Cross-College Meeting Communique

The recent Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) Cross-College Meeting was held on Tuesday, 2 September 2025, at the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO), located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people in Melbourne. The meeting brought together representatives from various Specialist Medical Colleges to share updates on the progress being made to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical workforce with focus on trainees and fellows. Colleges spoke about the positive outcomes in retention, the growth in new applicants, and the steps being taken to embed cultural safety into training programs.

The meeting was co-chaired by Stephanie May and Jordy Darney and opened with an Acknowledgement of Country by Abe Ropitini, Executive Director of Population Health Unit VACCHO. Attendees both in person and online provided individual college updates, followed by AIDA key updates which are attached.

Important initiatives were highlighted, including efforts to improve governance and leadership opportunities, with First Nations voices being welcomed into decision-making and working groups. Colleges also reflected on the success of exam support programs, mentoring networks, and cultural training delivered both face-to-face and online. These activities are helping to create stronger pathways for trainees and ensure that cultural knowledge and representation are valued and key focus throughout medical education.

The group discussed innovative approaches such as fee waivers to improve access, cultural connection activities, and the use of peer networks to provide ongoing support. Several inspiring examples were shared, including representation in mainstream media and cultural mentoring programs that are having a significant impact on how trainees experience their learning journey.

Dr Josie Guyer also presented on the Indigenous General Practice Trainee Network (IGPTN), which supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GPs. The presentation included topics on supporting trainees through exam preparation, workshops and cultural mentoring. This initiative has built strong partnerships with ACRRM and JCTS, ensuring cultural mentoring is embedded in GP training. Next steps include the development of a template letter to assist trainees seeking study leave to attend workshops, continued focus on recruitment and retention, and sharing of best practice initiatives across colleges, including lessons from the Indigenous General Practice Trainee Network.

A key outcome from the meeting was agreement by all colleges to develop a Microsoft Teams Channel platform to implement a Cross-College chat. This will provide easier communication, knowledge sharing, and a stronger way for us to stay connected. AIDA will collaborate with their IT Team to implement this.

Our next Cross College Meeting will be held in Sydney/Gadigal in December, where the focus will be on peer-to-peer support and mentoring. This will be a chance to build on the progress shared at VACCHO and continue working together to strengthen outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees on their journey.

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