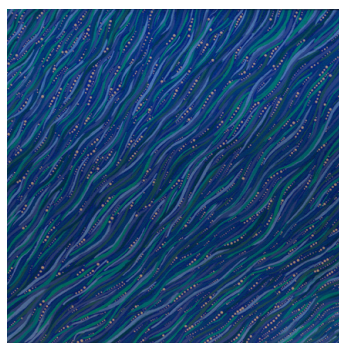


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Artwork:
Tidal Changes by Melanie Robinson
This artwork is featured under
Populations group

Communiqué



Welcome

Kaya, and happy NAIDOC! Reflecting on the NAIDOC Week 2026 theme of 50 Years of Deadly provides a great opportunity to celebrate the meaningful work and outcomes which have been achieved by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector. July marks the implementation of the *Public Sector (Closing the Gap) Legislation Amendment Act 2025* in the ACT, making the ACT the first state or territory to legislate their requirements towards the National Closing the Gap Agreement. This level of reform represents an opportunity for genuine systems change and true accountability which our communities have long called for.

In May, I travelled to Canberra to meet with our Commonwealth funders for the HealthInfoNet, Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre (AODKC) and Environmental Health Portal. Discussions involved the updated focus on social and emotional wellbeing indicators in our annual Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as well as the role that culturally

safe artificial intelligence (AI) can play in knowledge exchange. It was also an opportunity to hear more about the Australian Centre for Disease Control who are now administering our Environmental Health Portal funding.

While in Canberra, we also ran a two-day strategic planning workshop with HealthInfoNet Board members and a representative from one of our partners, Tackling Indigenous Smoking. The workshop was powerful and productive and allowed members to delve into the issues facing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector and the critical role that HealthInfoNet plays in helping to address these issues. Members also agreed to transition Board functions from an advisory to a decision-making role, which marks a genuine shift towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander oversight at HealthInfoNet. My thanks also to the *Yardhura Walani* team at the ANU for hosting us during the 2-day workshop.



NAIDOC Week - Bep Uink and some of the team at the flag raising

The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of Australia and the Torres Strait. We respect all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—their customs and their beliefs. We also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging with particular acknowledgment to the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, the traditional owners of the lands where our offices are located.

While in Meanjin (Brisbane) for our HealthInfoNet Roundtable, I met with Queensland Health who fund our Queensland Portal, as well as partner organisations Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM), The Lung Foundation, QAIHC, and Health Workforce Queensland as well as attending a wonderful afternoon tea with the First Nations team at Metro North Health.

Across April, May and June, I ran an online workshop for **OCHRe Network** members on how to use the HealthInfoNet database for research and practice, met with Speech Pathology Australia, Podiatry Australia, and the Australian Primary Nurses Association (APNA) to assist in sharing and promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health resources.

In July we were joined by Chad Stewart, CEO of the Council of Aboriginal Services WA (CASWA) at our Joondalup office who provided us an update of the work CASWA are doing to support community-service focused ACCOs across WA (see story below).

NAIDOC Week was launched at ECU on 6 July with an official ceremony at the ECU Joondalup campus in the Boorna Baronga Cultural Reflection Space raising the Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Western Australian and Australian flags. The ceremony was officiated by ECU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Clare Pollock, and Pro-Vice Chancellor (Indigenous), Professor Dan McAullay.

I presented at a lunch & Learn session at ECU City campus and Em Anderton (HealthInfoNet team member) gave an online presentation and update to Asthma Australia as part of NAIDOC week.



Bep Uink Professor Bep Uink

Brisbane Roundtable and meetings



L-R Rebecca Lang, Bep Uink, Deanne Minniecon & Wayne Ah Boo

Late May we held our well attended Brisbane Roundtable which included a broad range of health sector organisations. I had the opportunity to also meet with some of our Brisbane based partners and other stakeholders in the sector.

Our guest speakers were:

1. **Diabetes Queensland** – Group Executive, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement, Deanne Minniecon
2. **Institute for Urban Indigenous Health** – CEO, Wayne Ah Boo
3. **QNADA** – CEO Rebecca Lang



Bep Uink and HealthInfoNet's Anna McGuinness based in Brisbane

CSIRO one day workshop

This was held in May in the ECU City campus and included representatives from VACCHO, the Kids Research Institute Australia, Westfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases. WA Department of Health, and our team.

The purpose of the workshop was to test and evaluate a draft large-language model which can be used to evaluate the cultural safety of research papers.

The workshop helped solidify the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governed AI within the health sector and prompted ideas for next steps in model development.



CSIRO one day workshop at ECU City Campus

Queensland portal news

I met with our funders at the Department of Health in Brisbane while there for our Roundtable event. It was a wonderful opportunity to promote the searchable regional map function within the portal. We are very appreciative of Queensland Health in funding this portal and in recognising the importance of a dedicated resource to support their efforts and the health sector workforce more broadly in Queensland.

