



Conference Sponsorship awarded to rural medical student.

As part of our commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rural medical students and trainees are nurtured and grown, the Rural Generalist Program South Australia (RGPSA) was proud to support a medical student from regional South Australia to attend the Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors' Congress (PRIDoC 2024) in Adelaide.

The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) hosted the congress, joining hundreds of doctors and allies from across the Pacific in sharing both medical and cultural knowledge, reflecting on their shared experiences, and reinvigorating their culture and spirituality.

PRIDoC 2024 featured keynote speakers, panel discussions and sessions on topics such as Language and Identity, Cultural Safety, Next Generation Healthcare, Mind and Body, and Climate-Conscious Healthcare. The theme of the Congress was Ngadliku Warra, Ngadluku Tapa Purruna, Ngadluku Purruna, meaning *Our Language, Our Culture, Our Health* in Kaurna language.

Doctor of Medicine and Surgery (MChD) student, Ms Lauren Whittington, was awarded a PRIDoC Student Sponsorship package funded by the RGPSA and enabling her to attend and present her research at the conference. We asked Lauren to share her thoughts and experience while attending the conference with us.

Lauren Whittington

Hi, my name is Lauren, and I am a final-year medical student at the University of Adelaide and a proud Arabana and Southern Arrernte woman. Originally from Cairns, I moved to Adelaide in 2020 to pursue my studies and have been fortunate to receive incredible opportunities and support along the way.

In 2024, I completed a rural year in Clare, South Australia, focusing on general practice. During this time, I had the privilege of working with Dr. Michael Nugent, participating in Aboriginal health outreach programs, and engaging in research to highlight areas for improvement in healthcare for our communities.



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The Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors' Congress (PRIDoC), held on Kaurna Country, was a profoundly inspiring experience.



Thanks to support from the Rural Generalist Program South Australia (RGPSA), I had the opportunity to present my research on Type 2 Diabetes and its impact on Aboriginal communities—a deeply personal and important topic.

The conference brought together First Nations doctors and students from across the Pacific, creating a space that was educational, cultural, and empowering.

One of the most impactful aspects of PRIDoC was its emphasis on connection and collaboration. While we recognise the significant health challenges facing our communities, such as chronic disease, limited healthcare access, and systemic inequities, the conference instilled a sense of hope and shared purpose.

It demonstrated that by working together, we can address these challenges while building fulfilling professional careers.

Hearing from First Nations leaders making a difference globally was incredibly inspiring and reaffirmed my commitment to providing culturally safe, community-centred care.

“PRIDoC left me feeling deeply connected to my culture, my peers, and the mission of improving health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to attend and look forward to being part of future PRIDoC conferences.”



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