



The Royal Australasian  
College of Physicians

## **RACP: work still needed to close the gap**

Media Release

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As Australia recognises ten years since the inception of the Close the Gap campaign, The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is calling for more to be done to improve health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

RACP President Professor Nicholas Talley said although some progress has been made since 2006, more hard work lies ahead.

“Over the last decade, more than 220,000 Australians have signed the Close the Gap pledge and want to see real improvements” said Professor Talley. “We have also seen increased access to medicines and health checks, as well as improvements in child health outcomes.

“Sadly however, there has been little progress in closing the life expectancy gap of Australia’s first peoples.”

Chair of RACP’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Committee Dr Tamara Mackean said government investment was key.

“The role of Indigenous leadership and the engagement and centrality of the Aboriginal Community Controlled health sector are crucial in ensuring culturally respectful and effective health services. It is vital that there is sufficient investment and support in these areas,” explained Dr Mackean.

“The RACP echoes calls from fellow members of the Close the Gap Steering Committee in urging the Federal Government to ensure adequate funding to deliver the Implementation Plan for the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan.

“The Implementation Plan recognises the need for a national framework to improve access to specialist care. As the low use of specialist services is a contributing factor to the health gap, the RACP has committed its resources to working in partnership on this issue,” added Dr Mackean.

**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.