The portal celebrated 1 year in May and is also embedded within the Departments' staff intranet and also freely accessible to anyone in the sector.

Anna McGuinness from our research team manages the portal and is also based in Brisbane (pictured above). Please contact her if you'd like any content added to our portal [Queensland - Locations - Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet](#)



Summary of annual Overview available



We have also added our *Summary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status – selected topics 2025*, a publication that provides a concise, visual summary of key indicators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

The *Summary* presents selected content from the annual *Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2025* using infographics and key statistics, making the latest health information quick and easy to understand.

For the first time, both the *Summary* and the *Overview* have been structured around the domains of connection outlined in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social and Emotional Wellbeing Model (Gee et al., 2014). This new structure reflects the holistic nature of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing. The publications present data on connection to culture, Country, community, family and kinship, alongside indicators of physical health (connection to body) and mental health (connection to mind and emotions).

The *Summary* and *Overview* are intended as resources for people working, studying or teaching in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector, and are accompanied by a *PowerPoint* of key facts.

Resources to Support Aboriginal Community Controlled Health and Community Responses to the Diphtheria Outbreak

As you may be aware, there is currently an outbreak of diphtheria infections in rural and remote regions of Australia. *Diphtheria is a preventable bacterial illness which causes two types of infections.*



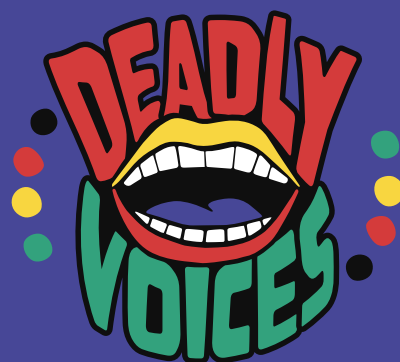
Respiratory (throat) diphtheria can be spread through droplets in the air from coughing or sneezing, and cutaneous (skin) diphtheria can be spread through contact with infected skin. Infection can also occur through touching household items and clothes that have come into contact with infected skin. If not treated quickly, diphtheria can lead to serious health complications.

We have curated a collection of resources related to the diphtheria outbreak in the *Prevention and Management subtopic* of the Respiratory Health Portal. This subtopic also contains *publications* on diphtheria that are relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Another Deadly Voice joins our collection

Kathryn Huet, Diabetes educator and Aboriginal health practitioner from Diabetes WA, is a Ghungalu and Baradah woman, born and raised in the Central Highlands of Central Queensland and now lives on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja.

Have a listen to: *Empowering communities to take ownership of their health journey through culturally safe diabetes education.*



Uncle Mick Adams Honoured

You may have already seen the news in June that Uncle Mick (long term HealthInfoNet Board member) has been made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in the King's Birthday Honours for contributions to Indigenous Health and Education. I have had the pleasure of getting to know Uncle Mick and his incredible work through my time at the HealthInfoNet. This is a well-deserved honour and we send a huge congratulations from us at the HealthInfoNet team.

TIS planning day

Michelle Elwell (Senior Research Officer) travelled to Canberra in July to take part in the Tackling Indigenous Smoking (TIS) Planning Day.

The National Best Practice Unit (NBPU) TIS team received an update from National TIS Coordinator, Professor Tom Calma AO and Department of Health, Disability and Ageing representatives.

The meeting was an opportunity for the NBPU TIS teams to come together to reflect on the achievements and challenges of their work to date and plan for the next twelve months to 30 June 2027.



Uncle Mick Adams AM

AOD policy timeline

This is a great resource housed on the AOD Knowledge Centre website which is continually added to *AOD Policy timeline - Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre*

The AOD (alcohol and other drugs) Policy timeline on the Knowledge Centre is a visual collection of national policies that document the evolving strategies to address harms from AOD use in Australia. The timeline provides an accessible record of significant national policies that date back to the first Campaign against Drug Abuse in 1985.

It includes policies that have been important milestones in AOD policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Drug Strategy 2014–2019 and the more recent National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Wellbeing 2017–2023.

New relevant national policies or documents are added as they become available, so that the timeline is both a record and a source of current policies. The AOD Policy timeline on the Knowledge Centre is a valuable resource for any working or studying in the area of advocacy and policy development in the AOD sector.

<https://aodknowledgecentre.ecu.edu.au/key-resources/aod-policy-timeline/>



CASWA morning tea

We welcomed Chad Stewart, CEO of The Council of Aboriginal Services Western Australia (CASWA) in July. CASWA is the peak body representing Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) across Western Australia.

