

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2023



## **MORE THAN HALF OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER TRAINEE DOCTORS EXPERIENCE OR WITNESS HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM**

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) is calling for urgent systemic and cultural reform within the health sector, following the 2022 Medical Training Survey results which were released this week.

The results found that 55% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee doctors have experienced and/or witnessed bullying, discrimination and harassment, including racism, compared to 34% of all trainees nationally. This has increased from 52% in the previous year indicating the issue is worsening.

AIDA CEO, Donna Burns said that while these numbers are deeply disturbing, they are not surprising.

“We know that harassment and discrimination, especially racism, has been adversely impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors and medical students throughout their medical journey and we applaud our doctors for having their voices heard.” Ms Burns said.

“The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors in training having responded to the survey increased from 158 in 2021, to 191 in 2022, which goes to show how important this matter is to our doctors and more broadly to workplaces and patients. As such we are continuing to advocate for systemic and cultural reform across the healthcare sector, including robust and ongoing accountability frameworks and genuine commitments by executives to address this issue.”

Since its inception over 25 years ago, AIDA has worked to provide a culturally safe and affirming space for our students and doctors to come together and be strengthened through the support of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peers.

“There is much work to be done and an ongoing long-term approach is required to transform the culture of medicine to ensure that our training and educational institutions and workplaces are safe and enable our trainees to thrive so that we don't continue to see this data year after year” Ms Burns said.

AIDA is proud to be a national leader in providing Cultural Safety Training workshops as an effective strategy to create more culturally safe individuals and workplaces. If you would like to learn more about cultural safety and the ways in which you can help to improve the landscape of medicine for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical professionals, go to: <https://aida.org.au/cultural-safety-program/>

AIDA also established the Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) last year, which has built a strong foundation in partnership with medical colleges to improve the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander specialty trainees.

*The 2022 Medical Training Survey (MTS) is an annual national profession-wide survey of medical training, funded by the Medical Board of Australia. More information on the 2022 Medical Training Survey can be found [here](#).*

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