



AIDA

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
ABN: 84 131 668 936

MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association

1 December 2016

Best Practice in Student Support for Indigenous Medical Students

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) is committed to reaching parity between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous doctors. This is a vital component in closing the gap in Indigenous health outcomes. Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students graduate is fundamental to achieving this goal, and with that in mind we must concentrate on improving overall retention rates.

AIDA's *Best Practice in Student Support for Indigenous Medical Students* policy paper reflects on the research that was completed by AIDA in 2005 titled *Healthy Futures: defining best practice in the recruitment and retention of Indigenous medical students*. This paper analyses the progress that has been made in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students, focusing on the recruitment, retention and graduation stages of their journey to becoming doctors.

Universities have made some progress since 2005. An increase in the numbers of students in the graduate and undergraduate medical degrees is evident, however we still have a long way until equity with non-Indigenous students is reached. Strategies that target the recruitment and enrolment stage, and building Indigenous specific pathways to promote alternative entry points need to be the focus.

The retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students is an ongoing concern for AIDA. Medical School Indigenous Support Units, financial assistance and tutoring all play a vital role in supporting medical students through their studies. However, essential to the success of these students is the development, implementation and maintenance of a culturally safe environment in the entry pathway and degree.

AIDA's policy paper identifies best practice in student support through all stages of medical studies. The paper recommends the development of pathways into medical degrees; cultural safety in all medical education curricula; meaningful engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in decision-making; and the provision of financial support for the entirety of the pathway to becoming a doctor.

To view our *Best Practice in Student Support for Indigenous Medical Students* policy paper please visit our website, www.aida.org.au or follow this link <https://goo.gl/uGDedc>.

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