REPORT FROM THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE SA ABORIGINAL HEALTH RESEARCH NETWORK

The inaugural meeting of the South Australian Aboriginal Health Research Network was hosted by SAHMRI at Tandanya on 30 May 2013. Over 60 members of the Aboriginal health research community were in attendance. The Network is part of a commitment by SAHMRI to strengthen capacity in Aboriginal health research in South Australia. The Network welcomes anyone involved in Aboriginal health research in the state.

The focus of the first session was on conducting Aboriginal research the ‘right way’, and introduced the proposed South Australian Aboriginal health research “accord”. We explored experiences in conducting research, and then considered what is required to build a foundation for the appropriate conduct of research in the state to best align with the needs of the Aboriginal community, and conducted with respect and in the most culturally appropriate manner. There was strong support for the development of principles which set a foundation for doing research the right way.
STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP
The morning commenced with a presentation by Professor Alex Brown on his experiences in conducting research in Central Australia. This was followed by a panel discussion with Mr Alwin Chong, Professor Dennis McDermott, Mrs Sharon Meagher, and Associate Professor Jenny Baker.

Their insights set the positive and energetic tone for the workshop session which followed. Kim Morey, Manager of Knowledge Translation and Exchange in the SAHMRI Aboriginal Research Unit, presented the draft accord. The workshop invited participants to consider the potential top 10 principles and determine if they believed the principles should be included, whether the principles reflected its intent, and to explore the practicalities of implementation.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DO RESEARCH THE ‘RIGHT WAY’?
Four themes emerged from the presentations and panel discussions are presented below:

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT, THAT OCCURS FROM THE START
Research needs to be embedded in, and work for, the community. Research is often developed in complete isolation from this. Instead, research should:
- develop ongoing committed relationships;
- develop from conversations in community;
- meet the expectations of participants; and
- have a positive impact for participants and their community.

Engagement and knowledge should be sought by speaking to the ‘right’ people, which should be determined by the community. This enables researchers to acknowledge, respect and value Aboriginal knowledge systems.

WORKING BEYOND THE WESTERN SCIENTIFIC MODEL OF RESEARCH AND WITHIN ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS
Research should go beyond the biomedical, western understanding of health and research, by recognising and building around Aboriginal knowledge systems. This process can be long and complex, however it is important to make the time to do this.

Being the receiver of knowledge must be respected, recognising that this is not a commodity which can be bought or sold, but celebrated, shared and protected.

Acknowledging what you don’t know is valuable and will support culturally safe research and strengthen the researcher’s own capacity.

RECOGNISING AND UNDERSTANDING HISTORICAL FACTORS AND THEIR ONGOING IMPACT
Research will only make sense if the researcher understands the impacts of historical factors such as colonisation and dispossession. It is also important to remember and respect that research has sometimes been conducted in an inappropriate manner in the past and this remains a contemporary issue.

Researchers must openly acknowledge the benefits which they will receive by conducting research. Researchers should not oversell the benefits of their research for the participants and openly identify and discuss any potential risks or costs to the community.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER RESEARCHERS
As researchers, we all need to support each other. Often, Aboriginal researchers face unique challenges, and feel they live and work between two very different worlds.

One view expressed is that as researchers it is important that we continue to be change agents to promote positive reconciliation within our own organisations. From a different perspective, another speaker expressed that as an Aboriginal researcher they feel privileged, and their colleagues and relationships should be the recipients of that privilege.
EARLY CONSULTATION FEEDBACK ON THE POTENTIAL TOP 10 PRINCIPLES

The workshop participants broadly supported the proposed top 10 potential principles with some minor wording revisions. Participants felt that it was important that some definitions be developed, which include:

- what constitutes an Aboriginal community, developed from an Aboriginal community perspective;
- a clear definition of Elders, from the perspective of Elders; and
- a clear definition of what broadly constitutes ‘engagement’, whilst maintaining a focus on local level diversity.

