

Purpose of this statement

The Oceania Academy of Cerebral Palsy and other Childhood-onset Disabilities (Oceania Academy) has developed this statement to guide our Academy's commitment to diversity and to promote equity. The Oceania Academy is committed to ensuring that an inclusive and equity-driven approach is embedded in all Academy activities. This statement is a starting point and a call for action to address the inequities in experiences and outcomes for people living with childhood-onset disability across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ). The aim of this statement is to guide the activities of the Oceania Academy and to ensure that equity is a priority of our work, both now and into the future.

Definition of equity and inequity

Equity, as defined by the World Health Organization, is the “absence of avoidable, unfair, or remediable differences among groups of people, whether those groups are defined socially, economically, demographically or geographically or by other means of stratification.” Thus, inequity is the presence of these avoidable, unfair, and remediable differences.

Need for this statement

People with childhood-onset disability face inequities arising from unfair conditions including stigma, discrimination, poverty, barriers to accessing and/or exclusion from services and resources including healthcare, education, and employment. It is also well recognised that intersectionality occurs - that is, additional discrimination and inequities can be unfairly experienced based on age, religion, ethnicities, sexual orientations, gender identities, socio-economic status, and other factors. Furthermore, in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand (AoNZ), colonisation has significantly impacted, and continues to impact, health outcomes for Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders and Aotearoa NZ Māori with disparities in timely access to appropriate health care and poorer health outcomes due to systemic and institutional racism.

Our interpretation of equity

We understand equity as an approach and an outcome that we work towards as Oceania Academy members. As an approach, it involves allocating and prioritising resources to where there are the greatest needs and making decisions related to Oceania Academy activities with this lens. Therefore, an equity approach includes identifying and understanding needs to influence action to eliminate inequities. As an outcome, equity means that everyone has or is supported to have equitable opportunity based on their specific needs, to realise what is important to them and their family.

Our responsibilities as an Academy

The Oceania Academy aims to provide multidisciplinary scientific education for health professionals and to promote excellence in research and best practice clinical care for individuals with childhood-onset disability.

The Oceania Academy recognises the importance of human rights and the inherent value of each and every person, based on the following overarching conventions and statements: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Convention on the rights of the Child, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, The Uluru Statement from the Heart, the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance.

We are committed to actively responding to inequity and intersectionality as members of Oceania Academy. As part of this commitment, we will apply the below principles to the work of our Academy. To uphold these conventions, we have a responsibility to treat every person fairly so that they can thrive and flourish. The below equity principles have been developed in consultation with Oceania Academy members.

Equity principles that guide our work:

1. We actively engage people with lived experience of childhood-onset disability.
2. We embed equity visibly in all that we do, including in our Strategic Plan.
3. We celebrate diversity in representation and perspectives across our work.
4. We recognise the unique intersectional inequities that Indigenous individuals and families experience, due to the ongoing, evolving and related impacts of colonisation and the climate crisis. We will prioritise partnership with Indigenous groups to better understand these experiences and to take steps to eliminate inequities.
5. We recognise the intersectional inequities that individuals with childhood-onset disability and their families experience. We will work to better understand these experiences to eliminate inequities.
6. We welcome all lived experiences of childhood-onset disability.
7. We embrace a strengths-based approach. We focus on what people can do whilst recognising the unique challenges faced by individuals with childhood-onset disability and their families.
8. We understand the influence that social determinants have on health outcomes for individuals and families living with childhood-onset disability.
9. We collaborate and align with partner organisations to create a more equitable society for people with childhood-onset disability.

Embedding equity across the Oceania Academy

Over the next two years (mid 2024 - mid 2026) we will focus on goals to embed equity in our work:

- Embed these principles in Board activities
- Embed these principles across committees

AusACPDM Equity Position Statement 2024 - 2026

- Embed these principles into our conference (scientific and organising committee) and education offerings (Listening & Sharing sessions; co-branded workshops/symposia)
- Review our progress and understanding our successes and challenges including reporting progress by the Oceania Academy conference in 2026

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