



## **AIDA Communique – Specialist Trainee Support Program**

On 21 June 2022, AIDA convened the first meeting of the Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) Cross-College Project Group (comprising 12 specialty colleges) on the Land of the Gadigal people. The purpose of the meeting was to support the successful delivery of AIDA's STSP for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-GP specialist trainees.

The meeting was opened with a warm Welcome to Country by Traditional Owner, Uncle Allen Madden.

Mr Duane Findley, CEO of The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR) addressed the group as the host and lead college of the consortium of colleges which had successfully secured funding under the Commonwealth's Flexible Approach to Training in Expanded Settings (FATES) initiative to fund the first year of AIDA's program.

Mr Findley noted the need across all colleges to grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialist workforce, that collaboration would strengthen and support each college's efforts and emphasised the importance of the work being led by AIDA.

AIDA's STSP lead, Dr Karen Nicholls, presented the background to the project, previous [research](#) undertaken by AIDA and James Cook University and framed the work within AIDA's purpose to "grow ethical and professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors who will lead and drive equitable and just health outcomes for all our peoples".

STSP progresses several of AIDA's strategic priorities including the first in [AIDA's Strategic Plan](#) to "grow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors".

The group agreed to be champions and drivers of change within their respective colleges to embed good practice identified by AIDA and the consortium of colleges in the recruitment, selection, retention and successful Fellowship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander non-GP specialist trainees.

The group reviewed data from the most recent '[Growing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical specialists](#)' report. In March 2021, there were 50 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander non-GP specialists and 99 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander non-GP trainees.

The group noted responses from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees captured in the Medical Training Survey 2021 showing that this cohort has a greater interest in future careers in areas of workforce, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and rural health.

Dr Nicholls spoke to the need for more comprehensive data including numbers of college applicants, success rate of application, number of exam attempts, time in training and success rate of trainees.

Dr Simone Raye, AIDA Vice President and past Chair of the Indigenous GP Registrar Network (IGPRN) spoke to the IGPRN's work and success since its establishment in 2008. AIDA's program has been modelled on the IGPRN and includes:

- culturally appropriate mentoring and coaching for individual trainees
- establishment of a network for culturally safe collegiate support with online and face to face educational activities
- collaboration with medical colleges to remove barriers, ensure training programs are equitable and enable trainees' success.

The group noted IGPRN had secured long term funding from the Department of Health and that ongoing funding for STSP was vital to measure longitudinal success and growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialist numbers.



Mr Blake McDonald from the Department of Health spoke of the Department's commitment to AIDA's program and its direct alignment with the National Medical Workforce Strategy and priority to grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical workforce and improve cultural safety.

During the meeting, the group workshopped culturally appropriate strategies for recruitment, and selection and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees. Discussion covered activities that were working well, resources that had enabled success, gaps and what colleges would need to do to address these gaps. Each college committed to two actions to progress before the next meeting and identified the support they required from AIDA.

In relation to recruitment, Mr Sam Dipnall from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists presented a case study on the Psychiatry Interest Forum. The Forum enables early engagement with doctors and provides a range of benefits for participants. The Forum has seen 22 of 101 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forum participants transition to psychiatry training.

Dr Nicholls spoke about AIDA's 'Yarn Up' online sessions from enabling colleges to engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors interested in their training program and provide a thorough overview of the benefits and expectations of the training programs.

Feedback from Colleges following the cross-college meeting affirmed the value of the opportunity for colleges to share information and resources with each other and seek advice from AIDA and co-design initiatives to ensure AIDA's STSP success.

The next meeting will be held on 13 September 2022.

#### Attendees:

AIDA

Department of Health

Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians

Australian College of Emergency Medicine

Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists

Royal Australasian College of Physicians

Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators

College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand

Royal Australasian College of Surgeons

Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists

#### Apologies:

Australasian College of Dermatology