

7 July 2024

Celebrating all that is Blak NAIDOC Week: 7-14 July 2024



**KEEP THE FIRE
BURNING!
BLAK, LOUD
AND PROUD**
7-14 JULY 2024

The Rural Doctors Association Australia (RDAA) is encouraging members to show their support and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, not only during NAIDOC week, but through their medical practice all year round.



Dr RT Lewandowski, RDAA President said that it was exciting to see the depth of interest and engagement in First Nations culture throughout the rural doctor community.

“We have some great Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in the rural health space, and we have learned much from them,” Dr Lewandowski said.

“The Aboriginal Health curriculums taught to medical students and junior doctors today were largely developed through partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rural doctors, who led the way in recognising the integral role culture plays in health.

“This year’s NAIDOC theme, **Keep The Fire Burning – Blak Loud and Proud**, honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture, and celebrates a future where First Nations people feel recognised and respected.

“At RDAA we are supporting our members to learn more about Indigenous culture and how our patients can benefit from us showing our respect, support and interest in this oldest continuous living culture.”

In partnership with the Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), RDAA hosts the annual conference, Rural Medicine Australia (RMA24), which is the largest gathering of rural doctors in the country.

In the spirit of reconciliation RDAA and ACRRM commission a custom artwork from a local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander artist which is integrated into the RMA branding to promote cultural awareness and educate conference delegates about the Country on which they gather and the Traditional Owners who have been caring for Country for tens of thousands of years.

This year’s artwork was created by Trent Bundirrik Lee, a proud Larrakia man, and represents the rainbow serpent, bringing both the ancestral knowledge and the scientific knowledge together.

“There will be a fabulous Cultural Performance along with a special Welcome to Country at our opening event, and for the



first time a full-day pre-conference Cultural Safety course presented by the Australian Indigenous Doctor's Association (AIDA), which will help participants to extend their knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, and explore how attitudes and values can influence perceptions, assumptions and behaviours in a doctor's practise," Dr Lewandowski said.

"This is all in addition to many clinical, research and education sessions aimed at improving the care we provide to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait patients.

"RDAA also offers discounted registration to AIDA's online Introduction to Cultural Awareness course, to help members develop a greater understanding of Indigenous health perspectives, to inspire change their own clinical practice and become an agent for change for others.

"We encourage all our members and friends in rural communities to attend a NAIDOC event this week, keeping the fire of Reconciliation burning."

A high resolution photo of Dr RT Lewandowski is [available here](#).

Available for interview: RDAA President, Dr RT Lewandowski
RDAA CEO, Peta Rutherford
State specific contacts also available

Media contacts: Ineke Kuiper on 0408 669 638
Patrick Daley on 0408 004 890

