MEDIA RELEASE

BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DERMATOLOGISTS

The Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD) has released its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. The plan outlines the steps that the ACD will make over the coming 12 months to work towards reconciliation and improved outcomes in skin health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Dr Andrew Miller, President of the ACD says: “The ACD understands the unique challenges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face in achieving best outcomes in skin health. We acknowledge that our position as Australia’s peak professional and education body in dermatology mandates a responsibility to lead the advocacy for and planning of policies that will bring real progress in closing the gap in skin health outcomes. We understand that this will only be achieved from engagement at every level including locally; and that as part of this all patients have the right to access healthcare that is delivered with cultural sensitivity and respect.”

“The RAP directs College’s strategic focus on training and education of Australia’s current and future dermatologists, ensuring a broad and respectful cultural awareness; and to strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dermatology workforce.”

Dr Dana Slape, ACD dermatology trainee and of the Larrakia people, says: “Of the 90,000 doctors in Australia, there are approximately 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors, making up less than 0.3% of the Australian medical workforce.”

“The RAP will build upon ACD’s existing activities, including a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dermatology training position, Annual Scientific Meeting Travelling Award, and education for Fellows and trainees on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and culture.”

The main objectives of the ACD in the RAP over the next 12 months are to:

- Build a foundation for ongoing reconciliation framework
- Raise awareness within College to ensure there is shared understanding and ownership of the RAP
- Develop and strengthen external relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations
- Build a culture that respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their communities and diverse cultures
- Research current health service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to identify ways to improve.

Dr Miller says: “The ACD also acknowledges that barriers to academic and professional achievement do not end after university; and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors face additional hardships when studying and working within their chosen field. We have a responsibility to act to open up new and sustainable opportunities for the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors.”
Links to further information

ACD Reconciliation Action Plan

A-Z of Skin

Find a local dermatologist

For further information on the ACD, visit www.dermcoll.edu.au, or see our updates on Facebook or Twitter at @DermatologyACD #dermcoll or LinkedIn

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About the Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD):

The ACD is the peak medical college accredited by the Australian Medical Council for the training and professional development of medical practitioners in the specialty of dermatology. They provide authoritative information about dermatology to Government, the media, other health professionals and the general public.

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