



AIDA Communique – Specialist Trainee Support Program

AIDA held a fourth meeting of the Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) Cross-College Project Group (comprising 12 specialty colleges) on the Lands of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri Peoples on Tuesday 7 February 2023.

The meeting continued the collaboration between AIDA and the 12-college strong consortium to augment the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors who wish to commence or are currently undertaking non-GP specialty training. AIDA was pleased to welcome a representative of the Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia to participate in the meeting.

The meeting was hosted by the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO). Medical Advisors, Dr Jason Agostino and Dr Kate Armstrong provided an engaging, eye-opening presentation on the complexity and sophistication of NACCHO and individual member services. The group noted the holistic model of multi-disciplinary care commonly regarded as the gold standard in primary health care.

AIDA staff presented a review of the first eight months of the STSP program under the Commonwealth's Flexible Approach to Training in Expanded Settings. Key deliverables had progressed and early outcomes included:

- 47% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainees engaged in the program
- 28 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors provided culturally appropriate one-on-one support
- 5 doctors provided performance coaching succeeded in their application to training programs

The group noted that an increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialists required ongoing effort. In the short-term the target of 100% retention of Trainees and improvements in the experiences of Trainees as recorded in the Medical Training Survey could be used to measure progress.

College representatives tabled a range of strategies progressed in 2022. Some of these included:

- Financial support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainees and applications including fee reimbursements and equipment funds
- Improved content on cultural safety in college curriculum
- Improved peer support, through networking, social events and mentoring
- Prioritisation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors in application and selection processes
- Increased engagement with prospective doctors through AIDA's event

The colleges reiterated the value of the cross-college consortium led by AIDA to support their efforts to drive change within colleges to better recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainees and prospective trainees.

The group discussed concerning data from this year's Medical Training Survey noting that the culture of medicine required transformation and that the experiences of bullying, harassment, discrimination, and racism witnessed and experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Trainees was totally unacceptable.

The group noted progress towards a cross-college statement on the eradication of racism led by representatives from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians and the Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators.

The group agreed to a proposal tabled by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists and the Australasian College of Dermatologists to develop a toolkit with recommendation for colleges and health services to improve cultural competency. The consortium agreed to undertake AIDA's cultural safety training as a collective prior to the next meeting in May 2023.



The Australian Medical Council presented on recent changes to the AMC's annual monitoring template for colleges and welcomed feedback on how this tool and process could support college efforts to improve processes to increase the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specialist workforce.

Attendees

- Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association
- Department of Health and Aged Care
- Australasian College of Dermatologists
- Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians
- Australasian 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 Psychiatrists
- Royal Australasian College of Physicians
- Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators
- Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
- Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists
- Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia