

Dr Amy Searle – Poche Indigenous Health Leadership Program 2024

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Dear Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health,

I am a proud Kamilaroi woman and I am writing to apply for the Melbourne Poche Indigenous Health Leadership Program, in the hope that I can use this program to accelerate my leadership potential as I move towards graduating from Medical School and transitioning into the hospital system. This program offers a unique opportunity to learn about health leadership with a Community lens and will provide essential learnings to influence the future Community-needs based projects I hope to bring to fruition as a clinician.

For as long as I can remember, I have taken on leadership roles. From Student Council in primary and secondary school, to Student President of the Baker Institute during my PhD, and more recently the University of Melbourne Medical Student Society's First Nations Officer and the University of Melbourne Representative on Australian Indigenous Doctors Association Student Council. In the latter two, I have passionately and proudly represented the University of Melbourne First Nations medical students and advocated for their needs, while working towards ensuring the student sphere of the Melbourne Medical School is culturally safe.

Over the past two years, I have also taken on the role of First Nations Liaison Office for the University of Melbourne MD Student Conference (MDSC), as historically, this conference has developed sessions which are inappropriate and not reflective of local Community values. This role, mentored by the Wurru Wurru Health Unit, involves working closely with the conference organisers to advise them on appropriate themes, language and ensuring a First Nations voice is present within all relevant sessions.

Indirectly, nevertheless importantly, my time as the MDSC First Nations Liaison Officer allowed me to contribute towards improving Indigenous health outcomes by ensuring the next generation of doctors have exposure to local health issues, listened and learned directly from Community members and

Elders, and understand the importance of self-determined, Community-led approaches towards addressing health disparities.

As a medical student, ethical practice is second nature. Not only is it a foundation of our training and a core value of our profession, but as a First Nations health professional, guiding ethical principles are always front of mind considering we typically do not receive equitable care within the hospital system. These health and care disparities, which are so deeply engrained in the western healthcare system, are what drives my aspiration to use the power that seemingly comes with being a clinician, to benefit Community.

Although I am highly motivated to develop my leadership skills and hope to take on further leadership and/or program development roles as a clinician, I am unsure what this next chapter will look like. There are many unaccounted variables such as which specialty I will eventually train in, where I will be working and what Communities I will be serving. However, what I do know is that I will be constantly learning from Community and Elders, learning about what health concerns they wish to address, and working collaboratively to achieve an improvement in health outcomes.

Finally, I would like to provide reassurance that, although I am a student, I am by no means shy to speak up and I look forward to contributing to robust discussions regarding health, leadership, education and even the age-old debate of the which sport is the 'real football' (without a doubt AFL), as well as everything in between.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my application and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Dr Amy Searle