



## **Pathways to Study Medicine for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People at the University of Newcastle.**

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### **Abstract**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Australians have much low levels of education than other Australians, also much high rates of chronic disease, causing much shorter life expectancy. Research suggest that part of the reason for poor health in ATSI people is feeling they are not treated culturally appropriately or with understanding, resulting in non-attendance to clinics.

Currently many Universities in Australia do not provide any ATSI cultural and health training for Medical or Allied Health students, which leaves their graduates unprepared to work in ATSI health. The University of Newcastle (UoN) recognise the benefits of providing ATSI cultural and health awareness training to their students. Although some universities have changed curriculum for medical degrees, most Allied Health (podiatry, physiotherapy etc.) degrees have not changed curriculum.

UoN have been setting example in ATSI culture and health in its medical curriculum, and is now expanding this to include many of its Allied Health degrees. This includes an introduction to ATSI culture, social determinates of ATSI health, ATSI health statistics, culturally appropriate ATSI health promotion, and working clinically with ATSI people. UoN is planning to push state and federal governments to introduce legislation that will require all Universities to change curriculum, which will produce culturally competent health professionals for future generations.