




Indigenous Medical Scholarship

Donation prospectus 2025



You have a unique opportunity
to help grow the Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander medical workforce.

Donate to the AMA's Indigenous Medical
Scholarship fund today and change lives for
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students
and their communities.

You can be a key part of the nation's efforts to close
the gap in health outcomes.

100 per cent of donations go directly to recipients.

Fully tax deductible.

Donate now

Dr Danielle McMullen

AMA President



Being a doctor is a profound privilege that offers the opportunity to change lives in ways that are impossible in most other careers. Doctors witness life's full spectrum — from the joy of new beginnings to the solemnity of final moments — and this perspective provides a rare and humbling view of the human experience.

As I look back on my foundational years as a medical student at the University of New South Wales, I feel a sense of pride and achievement to have made it this far. But it is also a reminder of how lucky I was to have had the opportunity to study medicine in the first place. Not everyone is afforded the same opportunities.

Entering medical school requires significant resources and support, which unfortunately places this path out of reach for many. The privilege to pursue this education is often shaped not only by talent and determination but also by circumstances, like financial stability, schooling, and connections to mentors, which many do not have.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are historically under-represented in medicine, leading to gaps in culturally appropriate healthcare services across Australia. The barriers for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples entering medicine can be immense. The AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship aims to help break down some of those barriers.

We know Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to receive regular healthcare if the medical services available to them reflect their own values and perspectives. That is why it is imperative Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples lead the development of health programs and policies that directly affect them if we are to truly address the gap in health outcomes.

First established in 1994, the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship has supported many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to become doctors. Past recipients include leading ear, nose and throat surgeon Professor Kelvin Kong, and leading Indigenous clinician and researcher, Professor Alex Brown. In this document, you will hear some of the scholarship success stories, from doctors who now have crucial roles in delivering healthcare in their communities.

Leading an organisation that is so invested in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes is a tremendous honour. But the sustained success of the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship relies on donations. Usually, it has only been financially possible to grant one new scholarship per year, despite receiving an increasing number of applications from impressive candidates. With greater support from donors, we hope to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students we support each year, with the aim of growing Indigenous representation and leadership in medicine.

By pledging your support for the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship and making a donation, you can be part of the solution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Danielle McMullen', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Danielle McMullen
AMA President

Your support is crucial

The significant gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians is of great concern to the AMA.

Closing this gap and achieving health equality should be a national priority.

The AMA believes everyone has a part to play in ending the cycle of disadvantage.

You can contribute to the solution.

What is the solution?

The AMA recognises there are no easy fixes. Success will only come from maintaining a long-term commitment to properly resourcing and strengthening capacity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to identify and resolve these health challenges.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not access health and medical services at a level appropriate to their needs. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are far more likely to attend health and medical services that reflect their own values and perspectives. The health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples improves when they are involved in the planning and delivery of their own health and medical care.

Having an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander doctor at a clinic can often make the difference between a community member turning up to the clinic for their scheduled appointment and never visiting the clinic at all.

About the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship

The AMA recognises the critical importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors through the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship scheme. Each year since 1994, the AMA has offered at least one scholarship to eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have entered an Australian university to study medicine.

A range of skills and qualities contribute to someone becoming successful as a doctor. Academic ability is one of them. However, cultural understanding and commitment to one's community are also significant factors in providing best-practice healthcare to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The value of the scholarship is \$11,000 per annum, paid as a lump sum for each remaining year of study that is successfully completed.

All donations go directly to recipients and all donations are tax-deductible.





Who is eligible?

The AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship is for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students who demonstrate a commitment to their community and to medicine, and who may not have the financial means to realise their dream.

The AMA relies on its Taskforce on Indigenous Health members to assess candidates for the scholarship and select the recipients. The taskforce is co-chaired by the AMA president and the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association president. It comprises doctors working in Indigenous health contexts and with peak Indigenous health organisations across Australia. The combined experience on the taskforce ensures only candidates of sound quality and commitment are chosen.

Applicants must be enrolled full-time in a medical degree at an Australian university and have successfully completed at least their first year of medicine.

Former AMA President Professor Steve Robson with 2024 scholarship recipient Kealey Griffiths and former Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association President Dr Simone Raye.



Past scholarship recipients

A number of past recipients have gone on to become prominent leaders in health and medicine after completing their medical degrees, including Professor Kelvin Kong, Australia's first Indigenous surgeon, and Professor Alex Brown, the director of the Australian National University's National Centre for Indigenous Genomics. Many other scholarship recipients are valued healthcare leaders in regional communities, where culturally safe care is most needed.



Professor Kelvin Kong

Australia's first Indigenous surgeon and 2023 NAIDOC Person of the Year, Professor Kelvin Kong, was one of the first recipients of the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship.

Professor Kong said not only did it provide crucial financial assistance during his medical studies at the University of NSW, it also provided significant personal motivation to push himself forward.

"When I was growing up, medicine was not even an option to anyone in our family. You were lucky enough to get through schooling, let alone think about university," he said.

"The scholarship was a reminder for me that I deserved to be in that place, and to have that kind of support and encouragement was really important, as it enabled me to dream big."

Professor Kong, a Worimi man, said receiving the scholarship in 1997 also made him realise the importance of organisations such as the AMA showing leadership and driving change.

"People probably don't realise the far-reaching consequences of the support of the AMA and their members in this space," he said.

"Some people think that simply speaking up in support of First Nations Australians won't do anything, when in actual fact, simply saying, 'this is something we believe in and this is something that's important to us' makes a huge difference."

Professor Kong now works as one of the country's foremost head and neck surgeons and has dedicated his career to the treatment and early intervention of chronic otitis media, which disproportionately affects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Dr Amy Rosser

Dr Amy Rosser, a Gubbi Gubbi woman from South East Queensland, received the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship in 2005 — and while that was 20 years ago, she has clear memories of the scholarship providing crucial financial assistance to help her thrive in her medical studies.



Dr Rosser has spent the past eight years in Alice Springs and now primarily travels each week to Yuendumu — nearly 300km northwest of Alice Springs — caring for the community's wide range of health needs.

"In remote communities, people are affected by a range of health conditions, which is why a doctor being available to provide high-level medical care within the community can make a big difference and support the delivery of care closer to home," Dr Rosser said.

"People in these communities are used to doctors and nurses coming and going every year, but when they've got someone who stays there for a long time, that has a very positive effect on their sense of wellbeing and this builds confidence and trust for people to seek out healthcare."

Kealey Griffiths

For 2024 scholarship recipient Kealey Griffiths, the financial assistance the scholarship provides has allowed her to channel more of her efforts into her studies and medical placements.

"It is wonderful that the AMA is committed to supporting Indigenous students, and it reaffirms that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are crucial to Australian healthcare as active contributors," Ms Griffiths said.



A Yuggera woman and University of Queensland student, Ms Griffiths aspires to work in sexual health medicine, in the context of psychiatry, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, who are disproportionately affected by sexual and family violence.

Be part of the solution by making a donation today

By supporting an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander medical student throughout their medical training, you are positively contributing to closing the gap in health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

The scholarship is advertised in November each year, and applications close in January the following year. The scholarship is usually presented to the successful recipient at the AMA's National Conference in August.

The entire portion of your donation goes directly to scholarship recipients.

In recent years, there has been an increased effort to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school students to consider a career in medicine. As a result, there is a rising number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying medicine and applying for the AMA's Indigenous Medical Scholarship.

With your help, we can support even more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the journey to becoming a registered medical practitioner.

Your donation will have a profound and enduring effect on Australia's efforts to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Donate now: ama.com.au/indigenous-medical-scholarship

ABN 95 410 894 783

About the Foundation

The AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship Foundation (ABN 95 410 894 783) is a charity that is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC). All monies received by the Foundation are held in accordance with the terms of the trust deed. It requires that all money donated be used to provide:

scholarships, bursaries or prizes... to promote the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in tertiary courses... at an Australian University leading to eligibility for registration as a medical practitioner.

The trustee is:

AMA Pty Ltd (ACN 010 731 576)
PO Box 6090
KINGSTON ACT 2600

Attention: Secretary General

indigenousscholarship@ama.com.au

The trust deed is available on the ACNC's website.

Support a student for their entire medical degree

While all donations, no matter the size, make a significant difference, you can make a special contribution by funding a scholarship for the entirety of a student's medical degree.

By making a donation of \$55,000 or more, you can change the life of a single student with a scholarship for the remainder of their studies. This donation also gives you the opportunity to be involved in the presentation of the scholarship at the AMA National Conference and special mentions on our website, social media and future AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship prospectus documents.

Donate now

ama.com.au/indigenous-medical-scholarship

Contact the AMA via email at indigenousscholarship@ama.com.au or phone (02) 6270 5400 to request bank transfer details and/or to discuss a sponsorship package.

This is a unique opportunity to directly invest in the future of First Nations healthcare. Your donation would have a profound impact on the scholarship recipient's life, as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities more broadly. You will be making a significant contribution to the provision of culturally appropriate healthcare.

Please contact the AMA should you wish to discuss a sponsorship package tailored to your organisation's needs or to simply make a donation to the scheme.

Leave a gift in your will

Your legacy can include life-changing support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students. Leaving a bequest to the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship in your will can make an enduring difference for the future of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical workforce.

Please talk to your solicitor if you would like to leave a gift in your will.

The trustee's preferred form of wording is:

"I GIVE, FREE OF ALL DUTIES AND TAXES, and for its general purposes, [[XXXX] / the residue of my estate] to The AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship Foundation, (ABN 95 410 894 783) PO Box 6090, KINGSTON ACT 2604

The receipt of the Secretary General for the time being of the Australian Medical Association on behalf of the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship Foundation is an absolute discharge to my executor."



Please donate

Cover artwork credit: Jillie Nakamarra

The artwork, presented to the AMA in 1994, depicts a centralised office with many branches of all people working together in remote locations. It shows a story of “working together to provide healthcare”.