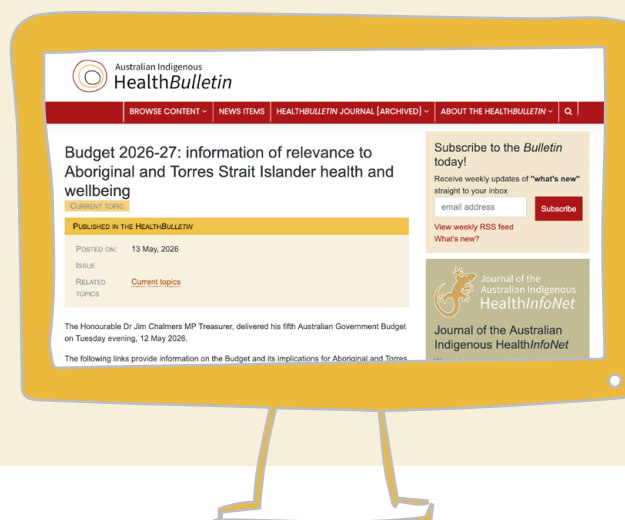
It was an opportunity to discuss partnerships and collaborations between HealthInfoNet and CASWA in the areas of Indigenous Data Sovereignty, social determinants of health, and supporting community-led approaches to care.



Chad Stewart and Bep Uink

Australian Government Budget 2026-27

As we do each May, we added links to relevant to our *HealthBulletin*: **Budget 2026-27: information of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing** to access information related to the Budget and its implications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.



Article about Injury literature

HealthInfoNet team members published a scoping review in *BMJ Injury Prevention* about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander injury prevention research, resources, programs and policy across Australia. Key findings were that the majority of injury research and programs are focused on violence prevention whereas health promotion materials and resources focused on road safety. Publications led by Aboriginal teams were more likely to meet the CONSIDER statement criteria for ethical research with Indigenous peoples. There is also a clear need for a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Injury Prevention Strategy. You can read the article here:

Article: *Scope and adherence to the CONSIDER statement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander injury prevention research in Australia*

Free to access link: <http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/cgi/rapidpdf/ip-2025-046059?ijkey=VZcEIWzshpqGq5&keytype=ref>



National Palliative Care week in May

National Palliative Care Week is an annual event organised by **Palliative Care Australia** (PCA) which aims to raise awareness and understanding about palliative care in the Australian community. The theme was *Getting to the heart of it: Big questions. Real answers.* to make palliative care easier to understand.

Visit our **Palliative Care and End-of-Life Care Portal** (funded by PCA) for more quality, up-to-date information and **resources**, developed specifically for the health workforce who provide care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, their families and communities. It is also designed to support both clinicians and policy makers in accessing relevant and

culturally appropriate resources, events, courses, programs and more on palliative care and end-of-life care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The Portal home page contains three subtopics including **Culturally appropriate palliative care and end-of-life care, Grief and bereavement and Planning ahead.**

GETTING TO THE HEART OF IT.

Big questions

Real answers ❤️

National Palliative Care Week 10–16 May

Conferences

QAAMS – presented and exhibited 6-7 May, Adelaide, SA

AHCWA – exhibited at both the youth conference and the main sector conference 17-21 May, Perth, WA

International Society for Drug Policy conference – exhibited 30 June-1 July, Perth, WA

APNA Festival of Nursing - exhibited, 30 July – 1 August, Melbourne, VIC



Sophie Worthington Diabetes WA with Bec Gillis at AHCWA



AHCWA conference Amanda O'Connor, Director Derby Aboriginal health Service



QAAMS delegates Yona Sam & Sarah Jane Tamwoy



Connie Bird - APNA Festival of Nursing delegate

Staff news

Late July, we said farewell to our IT Manager, Renae Bastholm who joined us in December 2014 and was responsible for the responsive design of the websites and build of other project websites during this time. I wish Renae well in her future endeavours and thank her for her contribution to the HealthInfoNet.

We also farewelled Sandra Rogers our Admin Officer who was with us for 19 years. I wish Sandra well and thank her for her years of support to our work.



Sandra Rogers



Renae Bastholm

Also in July we welcomed Dr Emma Tufuga. She will be writing our new Evidence Brief for our AOD Knowledge Centre.



Emma Tufuga

Be social and
follow us



Makuru—season of fertility

Makuru, in the Noongar calendar of Western Australia, is the season of fertility and the coldest and wettest time of the year, typically spanning June and July. It is a time when the landscape experiences heavy rains and strong winds, and animals begin to pair up in preparation for breeding. Find out more https://beta.bom.gov.au/resources/indigenous-weather-knowledge/indigenous-seasonal-calendars/nyoongar-calendar#bom-anchor-list__item-makuru-season-of-fertility

