

Becoming an AIPA Member

Topic: Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) membership process

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to outline the steps that AIPA will take when considering applications for membership under Rule 6.

Background:

The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (AIPA) is committed to achieving equitable participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the psychology profession in Australia. This includes providing representation and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists and psychology students, being a national voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists, contributing leadership and expertise on issues related to social and emotional wellbeing and mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The rule book of The Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association (Aboriginal Corporation) (ICN: 9111) outlines the eligibility criteria for membership (under Rule 6.).

There are two classes of members: a) Members and b) Associate members.

A) An individual can apply for **membership** with AIPA if they meet the following conditions:

Rule 6.1.1. Who can apply to become a member? (Eligibility for membership)

A member must be:

- (a) At least 18 years old
- (b) An Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander Person
- (c) A Psychologist registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA), or a retired Psychologist of good standing with a significant relationship to the Corporation.

An individual can apply for **Associate membership** if they meet the following conditions:

B) Rule 6.1.4. Associate members:

- (a) At least 18 years old
- (b) An Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person
- (c) Are associated with the profession of psychology to the satisfaction of the Board of Directors.
- (d) An associate member shall have the same rights and responsibilities as a member but is not entitled to vote at meetings of the corporation and is not eligible to be a director.
- (e) Associate members shall cease to be associate members in the same way as provided for members under rule 6.5.

These conditions emphasise the intent and identity of AIPA as a voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists, and advocating on behalf of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with respect to the field and profession of psychology in Australia.

In accordance with these provisions, AIPA has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to ensure that applicants meet these criteria.

Application Requirements

Schedule 2 of the Rule Book provides a template application form for prospective members. The form includes a declaration by the applicant that they are eligible for membership. AIPA has adapted this declaration to the form of a statutory declaration.

In AIPA's view, this declaration is an important step in assessing an applicant's eligibility for membership, and will be complemented by relevant evidence to assist Directors in making their decision regarding each membership application.

1. At least 18 years old.

The AIPA rulebook requires that all members are adults. However, given the other requirements (namely the need to be a Psychologist), those registered by the Psychology Board of Australia will be at least 18 years old. In circumstances where there are concerns about an applicant's age, further evidence in terms of a valid form of identification may be requested.

2. An Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person

As an Indigenous Corporation representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander psychologists, it is important that members are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

However, AIPA recognises that Indigenous peoples have the right to determine their own identity and membership in accordance with their own customs and traditions, and that this is best administered by Aboriginal nations and communities themselves. As a representative organisation that spans Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations, it is AIPA's view that AIPA has no standing in resolving matters of identity. AIPA also acknowledges the many challenges related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity, including displacement and disconnection arising from past policies including the Stolen Generations.

AIPA requires that applicant's provide relevant documentation as an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person, including some form of confirmation provided by a relevant Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation.

3. A Psychologist

It is AIPA's intent to represent the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's in psychology. In Australia, the profession of psychology is regulated by the Psychology Board of Australia, which oversees minimum standards for psychologists as health care

professionals. As such, full membership of AIPA requires registration with the Psychology Board of Australia.

Application Process

1. Complete an application form online (including completed statutory declaration). Applicants will need to include a confirmation that they are an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person provided by a relevant community organisation.
2. Consideration of the membership by the AIPA Membership subcommittee. This will include review of all documentation, and review of registration through the Australian Health Practitioners Registration Agency (not applicable for associate membership). This may include follow up with organisations providing review.
3. Recommendation regarding the application made to Directors. The recommendation should include the basis for the recommendation, and any relevant information relied on to arrive at that recommendation.
4. Determination by Directors at a meeting of the Directors. The outcome of this determination will be communicated to the applicant, including relevant reasons if the application for membership is declined (as per Rule 6.1.3(e)). Successful applicants will have their name, address and date of membership added to the AIPA register of members (as per Rule 6.1.3(d)).

Where information becomes available that details relied on for membership have subsequently changed, or were misstated, AIPA may undertake to cancel the membership (as per Rule 6.5).