



AIDA acknowledges and pays respect to the Traditional Owners of the lands across Australia on which our members live and work, and to the Elders and ancestors, past and present. We pay respect to the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land on which the AIDA office stands.

AIDA Communique – Specialist Trainee Support Program – Cross-college meeting 26 February 2026

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) Specialist Trainee Support Program (STSP) Cross-College Meeting was held on Thursday, 26 February 2026 at the Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri People in Melbourne. The meeting brought together representatives from Specialist Medical Colleges to share updates and strengthen collective efforts to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees and Fellows across specialist training.

The meeting was opened by Stephanie May, Director of Programs and Outcomes, AIDA, who emphasised the shared responsibility of advancing this work with cultural safety, care, and accountability. Colleges provided brief updates highlighting progress, challenges, and approaches to strengthening recruitment, retention, and culturally safe training environments.

Overall, colleges reported strong retention outcomes, with several noting growth in trainee numbers and positive transitions to Fellowship. Key developments included enhanced mentoring and peer networks, trainee forums, Indigenous health scholarships, and increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation within governance and advisory structures. Colleges also reflected on continued efforts to embed cultural safety across curricula, assessment, and organisational systems.

Challenges discussed included competition for training placements, particularly for pre-vocational doctors, broader workforce changes, and rebuilding First Nations staffing capacity within colleges. The importance of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation in leadership and decision-making roles was noted, alongside the need for culturally appropriate and integrity-based identity confirmation processes.

AIDA's Cultural Safety team delivered a dedicated session focused on racism and bias facilitated by AIDA's Medical Educator, Dr Danielle Arabena, the session grounded discussion in lived experience, history, and identity. Participants engaged in reflective and small-group discussions on truth-telling, historic racism, and the role of institutions in addressing colonial load and appropriation within the workforce. For further information regarding tailored Cultural Safety Workshops please contact the AIDA Cultural Safety Team via email culturalsafety@aida.org.au.

AIDA also provided updates across its core programs, reinforcing ongoing collaboration with colleges and AIDA's commitment to strengthening cultural safety and workforce outcomes across specialist training.

The meeting concluded with breakout discussions to identify future priority topics for the Cross-College Group and upcoming trainee workshops. Key points raised included:

- Model standards for training site accreditation and expectations for culturally safe training environments.

Commented [SM1]: @Kenneth Ford can we include a few points on what was shared here? Where are these written up and saved?

Commented [KF2R1]: @Stephanie May Hey Steph, I looked at the butcher paper and input the a few points that we discussed about in the breakout groups. I hope this is what you meant but if not, happy to adjust it :)

W: aida.org.au

PO Box 3497, Manuka ACT 2603

E: aida@aida.org.au



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- Organisational approaches to cultural safety, including sharing resources and identifying safety indicators.
- Responding when trainees report feeling culturally unsafe at a training site and how trainees can be supported during investigation and follow up.
- Cross-college collaboration opportunities, including learning circles on specific topics and sharing discussions through pinned channel threads.

College representatives proposed areas of focus and potential facilitators to ensure future activities remain responsive to trainee needs and aligned with the group's purpose.

Attendees:

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

Apologies:

1. Australian and New Zealand College of Anaesthetists
2. Royal College of Pathologists of Australasia
3. Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine

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