

**Australian Medical Association Limited**

ABN 37 008 426 793

42 Macquarie Street, Barton ACT 2600: PO Box 6090, Kingston ACT 2604  
 Telephone: (02) 6270 5400 Facsimile (02) 6270 5499  
 Website : <http://www.ama.com.au/>



**LAST CHANCE TO APPLY FOR AMA INDIGENOUS MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP**

*Applications close 31 January 2021*

Applications close soon for a scholarship that helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students balance work, study and family life.

The AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship provides \$10,000 a year to already enrolled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students for the remainder of their degree.

Over the past 27 years, the Scholarship has supported 30 Indigenous medical students, including Australia’s first Aboriginal surgeon, Professor Kelvin Kong.

The 2020 recipient, Lloyd Diggins, was able to use his scholarship to cut down on his working hours, which were restricting his study time outside of classes and his ability to work on country.

Mr Diggins, a Wongi man who grew up on Whadjuk and Wardandi Noongar countries in Western Australia, is a physiotherapist, but decided to retrain as a GP after seeing the needs of remote Aboriginal communities.

He has combined full-time study and rural clinical training with weekend shifts as a physio at hospitals in Perth.

Receiving the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship has allowed him to cut down on his work hours and increase his study time.

“Needing to work on both Saturdays and Sundays would have precluded me from being able to study medicine on country,” Mr Diggins said.

“My workload has also meant I haven’t been able to study outside of classes like the majority of other students. The scholarship has allowed me to work less frequently this year and given me the same opportunity to study as other students and this has significantly improved my learning.

“The scholarship has also allowed me to learn on country. The way I will think and work as a doctor has been changed by the Elders and local Aboriginal people I’ve been able to care for and learn from.

“I would encourage every Aboriginal person with an interest in healthcare to consider medicine. Unfortunately, Aboriginal inequality is a thriving industry and needs to be filled by people with a desire to work themselves out of a job - not by people with a vested interest in perpetuating inequality to protect their careers.

“It can be challenging for Aboriginal people to access the long pathway to becoming a doctor but scholarships like this provide opportunities to do so,” Mr Diggins said.

“One of the most inspiring things about being part of the medical profession is being able to watch new generations of doctors emerge, and one of the greatest honours of being the Federal AMA President is being able to present the AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship to the shining stars of those new generations,” AMA President, Dr Omar Khorshid, said.

“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are over-represented in our healthcare system—and, despite years of reports and reviews, the gap in life expectancy and health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians is still disgraceful.

“We know Indigenous patients do better if they’re confident their healthcare workers understand and empathise with them.

“With around 600 Indigenous doctors in the Australian workforce and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprising 3 per cent of the population, we need about 3000 more Indigenous doctors just to reach population parity.

“Much more needs to be done to grow the Indigenous medical workforce and provide the culturally appropriate care that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians need and deserve. The AMA Indigenous scholarship program is a tangible step towards reaching that goal.”

Applicants must be currently enrolled at an Australian medical school, have successfully completed their first year of medicine, and be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background.

Further information and the application form is available at: [www.ama.com.au/about/indigenous-medical-scholarship](http://www.ama.com.au/about/indigenous-medical-scholarship)

---

27 January 2021

CONTACT: Maria Hawthorne 0427 209 753  
[media@ama.com.au](mailto:media@ama.com.au)

Follow the AMA Media on Twitter: [http://twitter.com/ama\\_media](http://twitter.com/ama_media)

Follow the AMA President on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/amapresident>

Like the AMA on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AustralianMedicalAssociation>