Participants felt further work was required to define intellectual property, both from the perspective of individuals and collectives, but strongly supported the inclusion of this principle in the accord. Overall, participant responses to the top 10 potential principles have been positive. The development of the accord is an iterative process, and future updates will be provided on progress of discussion and engagement of Aboriginal stakeholders.

ADVANCE NOTICE

SA Aboriginal Health Research Network meeting – A focus on Knowledge Translation
Tuesday, 23 July 2013
9:00am – 12:00pm
Venue to be advised
More information will be sent in early July

DEVELOPING A SET OF PRINCIPLES TO SET A FOUNDATION FOR CONDUCTING ABORIGINAL RESEARCH THE RIGHT WAY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

The SAHMRI Aboriginal Research Unit hosted an Aboriginal Health Research Workshop in February 2013, which attracted stakeholders from the three major South Australian universities and across the health and Aboriginal health sector more broadly. One of the key themes identified from the workshop was the need for an agreed set of principles to guide Aboriginal health research within South Australia. Importantly, the findings of the workshop echoed the key recommendations of the Indigenous Health Scoping Study auspiced by the Aboriginal Health Council of SA in 2005.

In response, the Aboriginal Health Research Unit is in the early stages of developing a South Australian Aboriginal health research “accord”. The aim of this document is to identify, record and disseminate the Aboriginal communities’ expectations of how they would like health research to be undertaken in South Australia. The overall objective is to have each of the universities, in partnership with the Aboriginal Health Council of SA, Council of Aboriginal Elders and SAHMRI, agree and commit to the principles outlined in the accord so as to guide effective and relevant Aboriginal health research in this state.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ACCORD

In commencing the development of an accord, the Aboriginal Health Research Unit has undertaken a literature review. The review had a focus on peer reviewed international, national and local level literature relevant to Indigenous populations broadly, and more specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. Grey literature from relevant sources has also informed the review, which included, but was not limited to, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), the Lowitja Institute, and the Aboriginal Health Council of SA Indigenous Health Research Scoping Study. Key themes emerged from the literature review and have informed the development of the potential top 10 principles. These principles will form the basis for discussion and consultation in achieving an agreed set of principles.

POTENTIAL TOP 10 PRINCIPLES

The following potential principles have been revised following the inaugural meeting of the South Australian Aboriginal Health Research Network on 30 May:

1. Research determined by Aboriginal community priorities
2. Aboriginal engagement and participation throughout the life of research development, implementation and learning
3. Shared capacity strengthening - local communities, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers; institutions
4. Respecting and protecting, Aboriginal peoples’ intellectual property
5. Respectful management of biological research materials
6. Integrated knowledge transfer
7. Culturally and community relevant communication approach
8. Respect for knowledge holders (Elders), including Aboriginal knowledge systems
9. Positive resource inputs into communities
10. Tangible benefits of research to Aboriginal people and communities.
WHAT’S NEXT?

The Aboriginal Research Unit is developing a process to consult with key stakeholders on the accord. The first part of this process was the recent discussion held at the inaugural meeting of the South Australian Aboriginal Health Research Network.

The second part of this process will be an online consultation. This online consultation is now open: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SA_Aboriginal_Accord](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SA_Aboriginal_Accord). The online consultation will remain open for some time, and on-going reminders will be distributed to network members.

The Aboriginal Health Research Unit has written to the three universities and key Aboriginal health and community stakeholders, introducing the aims and objectives of the accord. It is anticipated that broad discussion and engagement will occur with Aboriginal Elders, young people and key Aboriginal health advisory groups, including existing structures (e.g. AHCSA, Council of Aboriginal Elders and the South Australian Aboriginal Health Partnership).

CHRONIC CARE MODEL PROJECT

The cost of providing health care to people with chronic diseases continues to rise. Current chronic care models focus on resources, health services, teams of providers and well informed and involved patients. The role of culture and family in maintaining a person’s wellbeing are rarely considered in current models. In particular, findings from a qualitative study conducted by the Kanyini Vascular Collaboration have raised important questions about what care means and how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience and survive life-long illnesses.

