

OT Australia 2016-17 Board Directors
Expression of Interest – Dr Carol McKinstry

1. A summary of what interests you about being on the OTA Board (100 words max)

I am interested in being on the OTA Board to contribute to the strategic direction of occupational therapy in Australia. I am passionate about the profession capitalising on a number of current opportunities such as the implementation of the NDIS, policy directions such as an emphasis on primary health, provision of services using telehealth, the increased opportunities for private practice and new areas of practice. OTA is ideally positioned as the national peak body to positively influence policy, politics and funding organisations using evidence to support submissions and presentations. I see my involvement in the OTA Board as a logical step in terms of my service to the profession.

2. What skills/strengths you believe you would bring to the OTA Board (100 words max)

My extensive clinical, management, teaching and research experience would assist the OTA Board in strategic planning and the decision-making. I have experience as a board member in a variety of organisations with formal qualifications as a board director. I am able to critique and use evidence to make a case for change or develop a business case. I have financial literacy skills for budget development and monitoring. I have a wide network of occupational therapists locally, nationally and internationally that can enable productive collaborations and ensure representation of Australian occupational therapists, particularly those in rural and regional areas.

Selection criteria

• **A vision for occupational therapy and the Association**

- My vision for occupational therapy within Australia is to be recognised as highly professional, evidenced-based in practice and person-centred. The profession would be at a mature stage so that it is occupationally focused and occupational therapists would be enabled to work to their full scope of practice, utilising the full range of their knowledge and skills, expanding the areas that they currently practice in. Occupational Therapy Australia would be consistently recognised as the peak association, with health and human service policy makers seeking out the opinion and advice of OTA to inform policy development and review. Funding organisations would respect the recommendations of OTA regarding schedule of fees and consider occupational therapy services to be vital for quality service provision. All practising Australian occupational therapists would deem it essential to be members of OTA to access continuing professional development and professional support such as mentoring. Members would recognise the need and value of raising the profile of the profession through lobbying and marketing as a united profession.

• **Personal attributes:**

- strong communication skills
 - I have well established verbal and written communication skills. I am able to have difficult conversations and resolve conflict. I regularly facilitate workshops, give formal presentations, chair meetings and am skilled in using technology to conduct meetings and communicate with others. I use social media to disseminate research findings, promote discussion and events. I am able to adapt my writing abilities to suit the audience and format. I regularly publish in peer-reviewed journals, have conference abstracts accepted and am able to write formal reports, newsletter articles and press releases. I utilise my extensive network to promote the work of my colleagues and students.
- ability to respect alternative viewpoints
 - I am currently a member or chair of several community boards with a wide variety of members and diverse interests ranging from chairing a rural health service, chairing a major football netball league and being a member of a secondary college council. I believe that effective boards are those with cognitive diversity where different perspectives lead to better decision making and strategy. While discussion may be robust, it must be respectful and professional with the objective of discussions to generate a range of possible options to enable high quality decisions to be made.
- highly motivated
 - I am very committed to roles that I take on. I aim to add something or improve an organisation that I am involved with. Last year I completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors course and passed the exam at the end to ensure I had the knowledge and skills for being a board director. I am very passionate about promoting Australian occupational therapy and view challenges as opportunities. As an academic, I seek to improve the quality of our future occupational therapists who are change agents and able to advocate on behalf of their clients, organisation and profession. I actively contribute to the practice evidence for our profession and through various roles I have held with OTA.
- **Leadership skills**
 - I have held various management and leadership positions throughout my career. At Bendigo Health I was deputy chief occupational therapists, mentoring and supervising experienced and inexperienced occupational therapists and also students. Later I was in senior management, leading a team of staff from various disciplines to manage complaints, serious adverse events, risk management, clinical governance, external accreditations and provision of information to the Board on quality improvement and patient safety. At La Trobe University, I have been Head of Rural and Regional Allied Health Department, leading academics from various disciplines within the largest rural health school in Australia. I am also an elected member of the La Trobe University Academic Board and a member of the Quality Committee reporting to the Academic Board. I currently coordinate the La Trobe University Rural Health School Occupational Therapy Program at the Bendigo campus, leading a small team of academics who work closely with colleagues at the Bundoora campus. I am a coordinator for the La Trobe Rural Health School higher

degree research students and member of the school research committee, ensuring research outputs are high in quality and impact.

- I am currently chair of a rural health service board and also a local sporting organisation. This requires me to chair meetings, facilitate discussion and foster partnerships with external stakeholders. I have increased my financial literacy and legal skills through gaining a qualification from the Australian Institute of Company Directors.
- I am currently chair of the OTA WFOT Approval Committee that oversees compliance with the WFOT Minimum Educational Standards.

