

On September 17, 2024, the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) convened a meeting of the Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) Cross-College Project Group (the Group) on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people in Melbourne. This gathering brought together representatives from various non-GP Medical Colleges and associated organisations, focusing on fostering collaboration and exploring initiatives to enhance cultural safety within medical training environments. The meeting also advanced the Group's shared commitment and efforts to strengthen the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors in non-GP speciality training.

The meeting was chaired by Dr. Karen Nicholls, who opened with an Acknowledgement of Country, marking her first meeting in the role of Medico-Cultural Lead. Following this, attendees introduced themselves, and apologies were noted.

Representatives from each non-GP Medical College provided valuable updates on trainee and fellow numbers, retention rates, recent achievements, and the top three priorities for their organisations. Key topics discussed included the Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors Congress (PRIDoC) stethoscope presentations and sponsorships, as well as the Cultural Safety in Education Toolkit proposal from the previous meeting. A Q&A session followed the presentations, encouraging further engagement among attendees.

Blake McDonald, the Assistant Director of the Medical Specialist Training Section provided an update from the Department of Health and Aged Care (DoHAC).

The Australian Medical Council (AMC) then presented an update on the review of specialist medical programs. This update was led by Professor Alison Jones, Chair of the Standards Review Working Group, alongside Jacqueline Gibson, Commissioner of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Commission and member of both the AMC Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and Māori Committee, and Madeleine Novak, Program Manager for Accreditation Standards Reviews.

AIDA's Program Coordinator for Cultural Safety, Simone Hurley, discussed initiatives aimed at increasing cultural awareness among supervisors, which led to important discussions on the uptake of cultural awareness tokens.

Additionally, AIDA's Director of Programs and Outcomes, Stephanie May, facilitated a discussion on the Medical Training Survey 2023 results and how to use the results to inform future planning.

The meeting concluded with a session for other business, evaluations, and final reflections, all led by Dr. Karen Nicholls.

This meeting marked significant steps in coordinating efforts among multiple non-GP medical colleges and organisations to improve Indigenous health outcomes and enhance diversity within the medical profession in Australia. Through collaborative dialogue and a shared commitment to cultural safety, the Group is well-positioned to make meaningful progress in supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors.

A key outcome from the meeting was agreement by all colleges to develop a workplan in consultation with their respective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Committees to share to inform future direction of cross-college meetings.

Attendees:

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