

GROWING INDIGENOUS GRADUATES

Join us and advance the next generation
of exceptional Indigenous healthcare leaders





Acknowledgment of Country

Monash University's Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences acknowledges the many lands our teaching and clinical training sites are on. We pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of these lands and their ancestors past and present.

Cover image: We acknowledge Mandy Nicholson for the use of her work Wurundjeri Healing (2012).

OUR CHALLENGE

Quality healthcare is the foundation of thriving communities. When our people are physically and mentally well, they're more likely to flourish in all aspects of life, such as education, career, relationships, parenting, and more.

Healthcare is a human right that every community member is entitled to. However, when we zero in on healthcare in Australia, we see clear health inequality for Indigenous communities.

A major factor fuelling this health inequality looms large: we simply don't have enough Indigenous people working in the healthcare sector. With such low Indigenous representation in the sector, health initiatives are rarely tailored to the needs of Indigenous communities, and Indigenous people seldom feel a sense of cultural safety when accessing health services, which can deter them from using these services at all.

If we want to see more Indigenous leaders in the health sector, we need to start by supporting more Indigenous people to enter the sector in the first place.

To make this possible, we need to overcome the barriers preventing many Indigenous young people from entering and completing medical degrees. Indigenous students can come up against many roadblocks to succeeding at their studies, such as socioeconomic disadvantage, being first in their family to attend university, a lack of mentors and role models, and living in a regional area far away from campus. Beyond these longstanding issues, the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted Indigenous students, and many have suffered financial hardship and are in unstable housing.

We need to take action now to break down these barriers. It's time to change the story.

**WE NEED TO BREAK DOWN THE
BARRIERS STOPPING INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE FROM ENTERING THE
HEALTHCARE SECTOR**



THE GROWING INDIGENOUS GRADUATES PROGRAM

At Monash, we have over 50 years of history as a trailblazer for advancing Indigenous education and engagement in Australia.

It began with us opening the first dedicated Indigenous centre at an Australian university in 1964. Since then, we've pioneered Indigenous programs, pathways, and engagement – ultimately growing enrolment and retention rates for Indigenous students at Monash.

One of our programs aimed specifically at increasing the number of Indigenous students entering the medical sector is **Growing Indigenous Graduates**. Launched in 2017, this program has been made possible by the joint contribution of Monash and passionate philanthropic partners.

The program provides holistic wrap-around support to Indigenous medical students at three key stages of their journey:

- **Entering the degree:** Supporting students with the enrolment process and orientation
- **During the degree:** Helping students to address barriers to succeeding and completing their degree
- **Transitioning into the workforce:** Helping students to make the leap from university into the healthcare sector

Our ultimate goal? To advance the next generation of exceptional Indigenous healthcare leaders and prepare them to walk confidently in multiple worlds: in Indigenous communities and within their chosen healthcare profession.



THE SUPPORT JOURNEY

ENTERING THE DEGREE



- **Indigenous access interview**
When an Indigenous person applies to study with the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash, our team engages with them to assess their needs for success.
- **Relocation costs**
We provide financial assistance to students from rural and remote areas to ensure they can study at Monash.
- **Accommodation costs**
We offer scholarships to students in need of accommodation support.
- **Orientation**
We bring first-year Indigenous students together at the Clayton and Peninsula campuses for an orientation to Indigenous programs.

DURING THE DEGREE



- **Kirrip (Woiwurrung for friend)**
Every first-year student is mentored by a senior Kirrip: an Indigenous student in the second year of their degree or above.
- **Annual Indigenous Student Symposium**
Led by Indigenous students, the symposium provides opportunities for Indigenous students to meet, develop skills, and share knowledge.
- **Study costs**
We cover study-related costs as needed, such as books, immunisations, uniforms, and equipment.
- **Tutoring**
Complimenting Monash's Indigenous tutor program, we provide specialist tutors as needed to assist with exam preparation and clinical skills.
- **Indigenous lounges**
We provide culturally appropriate spaces at our Clayton and Peninsula campuses where students can connect, reflect, and study.

TRANSITIONING INTO THE WORKFORCE

- **Indigenous Health Graduate Research Circle**
This group meets monthly and provides support for those conducting a PhD in Indigenous health research.
- **Cadetships**
We link students to Indigenous cadetships at leading healthcare centres in Victoria, such as Monash Health, the Royal Women's Hospital, St Vincent's Hospital, and Eastern Health.
- **Indigenous professional networks**
We support students to develop their Indigenous health professional networks nationally and internationally through attending events such as the Australian Indigenous Doctors Association Conference and the Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors Congress.

WE'RE SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS MEDICAL STUDENTS EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

OUR IMPACT ON STUDENTS & COMMUNITIES

Despite only starting in 2017, our Growing Indigenous Graduates program has already made an impact. And it's recognised as one of the most successful Indigenous programs both within Monash and beyond.

