

AIDA held the seventh meeting of the Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) Cross-college Project Group (the Group) on Thursday 7 December 2023 on Bidjigal and Gadigal Country, Sydney. Highly productive and generative discussions took place in order to progress the Group's shared commitment and efforts to strengthen recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors in non-GP specialty training.

Dr Anita Watts, AIDA's Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) Lead opened the meeting with an Acknowledgment of Country. Dr Watts then asked the Group to share reflections and highlights from the AIDA Conference held in Nipaluna (Hobart from 16-18 November 2023). College staff commented on the wonderful atmosphere of celebration of the strength and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors. The Group also agreed that attending the annual AIDA Conference offered a great opportunity to connect with and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors or students interested in particular specialty pathways.

Dr Watts acknowledged the ongoing impact that the October 2023 Referendum outcome was having on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities. Impacts have included increased experiences of racism and resurfacing trauma. College staff shared initiatives taken in response to the Referendum outcome including published statements of support and education webinars.

Bianca Field and Stephanie May provided an update on AIDA's STSP. AIDA held the third specialist trainee workshop in Nipaluna following the AIDA Conference. This was highly successful with the largest number of attendees so far. AIDA's continuing work with trainees included ongoing advocacy with colleges, culturally appropriate tailored support, and exam support. AIDA commended the many achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors in 2023 including success in selection onto training programs and passing exams. Upcoming activities for STSP included an evaluation of the program to be conducted early 2024 and a series of activities for trainees including social trainee dinners, virtual Yarn Ups to promote college pathways, and two face to face trainee workshops.

Justin Noel from Origin Communication provided an update on his work with AIDA and the Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand (MDANZ) to scope and design AIDA's Indigenous Medical Student Support (IMSS) Program. The work would be informed by the model and success of STSP.

Simone Hurley, AIDA's Cultural Safety Program Coordinator provided an update on the uptake of the 815 tokens AIDA had provided to the 13 non-GP specialty colleges to undertake AIDA's Cultural Awareness online course: An Introduction to Cultural Safety.

Associate Professor (Assoc Prof) Carmer Parter, from the UNITE hub of the Our Collaborations in Health Research (OCHRe), provided the Group with an update on the collaboration between OCHRe and AIDA to ensure trainees undertaking research are culturally safe and not subjected to racism. The Group were unanimous in their agreement to support culturally safe research experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees and hear from Assoc Prof Parter at future meetings.

Assoc Prof Parter additionally shared information from her role on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (Ahpra) Board on the outcome of the recent banning of a doctor for discriminatory and offensive behaviour towards an Aboriginal doctor, Associate Professor Kris Rallah-Baker, a Yuggera, Warangoo and Wiradjuri man. This was a landmark ruling and sent an emphatic message to the wider health system and workforce that not only is racism harmful, but it is

also unacceptable, and will not be tolerated. A safe and effective health system is not possible without ensuring the cultural safety of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce.

All colleges gave updates on their activities and shared information relating to their goal of 100% retention of trainees. The room engaged in a productive discussion regarding best methods of identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees and doctors, and self-identification was agreed upon as an appropriate and strengths-based approach. The Group agreed that future opportunities to learn and discuss culturally safe means of identification would be beneficial.

The group engaged in table discussions to consider reporting and planning tools developed by AIDA following the discontinuation of specific funding for AIDA to support bi-annual college self-assessments.

AIDA's Director of Strategic Policy and Impact, Paula Myott, facilitated a discussion with the Group to gauge commitment to the development of a cultural safety in education framework across all medical specialty college as recently proposed by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists.

The Group noted learnings from the RACGP Culture and Training Framework project to embed Aboriginal ways of knowing, being, and doing in training and education and to eliminate racism and discrimination across training structures. The Group agreed that the first stage of the project would be assessing the feasibility of developing a cross-college framework and noted that most colleges are unlikely to have sufficient capacity and resources to support development and implementation of a Framework. The group noted AIDA's position that this framework must be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led, and that AIDA are well placed to drive such a project. As such, discussions to further the project would be held at the Cross-college meetings.

Attendees

1. Australian Indigenous Doctors Association
2. Department of Health and Aged Care
3. Australasian College of Dermatologists
4. Australasian College of Emergency Medicine
5. Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists
6. College of Intensive Care Medicine of Australia and New Zealand
7. Royal Australasian College of Physicians
8. Royal Australasian College of Medical Administrators
9. Royal Australasian College of Surgeons
10. Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
11. Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists
12. Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists
13. Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists