

## JOINT CEO STATEMENT: FOUNDATIONAL SUPPORTS

A statement by Occupational Therapy Australia CEO, Sam Hunter  
and Speech Pathology Australia CEO, Jodie Long

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### Australia's key allied health peaks work together to call for investment in clinical allied health services in future early childhood foundational supports

In a united effort to advocate for better support for children with disability and developmental concerns, Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA) and Speech Pathology Australia (SPA) are joining forces to ensure key allied health services are recognised as an essential element of early childhood foundational supports.

The Government has signaled its intention to develop foundational supports in the NDIS Review released last December, (services that will sit outside the NDIS) to offer a range of limited supports and services for people with disability who do not qualify for the NDIS, including young children.

OTA and SPA are calling on state and federal governments to commit to commissioning and funding services to enable access to occupational therapy and speech pathology as part of early childhood foundational supports.

The peak bodies are also calling for stronger engagement with allied health professionals during the development of new foundational supports, to ensure they are built upon best practice principles and harness the full scope of these essential allied health services. These supports are critical to ensure that all children get the best start to life.

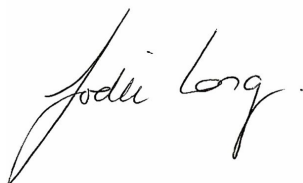
#### Background

Paediatric speech pathologists and occupational therapists play a key role in the screening, assessment and therapeutic supports for children with disability or developmental concerns and provide hundreds of thousands of life changing services for children each year.

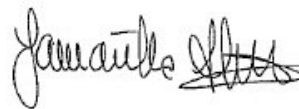
Paediatric occupational therapists work in partnership with the child, family and significant others (such as educators) to plan and implement evidence-based therapeutic interventions with the aim of enabling participation in daily activities and life situations most meaningful to the child.

Speech pathologists work with children and families to develop speech, language and communication skills, and provide support for children with difficulty eating and swallowing.

Both professions provide services that are critical for young children to reach their full potential and support their participation and inclusion in their communities and everyday life.



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