In a short time, we've seen:

- **Higher rates of enrolment:**

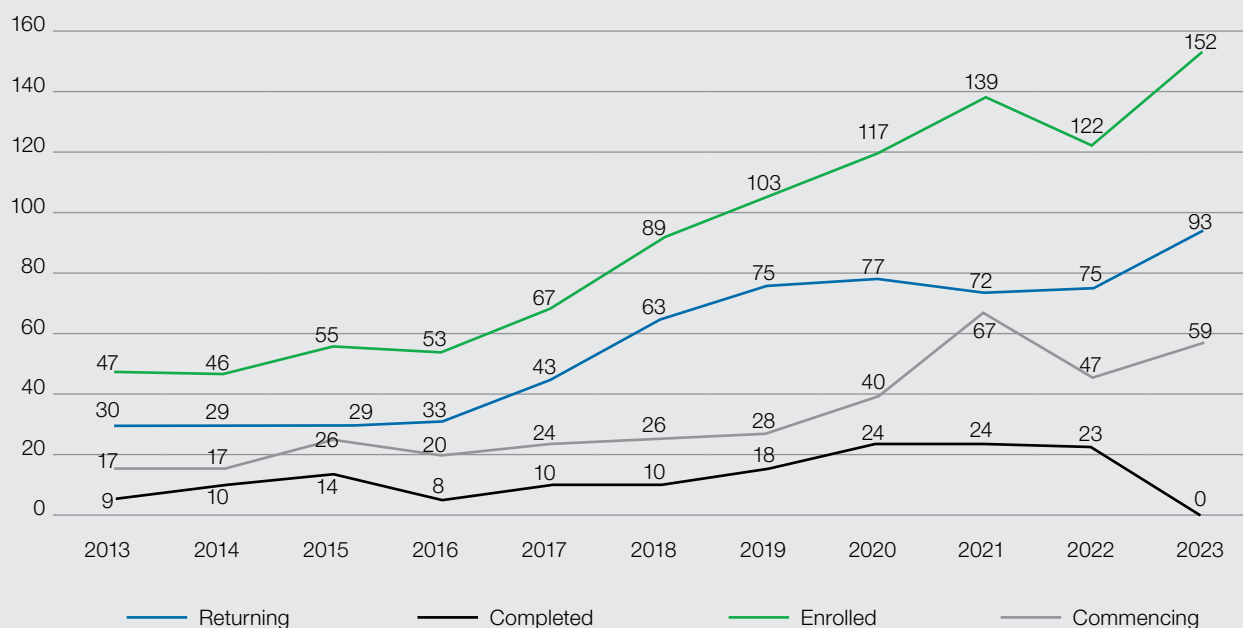
We've had strong growth in Indigenous student enrolments since the program started. In the year before the program started we had 53 enrolments, which grew to 139 students by the end of 2021.

- **Higher rates of degree completion:**

More importantly, as enrolments are trickling through, we're starting to see a corresponding growth in Indigenous completions (health science degrees take 3–5 years to complete). In the year before the program started we had 8 completions, which grew to 24 students by the end of 2021.

89% OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS STUDYING MEDICINE AT MONASH ARE GRADUATING – DOUBLE THE AUSTRALIAN TERTIARY AVERAGE.

Figure: Indigenous student numbers in Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences at Monash



A RANGE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS

In 2022, our students were involved in a wide array of degrees:

Bachelor degrees

Bachelor of Health Science
 Bachelor of Medical Science and Doctor of Medicine
 Bachelor of Nursing
 Bachelor of Nutrition Science
 Bachelor of Paramedicine
 Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)
 Bachelor of Nursing and Midwifery
 Bachelor of Occupational Therapy
 Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Honours)
 Bachelor of Radiography and Medical Imaging

Graduate Certificate

Graduate Certificate in Applied Mental Health
 Undergraduate Certificate in Mental Health (Honours)

Graduate diplomas

Graduate Diploma in Psychology
 Graduate Diploma in Psychology Advanced
 Graduate Diploma in Reproductive Science

Master degrees

Master of Advanced Clinical Nursing
 Master of Health Administration
 Master of Nursing Practice
 Master of Specialist Paramedic Practice
 Master of Wound Care
 Master of Advanced Paediatric Physio
 Master of Mental Health Science
 Master of Public Health

PhD degrees

PhD in Clinical Psychology

In the long-term, these rising numbers will translate into tangible differences in the lives of Indigenous medical students and communities.

Receiving holistic wrap-around support at university can transform the life journey of a young Indigenous person. This crucial helping hand at university means that their opportunities will continue to multiply exponentially throughout their lives, allowing them to contribute more significantly to their communities later on.

And the benefits flow on beyond the individual. Possessing a degree improves lifelong social circumstances for the individual's family, graduates become role models for other Indigenous people, and more Indigenous graduates in the medical workforce increases cultural safety – and ultimately accessibility – for Indigenous peoples.



