

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

Working together



Our members

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health ('the faculty') has more than 10,000 members who work in, and/or have a passion for and interest in, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Membership of the faculty is at no additional cost to RACGP members and Fellows.

Join us if you:

- are actively engaged in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- have past experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- are interested in or would like to learn more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health
- identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.



Dr Danielle Arabena

MBBS, FRACGP, BNurs, BBusComms

Dr Arabena is a descendant of the Meriam Mer Clan groups of the Torres Strait Islands. She works in medical education, enabling her to influence registrars' experiences with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients, as well as practising medicine as a general practitioner (GP).

'As a GP, I am particularly fond of the relationships I form with my patients. General practice is a medicine that spans across generations, from the cradle well into old age. I feel that general practice is the correct vehicle to help patients and their families undertake their health journey and achieve its outcomes.'



Dr Janelle Trees

MBBS, FRACGP

Dr Trees is a descendant of the Thunghutti clan from Walcha in New South Wales. Her medical education led her to choose general practice as it would best allow her to see patients from all walks of life.

'General practice is one of those professions where you can see patients and really be able to form a connection and build a relationship with them, which is important to good primary care. Why wouldn't you want to work with Aboriginal people? It is one of the most interesting networks of cultures in the world. It is a privilege to be able to work with them. As their GP, I am there to listen and to care for them. That's what being a good GP is about.'

Photo credit: Claudia Jocher



Who we are

The faculty was established in February 2010 to ensure that GPs are well resourced and supported to provide high-quality, culturally responsive, patient-centred healthcare that is valued by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The faculty works together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations to improve health outcomes.

Faculty member, Dr Sarah Jane McEwan
BMed, Dip Child Health, Advanced DipObst,
GradDipClinEduc, FACRRM, FRACGP, FARGP



What we do

The faculty undertakes a range of activities to support the general practice workforce and improve health outcomes, based on the guiding principles of education and training for general practice, innovation and policy for general practice, advocacy and collegiality.

The faculty also advises and assists the RACGP to be culturally responsive and effective in its work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.



Education and training for general practice

Deliver education, training and assessments to registrars and GPs to support effective, culturally and clinically appropriate healthcare.



Innovation and policy for general practice

Support the growth of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander general practice workforce and develop guidelines, tools and resources for GPs and health professionals.



Advocacy

Advocate on a range of issues to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, health delivery and systems.



Collegiality

Celebrate the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GPs, registrars and students, and model best practice community engagement.

Our vision

All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples receive optimal primary healthcare from GPs and are able to enjoy long and healthy lives.

Growing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander general practice workforce

Improving the quality of healthcare delivery in general practice

Our mission statement

Working together with key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

Advocating for health equity and a health system free of racism

Celebrating achievements and culture



RACGP ceremonial gown

Introduced in 2012, the RACGP ceremonial gown and accompanying sash for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fellows symbolises respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia, and for the land on which GPs learn, teach and practise the art of medicine.

Snapshot of our history

2010

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health ('the faculty') is established.

2012

- The RACGP Fellowship gown is redesigned to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork.
- The first Indigenous Fellowship Excellence Program workshop is held in Sydney. The program is renamed Yagila Wadamba in 2016, meaning 'learn to heal'.

2014

The RACGP signs a memorandum of understanding with the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) in 2014 and again in 2019.

2017

The Growing Strong Award is launched and Dr Josie Guyer is named the inaugural winner.

2018

- The Minister for Indigenous Health, Ken Wyatt AM MP, launches the third edition of the NACCHO/RACGP *National guide to a preventive health assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people* at Parliament House.
- The RACGP endorses the Uluru Statement from the Heart during NAIDOC Week.

2019

The faculty reaches the milestone of 10,000 members.

2020

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health celebrates its 10th year of operation



Leadership

The faculty is governed by a **Council and Education Committee**. The Council advises on education, training, quality care, research and general practice advocacy, and oversees initiatives that support GPs to provide high-quality, culturally responsive healthcare.

Council members include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander GPs, community members and representatives from the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), Indigenous GP Registrar Network (IGPRN) and the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association (AIDA).

The Council Chair is a member of the RACGP Board, responsible for decision making across the whole organisation.

The Education Committee provides advice to Council regarding education, vocational training and assessment issues. The committee aims to have 50% of its positions filled by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander members.

Faculty Chair, Associate Professor Peter O'Mara MBBS, FRACGP, FARGP, GradDipRural

Partnerships

The faculty adopts a partnership model that encourages GPs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to work alongside one another.

We support the vital role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health practitioners, health workers and others working in partnership with general practice to deliver comprehensive primary healthcare services.

In our work we collaborate with a number of key partner organisations to increase the value and quality of our work, including NACCHO, AIDA, IGPRN, and the Leaders in Indigenous Medical Education Network and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association.

Annual awards

Each year, the faculty offers a suite of awards:

- Standing Strong Together Award – established in 2007 to recognise collaborations between GPs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Growing Strong Award – established in 2017 to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander general practice registrars during the early stages of their GP career
- Student Bursary Award – provided to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander medical students who are currently studying at an Australian university to attend the RACGP annual conference



Dr Josie Guyer receives her Growing Strong Award from RACGP President Dr Bastian Seidel (2016–18) at GP17



RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health welcomes your participation in our activities and projects

How can you get involved?

- Represent the faculty at events and meetings
- Provide advice on policy and advocacy issues
- Review exam questions or become an examiner
- Co-design resources
- Partner with the faculty on projects and events

To find out more, please contact us

RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health

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Disclaimer

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and seas on which we work and live, and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.