- **Understanding of contemporary issues affecting the occupational therapy profession**

- Through attendance at international, national and state conferences I have ensured that I am aware of contemporary issues impacting on the Australian occupational therapy profession and also global issues. This year, I attended and presented at the ENOTHE-COTEC conference in Ireland and the Vic-Tas OTA Conference in Melbourne. I have attended the last 10 National OTA conferences and last 4 World Federation of Occupational Therapists Congresses. I have researched and published peer-reviewed journal articles on contemporary issues relating to practice education, emerging areas of practice, and the need for continuing professional development.
- Through involvement in various OT Australia activities such as the current advanced scope of practice work occurring in Victoria, editorial board member for the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal and reviewer for other international occupational therapy journals, I aim to maintain currency of issues impacting occupational therapy both within Australia and globally. I have been a long term member of both OTA and WFOT, regularly reading newsletters and bulletins to keep up to date. Through social media, I follow a number of world leaders in occupational therapy and learn much from the discussions on the OT4OT forums.

- **Proven commitment to the profession of Occupational Therapy in Australia**

At a local level, I have been involved in marketing and promotional activities such as writing articles for our local newspaper to promote awareness during OT Week. I also assisted in commencing the La Trobe Rural Health Occupational Therapy Program in Bendigo in recognition of the need for more educational opportunities for rural and regional Victorian students and to address occupational therapy workforce shortages in regional Victoria. At a state level, I have actively supported the Vic-Tas OTA branch activities including conferences and I am currently on a reference group for a Department of Health and Human Services Victorian Occupational Therapy Workforce research project. At a national level, I have supported the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal through submitting research manuscripts, reviewing manuscripts and being a volunteer on the editorial board. I have and continue to mentor local occupational therapists and support graduate occupational therapists to access continuing professional development and careers

advice. I am proud to be an occupational therapist and even when I was working in a senior management position, I would introduce myself as an occupational therapist.

- **Demonstrated appreciation of the breadth of occupational therapy practice settings (including public, private, academia, management, regional, rural and remote)**
 - During my career I have worked in a large regional health service as a clinician and in senior management, had my own private practice and consultancy business in quality improvement for health services, and I now hold a teaching and research position in academia. I have worked as an academic on both a metropolitan and regional campus. My current research relates to workforce in various locations and practice areas, particularly new areas of practice, service delivery in regional and rural areas, building research capacity, effectiveness of clinical supervision, building digital literacy capabilities and innovative practice education models for occupational therapy students.
- **Proven experience and involvement in Occupational Therapy Australia and past member associations, such as on the Association's Board, Divisional Councils, Committees, contributions to the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, contributions to the Association's national and state/ territory/Divisional conferences, contributions to Special Interest Groups, Member Forums, and CPD events**
 - I have been a member of the Australian Occupational Therapy Journal (AOTJ) Editorial Board since 2011 and currently am responsible for the management of the Viewpoint Department. I regularly review for the AOTJ and also other occupational therapy journals including the Journal of Occupational Science, the American Journal of Occupational Therapy and the British Journal of Occupational Therapy.
 - I am currently the chair of the OTA WFOT Approval Committee responsible for assessing Australian occupational therapy education program compliance with WFOT Minimum Educational Standards.
 - I was the Chair of the OT Australia National Conference Review Working Party in 2009 that radically changed the format and organisation of the National OTA Conference.
 - I was a member of the OTA Professional Standards Reference Group between 2005-2010 and the OTA Professional Development Reference Group between 2005-2011.
 - I have been a member of the organising committee for the 2011 National conference in Melbourne and 2013 National conference in Adelaide.
 - I have been an abstract reviewer for national OTA conferences and WFOT congresses (2008 and 2012) and regularly chair sessions for national OTA conferences and WFOT congresses.
 - I have regularly presented at Victorian, Australian and WFOT conferences. As part of a local team, we regularly promote OT Week through arranging dinners, guest lectures. Last year I was involved in organising an OTA forum on occupational therapy and the NDIS at the Bendigo campus of La Trobe University, bringing together a number of state and national politicians and ensuring media coverage.

- **Evidence of at least five (5) years professional experience as an occupational therapist**
 - I graduated in 1986 and have worked predominantly full-time except for two periods of maternity leave of 12 months each. I was an Accredited Occupational Therapist since the program was implemented and more recently have been a registered occupational therapist since 2012.
- **Current member of Occupational Therapy Australia (OTA) and history of membership with OTA.**
 - I have been a continuous member of Occupational Therapy Australia since 1985 and a long-time member of WFOT.