



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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A U S T R A L I A

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Partnership to help boost Indigenous doctors

The University of Notre Dame Australia is proud to partner with St John of God Health Care to help increase the number of Indigenous doctors working in Australia's healthcare system.

Under the partnership, St John of God has provided \$160,000 in scholarship funding that will support four of the University's Indigenous medical students over the four years of their postgraduate degree program.

The funding equates to \$10,000 per student per year, or \$40,000 per student over the full four-years.

Head of Notre Dame's School of Medicine, Professor Gervase Chaney, said the University was proud to partner with an organisation like St John of God Health Care, which had a determination to improve Aboriginal representation in the health system.

"Currently only about 0.5 per cent of Australia's registered doctors are Indigenous, which equates to only about 500 across the country," Professor Chaney said. "To reach population parity, the figure needs to grow to about 3,500, or seven times the current number.

"The tragedy of such low representation is that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will never have had the pleasure of being treated by a doctor who shares and truly understands their social and cultural background.

"That is why this partnership with St John of God Health Care is so important to help ensure our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are as well supported as possible and are given every chance of success."

Past recipient Rosie said the funding allowed her to pay for her Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency registration, get a new passport and reunite with her brothers who live in the Eastern States.

"I was also able to pay for my brothers to attend my graduation ball when they returned at the end of the year," Rosie said.

"This was a monumental occasion for our entire family as the first doctor, and the first woman to attend university on both sides of my family.

"I continue to endeavour to improve Aboriginal health by learning more about my own as well as other mobs, and learning to include important cultural customs, traditions and beliefs at the centre of care," she

said.

“It has been an absolute privilege to study medicine, and I feel proud to be graduating not just for myself but my community.”

St John of God Subiaco Hospital Chief Executive Officer, Tina Chinery, said it was the second time the organisation had awarded scholarships to Notre Dame’s students, with previous recipients completing their studies last year.

“It is extremely satisfying to know that three of the four past recipients have now gone on to qualify as doctors, with the fourth still enrolled, and are now working in Western Australia’s health system where they will be able to do their part to improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous Australians, as well as the broader community,” Ms Chinery said.

“Graduating as a doctor, regardless of your background, is a huge achievement and requires an enormous amount of dedication and commitment. That is why the funding we provide is so important because it helps to take some of the pressure off these students by helping them to make ends meet over the four years of their study journey with Notre Dame.”

In addition to the financial support, the scholarship recipients will have opportunities to undertake part of their training at St John of God Subiaco Hospital, as well as being offered employment opportunities when they complete their studies.

Notre Dame currently has almost 400 students enrolled in its Fremantle medical program, of which 17 are Indigenous. To date, 12 Aboriginal people have gone on to become doctors after graduating from the program.

For more information about Notre Dame’s medical school, [click here](#).

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