



The Royal Australasian
College of Physicians

More to be done to Close The Gap

Media Release

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Ten years on from the first National Close The Gap Day, The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is calling for renewed action to close the health gap of Australia's first peoples.

The National Close the Gap campaign seeks to increase awareness of the gap in life expectancy and health outcomes between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.

RACP President Professor Nicholas Talley said although progress has been made over the last decade, further work and committed action is needed.

"From a medical point of view, we have seen increased access to medicines and health checks, as well as improvements in child health outcomes," explained Professor Talley.

"Unfortunately however, there has been little progress in closing the life expectancy gap of Australia's first peoples."

Professor Talley noted that despite some positive gains already made in areas like child and maternal health, RACP physicians continue to see disproportionate levels of disease among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

He added that RACP welcomed the Australian Government's Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan, announced in October, last year.

"We are pleased that the Implementation Plan identifies specific strategies to progress priority areas, and that it recognises the need for a national framework to drive improvements in access to specialised care. The RACP is committed to continuing to work with our partners in this area.

"We join with the Close the Gap campaign in calling for these strategies to be actioned, with a long-term approach and secure funding in place."

Ends

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About The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP): The RACP trains, educates and advocates on behalf of more than 15,000 physicians and 7,500 trainee physicians across Australia and New Zealand.

The College represents a broad range of medical specialties including general medicine, paediatrics and child health, cardiology, respiratory medicine, neurology, oncology, public health medicine, occupational and environmental medicine, palliative medicine, sexual health medicine, rehabilitation medicine, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine. Beyond the drive for medical excellence, the RACP is committed to developing health and social policies which bring vital improvements to the wellbeing of patients.

The College offers 60 training pathways. These lead to the award of one of seven qualifications that align with 45 specialist titles recognised by the Medical Board of Australia or allow for registration in nine vocational scopes with the Medical Council of New Zealand.