MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association

10 July 2017

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association releases report on racism, bullying and lateral violence in the workplace.

In 2016, the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) surveyed their members about racism, bullying and lateral violence in the workplace. AIDA undertook the survey in order to understand the occurrence of racism, bullying and lateral violence and the impact it was having on their membership in their workplaces. AIDA released a report today, highlighting three main areas for concern which must be addressed in order to eradicate racism and bullying, and progress the implementation of a culturally safe healthcare system.

The key finding from the survey is that **racism is prevalent in the workplaces of AIDA members**. Over 60% of the Indigenous medical students and doctors surveyed reported that they had experienced racism, bullying or both, on a regular basis. Respondents have called for improved support for victims and mandatory and regular cultural safety training for all health professionals. These are tangible and important steps towards overcoming racism in the workplace.

The survey also found that **existing complaints and support processes are inadequate** and that **more work is needed to improve workplace cultural safety**.

AIDA CEO, Craig Dukes said "It is undeniable that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals play a critical role in improving health outcomes for Indigenous Australians. Indigenous doctors have unique ability to align clinical and cultural knowledge to provide culturally appropriate care.

A culturally safe healthcare system, free from racism and bullying attracts and nurtures Indigenous doctors and this must be a priority if the government is serious about closing the health gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians".

AIDA recommends the following actions to assist in overcoming the main issue raised in the report;
- respecting and accepting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and staff and their cultural values;
- adopting a zero tolerance approach to bullying, racism and lateral violence and appropriately enforcing it; and
- adopting mandatory and regular cultural safety training for all health staff, in particular for perpetrators and complaints handlers.

The report can be viewed on the AIDA website at https://www.aida.org.au/our-work/policy/ under *Policy papers and statements.*

END MESSAGE

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