This study aims to develop a chronic care model (CCM) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to improve quality of care, quality of life and health outcomes. The CCM study has three stages and will be informed by knowledge gained from previous studies and guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and primary health care providers.

POSITION VACANT

Indigenous Research Fellow Sought to Work with the Chronic Care Model Team

In keeping with the our commitment to support the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, the Aboriginal Health Research Unit at SAHMRI is currently accepting expressions of interest for the role of Indigenous Research Fellow. This 18 month position commencing in July 2013 will be responsible for contributing to the development of a Chronic Disease Care Model for Indigenous Australians, specifically assisting with an extensive review of the literature, key informant interviews and community consultations. At a minimum the candidate should have experience in health services provision and/or research. Further information can be obtained from Dr Carol Davy at carol.davy@sahmri.com or by phoning 8116 4450.
SPOTLIGHT ON THE SAHMRI ABORIGINAL HEALTH RESEARCH TEAM

Rachel Reilly - Post-Doctoral Research Fellow

Rachel was raised in Adelaide and completed undergraduate studies in psychology and anthropology at Adelaide University before heading to Melbourne to complete a Doctorate in Psychology (Health) at the University of Melbourne. Her doctoral thesis, conducted with members of the Koori community in northern Victoria, investigated psychosocial determinants of Aboriginal health. Over subsequent years, Rachel was fortunate to continue working in partnership with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations in the Goulburn-Murray region to develop a program of community-led work seeking to better understand and strengthen Aboriginal models of health promotion and evaluation. Rachel has also practiced as a psychologist in community health, private practice and most recently in a large integrated renal service in Melbourne.

Rachel will be contributing to the Viertel-funded ENHANCED program looking at the complex links between depression and heart disease. She currently balances her research work with the care of three young children. She is incredibly excited to have joined the Aboriginal Health team at SAHMRI and to be getting reacquainted with SA and the wonderful people who live here.

John Gray - Data Analyst

John Gray was born and raised in the English countryside. After completing undergraduate study in psychology, John started work delivering and co-ordinating residential care services for delinquent teenagers in London before moving to Adelaide to continue working in children’s services. Following post-graduate study in Social Administration at Flinders University, John led education social work services in rural South Australia and coordinated a TafeSA community services program including extensive curriculum development work before joining Child and Youth Health as a youth health policy advisor and staff development officer. During this time he co-wrote the primary school teachers’ manual “We Can Manage Change” about children’s experience of grief and loss. In 1997, John moved into SA Health central services working on projects and policies relating to tobacco control and health inequalities then eight years later moved to Southern Adelaide Health Service to provide a population health analysis and reporting service as well as data management services for a multidisciplinary research cluster at Flinders University, and for the external evaluation of the SA Health OPAL program.

John feels privileged to join the SAHMRI Aboriginal Health Research Unit at its inception and the opportunity this brings to combine his interests in social justice, the Aboriginal culture of his adopted home and telling stories about numbers.

Katharine Brown - Research Assistant

Katharine joins the Aboriginal Health Research Unit at SAHMRI from the Heart Foundation (SA), where she was working across a broad spectrum of projects from prevention to the quality of acute cardiac care.

With an interest in public health and health policy, Katharine completed a Masters of Health Economics and Policy in 2012. Prior to this, she completed a Bachelor of Health Sciences (Public Health) and a Graduate Certificate in Health Economics. Since the completion of her degree, Katharine has tutored in Health Economics at both an undergraduate and postgraduate level.

Katharine will be working across a range of research, centred around cardiovascular health and the continuum of care for Aboriginal people with cardiovascular disease. Katharine is excited to be a part of the SAHMRI Aboriginal Research Unit and looks forward to working with SA community members and researchers.

