

STSP Cross-College Communique – 3 June 2025

Focus: Selection Processes and Criteria

On 3 June 2025, the Specialist Training Support Program (STSP) hosted its Cross College Meeting at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) in Redfern, Sydney. Thirteen medical colleges were represented, with attendees joining both in person and online. The meeting created a culturally safe space for colleges to come together and discuss the barriers faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical trainees.

The main focus of this meeting was on selection processes and criteria, with an emphasis on ensuring that selection processes are culturally safe, transparent, and equitable. Dr Karen Nicholls facilitated the discussion and provided guidance drawn from her cultural knowledge and medical experience.

Brendan Grabau, General Manager of Training and Lifelong Learning at The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists (RANZCR), delivered a standout presentation, offering insight into RANZCR's approach to supporting First Nations trainees.

RANZCR's key initiatives included:

- No fees for First Nations and Māori trainees applying for selection
- Direct pathway to interview for eligible applicants
- Inclusion of First Nations and Māori representatives on selection panels
- Mandatory hospital placement sites to include Aboriginal Liaison Officers from 2026
- Action Plan with pillars that embed Indigenous worldviews into education, training, and professional practice

Brendan also spoke openly about systemic issues such as bullying and harassment, and the need to embed cultural competency throughout medical and specialty training. His presentation encouraged other colleges to reflect on their own systems, challenges, and progress.

During the meeting, other colleges contributed insights on:

- Fee waivers and external exam preparation support
- Providing trial exams and optional feedback
- Creating yarning networks and mentorship pathways
- Support for trainees who may not identify until later in training
- Reporting KPIs to Boards on cultural safety outcomes
- Sharing data insights to identify gaps in trainee support

RACS shared their efforts to provide exam and learning support tailored to different learning styles. RACP discussed funding external support if an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainee requests it.

Stephanie May from AIDA encouraged colleges to present at the next Cross College Meeting in September 2025, where the focus will shift to Strengthening Examination Support. Colleges were invited to share examples of how they currently support trainees or how they plan to improve in this space.

The meeting closed with reflections and a strong commitment to ongoing collaboration. Colleges expressed a shared intention to continue improving selection processes and increasing culturally safe support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors.

Attendees included representatives from:

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. Australian Orthopaedic Association

Apology:

1. Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia