

Media release
Wednesday 7 June 2017

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students encouraged to apply for important Bursary

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students are being encouraged to apply for an important national Bursary that aims to provide an Indigenous medical student with much needed support while on the path through their medical degree.

The **2017 MDA National and Rural Doctors Association of Australia (RDAA) Rural Health Bursary** is again being generously provided by MDA National as part of its sponsorship arrangement with RDAA.

This is the third year that the Bursary has been offered, with applications now being accepted.

The Bursary, which is valued at up to \$7000 plus GST, will assist the recipient with:

- relocation and living / study costs while studying
- undertaking a rural or remote clinical placement to experience this rewarding area of medical practice or to develop skills in a particular area of medicine in order to assist a rural or remote community or Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community
- any other activity (including research) that would benefit rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and/or rural and remote health

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) is again supporting the initiative and will jointly select the successful recipient of the Bursary with RDAA and MDA National.

"Currently there are about 300 registered Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors, with about 2700 more needed to reach parity for the Indigenous community in terms of access to Indigenous doctors" RDAA President, Dr Ewen McPhee, said.

"Yet cost pressures for many Indigenous students is often a big factor in whether they go on to study medicine or other health disciplines.

"The decision to study often also means moving far away from their home and family.

"Our Bursary aims to make it easier for an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander medical student to continue their studies, undertake a clinical placement in a rural or remote location to sample rural medicine or develop specific skills, or undertake a research project or other activity that will benefit rural and remote communities and Indigenous patients.

"The Bursary will also cover the recipient's attendance at RDAA's and the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine's Rural Medicine Australia 2017 (RMA17) conference, to be held in Melbourne from 19-21 October 2017 — providing them with a valuable opportunity to undertake clinical learning across a wide range of skill areas, learn more about rural medicine as a career option, and form supportive networks with rural and remote doctors from across Australia.

"We thank MDA National for again generously supporting this important Bursary, and AIDA for its valuable assistance in promoting the Bursary to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students."

MDA National President, Dr Rod Moore, said the Bursary originates from the relationship between MDA National and RDAA, and an understanding of relevant issues.

“MDA National is proud to sponsor this Bursary” he said. “It means we can support our future Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander doctors and this, in turn, benefits the wider community. Doctors in rural and remote areas face specific challenges, something this Bursary acknowledges and that MDA National and RDAA understand.”

Applicants for the Bursary may be based either in rural, remote or urban locations as long as there is a specific rural or remote focus to their proposal. Applicants must be currently in their second or third year of medical studies, and a member of AIDA at the closing date for applications (7 July 2017). Further information and an application form is available at www.rdaa.com.au (see Quick Links).

The successful recipient of the Bursary will be announced at RMA17.

Available for interview:

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