

### INDIGENOUS DOCTORS AND MEDICAL SPECIALISTS SIGN LANDMARK AGREEMENT DURING NAIDOC WEEK

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The **Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA)** and **Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges (CPMC)** believe that reducing the current gap in health outcomes and life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians will be facilitated by increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical specialist workforce and by all doctors working in Australia possessing the knowledge and skills to work competently with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The theme of NAIDOC Week this year is *We Value the Vision: Yirrkala Bark Petitions 1963*. Fifty years after the Yolngu bark petitions were sent to the Federal Parliament, a landmark agreement between the national organisations representing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors and specialist medical colleges will be signed, during NAIDOC week, **at the Royal Melbourne Hospital on Monday 8 July 2013 at 10am.**

The Collaboration Agreement will make a contribution to closing the gap in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians by training more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical specialists, by improving the ways in which medical specialists work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and by mentoring future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in medicine.

Professor Kate Leslie, Chair of the CPMC and a senior anaesthetist at the Royal Melbourne Hospital said "Australia graduated its first Aboriginal medical graduate 30 years ago, 100 years later than comparable countries such as New Zealand and Canada. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors are significantly under-represented in the medical workforce and all 15 specialist medical college Presidents are absolutely committed to leading the change with our partners AIDA".

Dr Tammy Kimpton, AIDA President and General Practitioner in NSW, said "this agreement completes the final piece in the continuum of medical education and training. AIDA now has formal partnerships with the national bodies responsible for the education and training of doctors from entry to medical school, through the junior doctor years, into specialty training and fellowship".

"AIDA estimates that there are around 175 Indigenous medical graduates and 230 Indigenous medical students. To reach population parity in the medical profession would require over 1000 additional Indigenous doctors immediately" said Dr Kimpton.

AIDA CEO, Mr Romlie Mokak said "whilst much has been achieved to date, this formal agreement underpins the need for strong and sustainable partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations".

"Together, powerful results can be achieved. The measure of success will be the quality of care provided to our people and ultimately, the closing of the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Australian community".

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