



RACMA

Transforming
Health Leadership

RACMA Position Statement

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Australasian Health Systems: The Impact of Medical Leadership

Vision

Doctors have a professional and ethical obligation to deliver medical care that is patient-centred, free from bias and addresses the needs of the communities that we serve.

RACMA envisions a healthcare system where diversity drives innovation, equity ensures fairness, and inclusion builds trust—delivering safe, high-quality medical care for all patients and communities.

RACMA acknowledges the pivotal role of health systems in shaping and advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). Strengthening DEI requires a unified framework, clear legislative direction, and comprehensive accountability structures to ensure consistent application across jurisdictions. By identifying and addressing systemic gaps that lead to unequal representation, RACMA fosters equity, integrity, and excellence in healthcare. By fostering collaboration, driving policy innovation, and championing inclusive medical leadership, RACMA is committed to transforming healthcare systems into effective, equitable, and trust-based environments. These efforts not only support health professionals and the diverse communities they serve but also lead to improved patient outcomes, ensuring better access, safety, and overall quality of care.

Intersectionality is fundamental to this approach, system levers must integrate gender equity, LGBTIQ+ rights, First Nations truths, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) representation, disability inclusion, ethnic acknowledgement, neurodiversity presence, racial equity and the empowerment of all diverse groups. By addressing these elements holistically systemic health inequities can be tackled in an interconnected way leading to meaningful change.

By fostering integration and connection, medical leadership can eliminate gaps in care, build an adaptive and diverse workforce, and drive sustainable improvements that strengthen DEI. Through collaborative, forward-thinking leadership medical leaders enable transformation ensuring healthcare systems are equipped to deliver high-quality care across diverse populations. Medical leadership plays a pivotal role in embedding DEI into clinical governance, workforce sustainability, systems infrastructure, ethical decision making, innovation, and policy development, ensuring that healthcare systems become more equitable, adaptive, and effective.

RACMA asserts that:



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- Diversity fuels innovation, empowering leaders to drive transformative healthcare solutions.
- Equity ensures fairness, creating systems where all individuals receive the care they deserve.
- Inclusion strengthens communities, fostering collaboration and culturally responsive care.

This position statement serves as a call to action, empowering RACMA members to:

- Drive systems-wide engagement,
- Implement practical solutions across jurisdictions, and
- Advocate and lead DEI to improve health outcomes, enhance workforce sustainability, and strengthen healthcare integrity.

Guided by innovation and inclusive leadership, RACMA supports thought leadership initiatives that redefine healthcare delivery—promoting equitable access, pioneering medical advancements, and transforming health systems to better serve the diverse communities in which we live, work, and thrive.

Building Stronger Healthcare Systems Through DEI Leadership

Inclusive leadership is a facilitator for transformation, driving excellence, equity, and innovation in healthcare systems. By prioritising DEI, healthcare leaders cultivate adaptable teams, sustainable solutions, and lasting impact across communities.

1. Unlocking innovation through strong, diverse teams

Healthcare thrives when medical leaders embrace diversity as a strategic advantage—enhancing problem-solving, research, and patient care.

- Diverse perspectives strengthen decision-making, leading to more inclusive policies, staff collaboration, and patient engagement strategies.
- Collaborative, multidisciplinary leadership drives groundbreaking advancements, ensuring healthcare evolves to meet diverse needs.
- Future-focused leadership fosters adaptability, ensuring healthcare systems remain responsive and dynamic in a changing world.

2. Deliberately cultivating a culture of growth

Leadership grounded in inclusion creates collaborative, engaged teams that sustain excellence in patient care.

- Psychological safety and representation are essential for fostering an inclusive healthcare environment where professionals feel valued, heard, and supported. By creating a diverse workplace that empowers healthcare professionals to contribute

ideas, take initiative, and lead with confidence, leadership can strengthen healthcare systems.



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- Mentorship and leadership development are essential for fostering and nurturing a diverse healthcare workforce. When diverse talent is recognised, supported, and nurtured organisations create stronger leadership pipelines.
- A workplace grounded in equity and belonging contributes to increased retention, strengthens morale, and enhances healthcare workforce sustainability.

3. Strengthening systems through strategic leadership

Equity-centred policies optimize healthcare delivery, reducing inefficiencies to drive systems-wide improvements that enhance efficiency, accessibility, and long-term impact.

- Equitable policies streamline healthcare delivery, ensuring all patients receive timely, high-quality care while improving health outcomes and system efficiency.
- A diverse workforce fuels innovation, strengthens cultural competency, and improves patient-centred care, improving health system outcomes and reinforcing system sustainability.
- Inclusive governance and strategic investment that actively includes DEI within healthcare empowers responsive systems to reduce disparities, strengthen trust and engagement, and focus on long term success.

4. Elevating Patient Trust & Community Engagement

Leadership is most effective when healthcare professionals' partner with patients, ensuring they feel seen, valued, and heard. This collaborative approach strengthens trust, communication and engagement leading to improved health outcomes and stronger provider-patient relationships.

