



Building an Indigenous surgical workforce

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The Royal Australasian College of Surgeons is well poised to help build an Indigenous specialist workforce with a growing number of Indigenous students entering medicine according to the latest issue of the *ANZ Journal of Surgery*.

The Journal looked at factors used by medical schools to attract Indigenous students as well as interventions used for successful graduation. Elements such as establishing contact in secondary school and assistance in subject selection were part of a 'pipeline approach' used by the schools.

The Journal also looked at the importance of developing mentors who would assist in career and academic guidance as well as identifying opportunities for personal advancement. Among a literature review, it was found that having a mentor was associated with greater successful completion of residencies and later academic success.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students has more than doubled in the past seven years while Maori medical students make up 15 per cent of those undertaking primary medical qualifications.

As part of a move towards building an Indigenous specialist workforce, the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons is a key partner in the Committee of Presidents of Medical Colleges 'National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Medical Specialist Framework Project'. This framework outlines a number of priorities in which the College works with the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association to develop resources and access points for an Indigenous workforce.

This also includes participation in events such as the Indigenous Knowledge Initiative held in November, as well as the inclusion of Indigenous Health as a key topic for the College's Annual Scientific Congress (ASC) held in May each year.

"The increasing number of indigenous medical students represents an opportunity to continue the pipeline into postgraduate training, University or hospital appointments and specialist career success," author Associate Professor Jonathon Koea says.

"Some of these resources are already in place with many courses run by the College in education and research matters, the Developing a Career in Academic Research is now a fixture at the College's ASC each year, as well as the establishment of the Indigenous Health Committee in 2008."

The *ANZ Journal of Surgery*, published by Wiley-Blackwell, is the pre-eminent surgical journal published in Australia, New Zealand and the South-East Asian region. The Journal is dedicated to the promotion of outstanding surgical practice, and research of contemporary and international interest.



Media inquiries: Bridget Hooper, Media & Public Relations Officer
+61 437 008 891 or +61 3 9276 7430