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## **20 YEARS OF LESSONS-LEARNT TO BUILD A MEDICAL TRAINING ORGANISATION OF EXCELLENCE**

**NT Chief Minister Natasha Fyles acknowledged NTGPE's cultural education program as 'best practice in Australia' at a celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> and final year of the Territory's sole GP training body.**

On Saturday night people from all corners of the Northern Territory celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> and final year of NTGPE. GP training in Australia will change on 1 February 2023. NTGPE along with other national training organisations will hand over the baton of GP training to the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) and Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM) under a new College-led GP training model.

NTGPE's celebration brought together Chief Minister Fyles, the Leader of the Opposition, Lia Finocchiaro MLA, Traditional owners, Elders, clinic staff from communities across the NT, as well as former and current GP registrars and GP supervisors in an opportunity to recognise and highlight the key achievements of NTGPE over the past 20 years.

NTGPE Chief Executive Officer Dr Richard Zanner said, "This was a once in twenty-year event as NTGPE celebrated its 20th year anniversary; it was a once in a century event as we reunited following a pandemic and the associated disconnection from each other and community; it was also a once in a lifetime event as NTGPE transitions its work to the Colleges and ceases its operations next year. Physical presence is so important in the NT where we've long come to appreciate there is no substitute for a warm 'G'day'."

"On the night we looked back, we reflected on where we've come from and what we've achieved. Secondly we looked forward, BEYOND at what is to come," said Dr Zanner.

"We have worked with Colleges, healthcare providers, medical and cultural educators, and supervisors to offer a highly-successful training program that has been culturally competent and varied in its training opportunities.

In 2002 we started with just 18 training posts, 13 GP supervisors and 15 GP registrars in training. Today we have 145 accredited training posts, 236 accredited GP supervisors and 100 GP registrars currently in training across the NT. Over the past 20 years, NTGPE has supported



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hundreds of GP registrars choosing to train on the Australian General Practice Training program (AGPT) on their pathway to fellowship," said Dr Zanner.

"When an organisation lives for 20 years in such a unique setting, there is a wealth of knowledge that is created through the lessons that are learnt."

"We've listened to our registrars and learnt from our supervisors, as well as Aboriginal Elders and Health Care Workers in community – what works and what doesn't work. What are the challenges and what are the opportunities? It's taken no less than 20 years of learning for us to really understand how to do this work in Northern Territory communities... and do it well."

Dr Zanner said the anniversary event allowed NTGPE to present BEYOND, a key program NTGPE has developed to ensure a successful transition to the Colleges, and to look forward to GP training in the NT into the future.

"BEYOND is about encouraging our doctors, our staff, our registrar, supervisors, practice managers to embrace the College-led model of training," he said.

"It's a different Australia now than it was 20 years ago when we started training in remote communities. And it will be different again in the next two decades."

In speaking about the future, Dr Zanner said, "In the next twenty years, I'd like to see less doctors only for the fact that they are no longer needed to the extent that we have robust communities with purpose, that foster resilient and sustainable lives and livelihoods. This is true to the Aboriginal precepts which put it in far better words: Strong Community, means Strong Individuals."

"We must be focused on using the past to look forward and create a strong future," he said.

NTGPE Chair Associate Professor Emma Kennedy said, "the NTGPE 20-year anniversary was a celebration of all the big and small things we've done for urban, rural and remote health in the Northern Territory over the past 20 years.

"We've been instrumental in making inroads into provision of medical training for communities that have not had regular services. We've improved the cultural and clinical effectiveness of hundreds of GPs, and most importantly, we've made this rugged and challenging territory appealing to a whole generation of doctors who may never have even considered it."

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