- Accessible healthcare improves population health, strengthens patient confidence, ensuring trust is built with the communities served.
- Culturally responsive care when combined with innovative solutions can reach underserved communities, bridging gaps in healthcare access.
- Representation in leadership fosters connection, ensuring healthcare decisions reflect diverse needs.
- Good leadership is essential to ensuring positive gains in equity of access and outcomes by facilitating dialogue between underserved and marginalised communities who often have little in common except the experience of discrimination

5. Embedding DEI Through Education and Training: Unlocking Inclusive Leadership in Healthcare



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Healthcare leadership is strongest when diversity, equity, and inclusion are embedded as core competencies—not just values. RACMA's education programs equip medical leaders to harness DEI as a strategic advantage, driving cultural safety, ethical governance, innovation and equitable care.

- Curriculum of education and training programs offered to members embeds cultural safety, inclusive governance, and equity levers—strengthening decision-making and reducing harm across systems.
- Advocacy for First Nations health and reconciliation, including strategies to address equity in the workforce through selection, support and retention, fosters culturally safe leadership and deeper engagement with Indigenous communities.
- Leadership development champions ethical, diverse, and inclusive practice—enhancing collaboration and patient-centred care.
- Lifelong learning cultivates reflection, allyship, and adaptability—ensuring leaders remain responsive to evolving community needs.

By educating members and candidates in DEI principles, RACMA unlocks the potential for transformative leadership that reflects and respects the diverse populations healthcare serves.

The Leadership Imperative: RACMA's Role

Inclusive healthcare leadership is more than an ethical priority, it is a strategic imperative that builds strong teams, sustainable systems, and transformative health outcomes. By championing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, healthcare leaders pave the way for innovation and excellence, ensuring lasting impact across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand health systems.

Medical leaders play a pivotal role in shaping health systems that are equitable, adaptive, and responsive to the needs of diverse populations. Through strategic governance, workforce development, and systemic advocacy, medical leaders are positioned to:

- Commit to DEI in Medical Leadership - Ensure DEI is not an optional priority, but recognise it is essential for fair, effective, and adaptable healthcare systems. By prioritizing inclusive leadership, RACMA strengthens the ability of medical professionals to address systemic barriers, foster equity in care delivery, and advocate for meaningful change.
- Unify fragmented DEI efforts - Despite existing initiatives supporting gender equity, indigenous rights, CALD representation, disability inclusion, ethnic acknowledgement,

neurodiversity recognition, racial justice, and responsibilities to diverse populations, no unified framework exists for DEI implementation across healthcare jurisdictions. RACMA seeks to bridge these gaps, ensuring cohesive, intersectional strategies that drive long-term adaptive reform.



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- Driving Systemic Change Through Leadership - Medical leadership plays a vital role in ensuring DEI is embedded within clinical governance and workforce development. RACMA supports leaders in fostering inclusivity; integrating equity-driven policies; implementing governance structures that uphold equity, accessibility, and diversity; and fostering inclusive career pathways, supporting mentorship, and professional growth for underrepresented healthcare professionals
- Advancing DEI Across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand – RACMA members are active across Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and internationally, we acknowledge and recognise that regional healthcare needs vary, however, DEI remains a shared priority. We are committed to tailoring DEI strategies that reflect local cultural values, healthcare challenges, and policy landscapes, ensuring solutions are both relevant and impactful. Medical leadership can spearhead and champion policy and systems reform, advocating for inclusive healthcare policies, ensuring equitable access across jurisdictions.
- Leverage Thought Leadership for Action – Medical leadership can take DEI beyond theory to transform DEI insights into initiatives and programmes for healthcare systems by applying strategic, measurable improvements with methodical implementation to integrate DEI principles into leadership development, clinical practice, and policy reform. Leaders can spearhead inclusive governance models that embed equity-driven decision-making across healthcare leadership structures. Prioritise cross-sector collaboration between healthcare professionals, policymakers, and communities to create inclusive solutions tailored to diverse populations.
- Measure and Report Progress – Medical leadership has the responsibility to establish accountability structures that embed equitable policies into governance, leadership, access, workforce diversity and health outcomes. Proactive, data-driven audits and surveys serve as tools for progress, enabling transparent reporting and measurable success. Transparent reporting facilitates institutional accountability, allowing organisations to set bold, sustainable goals that drive systemic change. By integrating DEI benchmarks into performance reviews, funding decisions, and policy development leaders can create long-term impact. Engaging communities in evaluation fosters trust, inclusion, and meaningful transformation ensuring healthcare reforms align with lived experiences and community strengths.
- Inclusive leadership is a health leadership imperative—and RACMA is committed to advancing equity across all levels of medical leadership. Members will be actively supported and encouraged to engage in education that equips them with the knowledge and tools to apply equity levers across clinical practice, organisational strategy, leadership disciplines, and system-wide reform. RACMA's education offerings will be grounded in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles, enabling

leaders to act with cultural intelligence, accountability, and purpose. Programs will prepare members to advocate for gender equity, Indigenous rights, CALD representation, disability inclusion, ethnic acknowledgement, neurodiversity, and racial justice. This is education that fuels advocacy—cultivating authentic leadership, lifelong learning, and inclusive mindsets that build trust, empower teams, and elevate patient voices across diverse populations in Australia



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