

Medical Deans Australia and New Zealand (Medical Deans) Indigenous Health Priorities 2013-2017

Rationale:

As the peak body for professional entry-level medical education, training and research in Australia and New Zealand, Medical Deans recognises that it too has a responsibility to help address one of the key health challenges of our two countries. To contribute to *Closing the Gap* in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, Medical Deans, in conjunction with its Indigenous partner organisations, and through its Leaders in Indigenous (LIME) Network Program, will continue to support medical schools to work together to graduate more Indigenous doctors and develop a medical workforce that is both clinically and culturally competent. Medical Deans is well placed to address the following priority areas over the coming years.

Support Medical Schools to:

Increase Indigenous medical student retention and graduation rates

There are significant concerns about the retention rates of Indigenous students, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students.

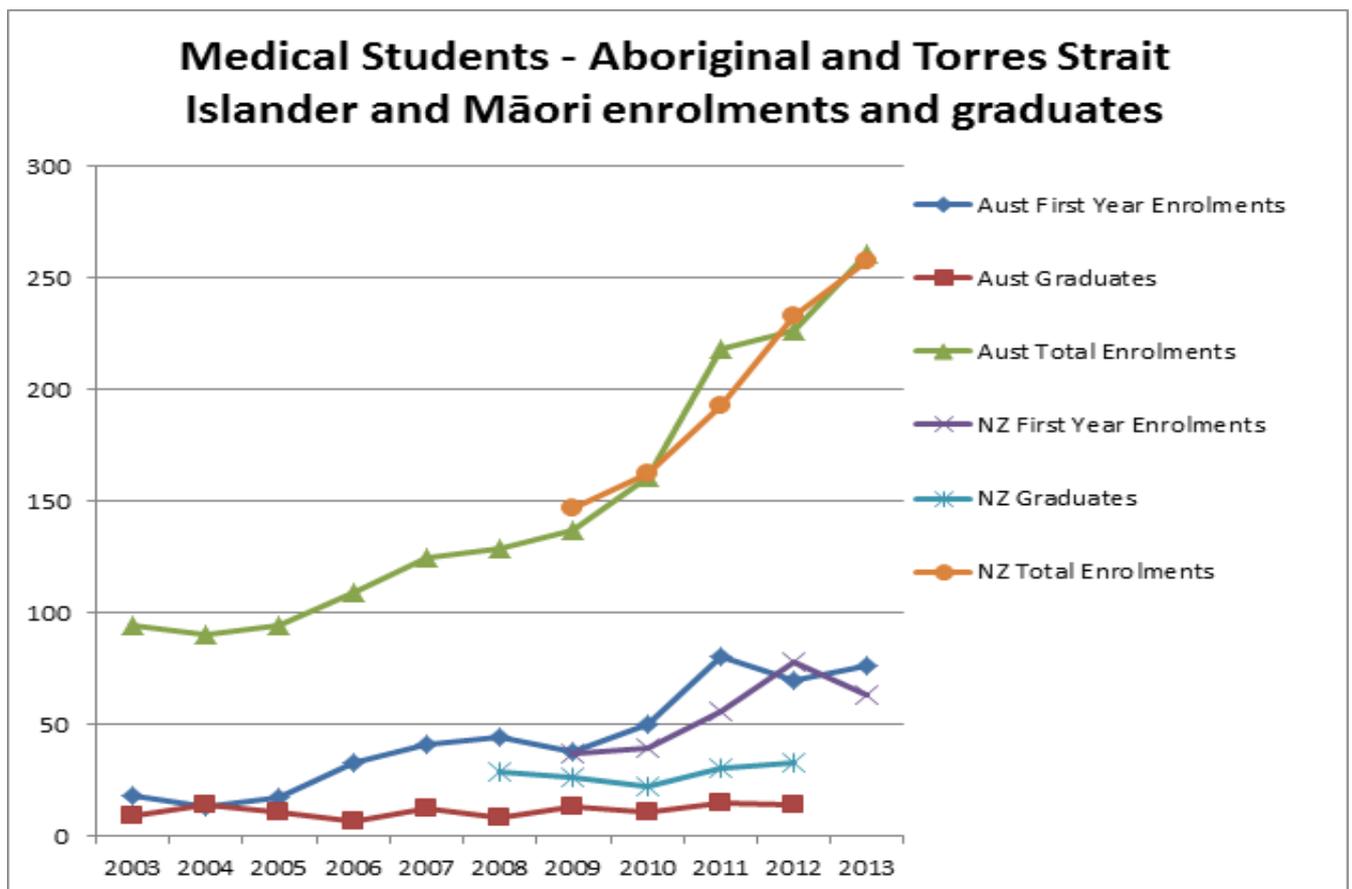


Figure 1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Maori medical student and graduate numbers

To assess these concerns and better inform the organisation on what current retention rates are and what are the drivers behind Indigenous students' success and withdrawal from medical courses Medical Deans will prioritise the following activities:

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive data set on Indigenous medical student enrolments and graduations. Medical Deans will draw primarily on annual medical school enrolment statistics, relevant analysis of longitudinal data from MSOD and additional qualitative and quantitative data published from LIME Network program activities.
- Alongside Indigenous partner organisations, AIDA, Te ORA and NACCHO, we will initiate additional research to better assess what the drivers behind Indigenous students' success and withdrawal from medical courses are. (subject to available resources)
- Conduct internal forums for Medical Deans and relevant school staff to exchange experience and insights on barriers and enablers to improve Indigenous medical student recruitment, retention and graduation.

Develop high quality Indigenous Health curricula

Medical Deans recognise that Indigenous Health is a relatively new and developing discipline, and that medical schools are at different stages in their development and implementation of Indigenous health curricula. Medical Deans also understand that experienced based learning through the development of programs for student clinical placements within the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector is recognised as good practice. As such Medical Deans will prioritise the following activities:

- Utilising the expertise of the LIME Network and through further collaboration with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) scope the current extent of medical student placements in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector in Australia. This will entail an analysis of numbers of students and clinical supervisors, numbers and size of placement sites, length of placements, impact of concurrent health student placements, barriers and enablers for increasing placement capacity. (subject to tripartite resources)
- Continue to disseminate examples of good practice in Indigenous Health education and clinical placements through multiple forums and pathways including but not exclusively the biennial LIME Connection conference, the annual Medical Deans conference and the Indigenous Knowledge Initiative.

Advocate and promote best practice

Considering Medical Deans' established partnerships with Indigenous organisations and its LIME Network Program, the organisation is well positioned to effectively advocate for Indigenous Health and disseminate examples of good practice. In regards to this Medical Deans will prioritise the following activities:

- Raise advocacy and dissemination of good practice through placing 'Indigenous Health' as a standing item at its monthly Executive meetings and relevant Membership meetings.
- Support the work of the newly formed Medical Deans Indigenous Development Steering Committee to provide strategic advice on relevant Indigenous health and development initiatives

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- Implement and regularly review the organisation's Reconciliation Action Plan activities
- Look to develop bipartite or tripartite activities with key Indigenous partners around particular strategic issues as they arise
- Advocate for Indigenous Health and disseminate examples of best practice both internally and externally on matters directly related to medical education and more broadly Indigenous Health education and recruitment, retention and graduation of Indigenous students.
- Promote best practice in Indigenous Health medical education and training in organisation responses to relevant discussion and policy papers.