



First Nations General Practice Training Committee

Communique – 29 February 2024

The inaugural meeting of the First Nations General Practice Training Committee (the Committee) was held on 29 February 2024.

The Committee was established to advise the Australian Government and general practice (GP) Colleges on First Nations GP training including:

- attracting more GP registrars to train in First Nations health settings.
- supporting and retaining First Nations doctors in GP training.
- ensuring the national approach for GP training works toward Closing the Gap in health outcomes and supports a culturally safe health workforce.

The Committee is chaired by Dr Dawn Casey. Dr Tim Senior and Dr Danielle Dries are the deputy chairs.

A majority of members of the Committee are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Members also have a depth of experience working with First Nations peoples and in First Nations primary care settings. In accordance with the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, the Committee will contribute to decisions on GP training to best support the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples and communities.

At its first meeting, the Committee discussed refinements to the Terms of Reference. These refinements include strengthening the focus on the growing number of First Nations registrars, clarifying that rural generalist training is within scope and recognising the broader First Nation primary care environment. Members discussed the role of the Committee and the forward work plan and agreed to provide six monthly updates to Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy (Minister McCarthy). The Committee agreed that milestones must factor in sufficient lead time for implementation.

The Joint College Training Services (JCTS) presented to the Committee on its implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health Strategic Plan, outlining what it was able to accomplish in 2023 and activities for 2024. The Strategic Plan aims to build capacity and promote innovation within First Nations health training settings, including cultural education and mentoring for GP registrars.

The Committee also received updates from the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) on the implementation of the Salary Support Program (SSP) following the transition to college-led general practice training in 2023. The change to a national approach has removed the funding cap previously applied to each state and territory, which should enable support to flow more flexibly. The GP Colleges also noted that enhancements to communication strategies, together with capacity building activities, could further assist the sector in accessing payments.

The Committee discussed key focus areas for improvement of the SSP, including communication, support and program awareness; policy settings; supervisor capacity; international medical graduates; and turnover rates. The Committee will give close consideration to key focus areas to guide next steps, including sector consultation.

The Committee meets quarterly. The next meeting is scheduled for late May 2024.
More information can be found at [First Nations General Practice Training Committee](#)