NEWS AND OPPORTUNITIES

WALKING THE TALK FOR RECOGNITION

Building the people’s movement to reform Australia’s Constitution to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Monday, 1 July 2013, 5:00 – 7:30pm

Scott Theatre
The University of Adelaide, Kintore Avenue

Key note speaker: Mick Gooda, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner

Speakers:
- Professor John Williams, Dean of Law, The University of Adelaide
- Aaron Pedersen, Actor
DATA LINKAGE RESEARCH CONVERSATION SERIES 2013
Friday, 28 June 2013, 4:00pm
SA NT DataLink Office
Level 3, UniSA House, 195 North Terrace, Adelaide
Drinks and nibbles provided. Places are limited - RSVP via email to santdatalink@unisa.edu.au or phone 8302 1604

SA NT DataLink extends a warm welcome to all researchers and data custodians to join us for our inaugural Data Linkage Research Conversation Session – the first in a quarterly series where expert ‘doers’ in the data linkage scene will be invited to discuss their experiences. Researchers and data custodians are encouraged to attend this excellent, informal networking opportunity, and discuss their interest in this space. To kick off the series, Professor David Roder, Chair of Cancer Epidemiology and Population Health, University of South Australia, will discuss his experiences of using population data for a data linkage study.

HEART FOUNDATION AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIPS
Applications are now open for Heart Foundation’s Australian Indigenous Scholarships. Applications close on 28 June 2013.

The award provides a stipend of $40,000 pro rata per annum for up to two years for Masters and up to three years for PhD. Part time scholarships for longer periods may be considered. The funding will support an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person to study for a research degree (PhD or Masters) in any area of research that is relevant to cardiovascular health (including biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research).

Professor Alex Brown invites SA researchers requiring support or guidance in applying for this scholarship to contact him on email at alex.brown@sahmri.com.

ABORIGINAL PALLIATIVE CARE SCHOLARSHIP
Applications are now open and close 30 June, 2013.

Palliative Care Council South Australia (PCCSA) is offering two scholarships for Aboriginal medical, nursing, or health workers to attend the Australian Palliative Care Conference in Canberra, 3-6 September 2013. Scholarships will be made available for an amount of $2,000 which will cover the costs of registration at the Australian Palliative Care Conference, reasonable travel, meals and accommodation costs.

More information: http://www.pallcare.asn.au/info-resources/education-training/scholarships

POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP IN THE ECONOMICS OF INDIGENOUS HEALTH
Applications are open for a PhD scholarship in the economics of Indigenous health. Applications close on 28 June 2013.

The successful candidate will have an honours degree and/or postgraduate qualifications in economics or public health with a strong health economics focus. Applicants must be Australian citizens, Australian permanent residents or New Zealand citizens. Candidates of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background are, in particular, encouraged to apply. The scholarship is valued at $26,000 per annum (tax exempt) and may be renewed for up to three years subject to satisfactory progress. A top-up scholarship may be available for successful candidate.

For more information, contact Stephen Jan (sjan@george.org.au), or visit: http://agile2.ucc.usyd.edu.au/ro/opportunities/scholarships/1296

THE PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA INC (SA BRANCH): SCHOLARSHIPS TO ATTEND THE 42ND NATIONAL PHAA CONFERENCE
Applications are open for scholarships to attend the 42nd National PHAA Conference. Applications close on 8 July 2013. PHAA (SA) are currently calling for applications from:
1. Student members of PHAA (SA) for the Konrad Jamrozik Student Scholarship; and
2. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples for the Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander Scholarship to attend the National PHAA 42nd Annual Conference.

For more information about the conference visit: http://www.phaa.net.au/42nd_Annual_Conference.php
For more information on the Konrad Jamrozik Student Scholarship, visit: http://www.phaa.net.au/documents/130603SAPHAA_Konrad%20Jamrozik_Student_Scholarship.pdf
For more information on the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Scholarship, visit: http://www.phaa.net.au/documents/130603SAPHAA_Aboriginal_Torres%20Strait%20Islander_Scholarship.pdf

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