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APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR 2020 AMA INDIGENOUS MEDICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Applications are now open for the 2020 AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship, a program that has supported Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to study medicine since 1994.

The successful applicant will receive \$10,000 each year for the duration of their course.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said that previous recipients have gone on to become prominent leaders in health and medicine, including Associate Professor Kelvin Kong, Australia’s first Aboriginal surgeon.

“Latest records show that there are fewer than 500 Indigenous doctors in the medical workforce, which is about 0.4 per cent of the workforce. To reach population parity of 3 per cent, the number should be closer to 3500,” Dr Bartone said.

“As at July 2019, it is estimated that 310 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students were enrolled in universities across Australia.

“We know that Indigenous people have a greater chance of improved health outcomes when they are treated by Indigenous doctors and health professionals. They are more likely to make and keep appointments when they are confident that they will be treated by someone who understands their culture, their language, and their unique circumstances.

“Closing the disgraceful gap in life expectancy and health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians requires real action from all levels of Government, the private and corporate sectors, and all segments of our community.

“This Scholarship is a tangible step towards addressing the shortage of Indigenous doctors.”

The 2019 recipient, Ms Nikki Kastellorizios, a second-year medical student in the Flinders University NT Medical Program in Darwin, said that winning the scholarship had changed her life.

“I have three boys, aged five, four, and two. This will help me balance my time, and the money of course will make a big difference,” Ms Kastellorizios said.

“Time is something very precious to every medical student, and it is also very precious to every parent.”

Applications close on 31 January 2020. 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 at <https://ama.com.au/indigenous-medical-scholarship-2020>.

The AMA Indigenous Medical Scholarship was established in 1994 with a contribution from the Commonwealth Government. The AMA is seeking further donations and sponsorships from individuals and corporations to continue this important contribution to Indigenous health.

To make a donation, please go to <https://indigenousscholarship.ama.com.au/donate>. For enquiries, contact indigenousscholarship@ama.com.au or (02) 6270 5400.

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