OUR STUDENTS MAKING THEIR MARK

DAYNA

“The Growing Indigenous Graduates program has exposed me to amazing opportunities and supports that have helped immensely with both my studies and my connections with culture and people!” – Dayna

Dayna is a proud Wamba Wamba, Yorta Yorta and Mutthi Mutthi woman from Swan Hill, Victoria. Passionate about helping people to live well, she embarked on a Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Honours) at the Monash Peninsula Campus.

The Growing Indigenous Graduates team supported Dayna with an accommodation scholarship, making her transition from country Victoria so much smoother. She was also given access to mentors and academic resources to aid her studies.

The team's investment in Dayna allowed her to give back by becoming the Indigenous Officer for Monash University Student Union (MONSU) Peninsula. She's helped foster a safe and cohesive community among Indigenous students across Monash campuses,

provided education about Indigenous culture for non-Indigenous staff and students, and even organised a 5K walk for NAIDOC week.

Dayna is now in her final year and looking forward to joining the workforce.



OUR TEAM

The staff leading our Growing Indigenous Graduates program are passionate about engaging with Indigenous students and supporting them to become tomorrow's healthcare leaders.

*Top. L-R: Professor Karen Adams, Petah Atkinson, Rosemary Gilby.
Bottom. L-R: Colleen Kelly, Doris Paton, Peggy Swindle.*



SAM & BEAU

“No matter the day, time, or problem, there was always someone you could call or email to put your mind at ease and help guide you.” – Beau

“Growing up in a small community in western Queensland, I witnessed the effects of health inequity faced by rural and Indigenous Australians. This inspired me to help close this gap through studying to be a doctor” – Sam

Both Sam and Beau had always had the drive to make a difference to people's lives from a young age. They decided to embark on medical degrees at Monash, and were supported by the Growing Indigenous Graduates program.

Sam came from a small community in western Queensland and received a scholarship for accommodation and relocation costs, vital for his access to university.

And Beau received a scholarship to attend the Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors Congress, which enabled him to build networks with Indigenous doctors internationally. On his return, he met with medical educators at Monash to discuss improvements to the Indigenous health curriculum.

With this support, Sam and Beau successfully graduated and continued their medical training by becoming the first Indigenous interns at St Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne. Following their internships, they will be the hospital's first Indigenous doctors. Sam hopes to be a psychiatrist, and Beau hopes to specialise in intensive care.



WE HAVE THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF WORKING WITH STUDENTS FROM THEIR FIRST STEPS OF PLANNING TO STUDY AT MONASH UNIVERSITY TO THEIR GRADUATION. OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS, WE'VE BEEN PROUD TO WITNESS OVER ONE HUNDRED ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS GRADUATE AND JOIN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR.

– THE GROWING INDIGENOUS GRADUATES TEAM

JOIN US: HOW PHILANTHROPY CAN ACCELERATE OUR IMPACT

The success of the Growing Indigenous Graduates program to date has been due to the visionary partnership between Monash and generous philanthropists like yourself.

However, although the growing number of Indigenous students studying medicine at Monash is a fantastic result, it does mean we need to scale up our resources to support the growing demand. Now that we've proven the program's effectiveness at growing enrolment for Indigenous students, we need to ensure that we can keep supporting the increasing cohorts all the way through to graduation and employment.

We need philanthropic partners who share our vision and values. Who believe in supporting our nation's first peoples and removing the barriers to their success so they can flourish. Who are willing to help us with pioneering work to support Indigenous communities in new ways.

Monash has committed to continuing the program for at least another five years and to funding the infrastructure and staff needed. Philanthropic funding will allow us to provide the essential supports that our Indigenous students need to thrive during their time with us, such as funding for students to:

- relocate and pay for accommodation near the university
- pay for basic study costs (e.g. textbooks, equipment, uniforms)
- attend Indigenous health professional networking events
- receive specialist mentoring and tutoring, especially for exams.

We also want to include a vital new element in the program: **postdoctoral scholarships** for our growing number of Indigenous PhD researchers. We know that the number of Indigenous people participating in postgraduate education is lagging across the nation. Australia needs a stronger pipeline of Indigenous medical researchers to increase Indigenous-led health research. Postdoctoral scholarships would be a much-needed enhancement to the program to allow Indigenous graduates to succeed and ultimately create innovative healthcare solutions that are relevant for Indigenous peoples.

By supporting the Growing Indigenous Graduates program, you would help more Indigenous people to enter and succeed in medical careers, and to contribute to medical research that informs change for Indigenous communities.

We invite you to come on this journey with us to deliver inclusive education that changes lives.

Working together, we can **Change It. For Future Generations.**



**YOU CAN ADVANCE THE NEXT
GENERATION OF EXCEPTIONAL
INDIGENOUS HEALTHCARE LEADERS**

CONTACT US

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