

## **MEDICAL DEANS SUPPORT STRONG ACTION TO CLOSE THE GAP**

Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand adds its voice to calls for renewed efforts to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Professor Nicholas Glasgow, President, Medical Deans said:

“While the release of the 2016 Close the Gap Report shows varied progress across the seven targets, it is clear there is still an unacceptable gap in health, education and employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.”

“Medical Deans is pleased to see the progress in improving Year 12 attainment and closing the gap in child mortality and reiterates our commitment to work for further improvements particularly in closing the life expectancy gap. Our Collaboration Agreement with the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA) is the foundation for promoting medical education that contributes to achieving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health equality.”

The fourth Collaboration Agreement between the AIDA and Medical Deans includes objectives to increase the Indigenous medical workforce and to ensure doctors in Australia possess the knowledge and skills to work competently with Indigenous people. This is essential to reducing the gap in health outcomes and doctors understanding the social, cultural and economic context of Indigenous peoples lived experiences.

The number of Indigenous doctors graduating from medical programs in Australia is increasing with 35 Indigenous graduates in 2014. In 2015 a further 65 Indigenous students enrolled in year one medicine, which is 2% of all commencing Australian medical students.

“These are encouraging figures but there is still much to be done to grow the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical workforce, including improving retention of students, providing greater support for prevocational Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors and training more medical specialists” said Professor Glasgow.

2016 will see the Medical Deans Annual Conference include an Indigenous Knowledge Initiative. In addition, the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education (LIME) Network, a programme funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, supports medical schools to deliver quality Indigenous health curriculum and best practice in the support of Indigenous students.

**Contact: Ms Carmel Tebbutt, CEO, Medical Deans, 02 8084 6557, 0437 476 267**

[www.medicaldeans.org.au](http://www.medicaldeans.org.au)

Phone +61 2 8084 6557  
Email [admin@medicaldeans.org.au](mailto:admin@medicaldeans.org.au)