



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF QUEENSLAND  
AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

# 2024 Annual Report

Poche Centre for Indigenous Health



## Acknowledgement of Country

The University of Queensland (UQ) Poche Centre for Indigenous Health acknowledges the Traditional Owners and their custodianship of the lands on which the University is situated. We pay our respects to their Ancestors and their descendants, who continue cultural and spiritual connections to Country.

## Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples

The UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia. They have cared for the nation for tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge that their sovereignty has never been ceded, and we are grateful for their custodianship of what is now known as Australia.

We pay our particular respects to the traditional owner groups and their descendants where our Centre is located and where our research is carried out. We are very grateful to be able to live, work and play on their lands.

We are grateful for the stewardship of Dr Aunty Mary Martin AM as our Elder-in-Residence to guide our business. We acknowledge Indigenous colleagues at UQ's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and our partnering organisations, whose wisdom, insight and knowledge are central to our research and operations.

## Poche Family recognition

Our work is made possible through the generous support of philanthropists Mr Greg Poche AO and Mrs Kay van Norton Poche.

The UQ Poche Centre's graphic and the cover graphic are reproductions of Consolidate by proud Kalkadoon artist Sid Domic. The graphics reflect our evolving goals and partnerships, highlighting the importance of visual identity and fostering a recognisable and trusted brand within the community and the broader UQ framework.

"Consolidate"  
Sid Domic, 2023  
Acrylic on canvas





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# About the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health

The UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health is dedicated to achieving equitable health and wellbeing for Indigenous peoples through research excellence. Established in 2015 with the generous support of philanthropists Mr Greg Poche AO and the late Mrs Kay Van Norton Poche AO, the Centre is part of the national Poche Indigenous Health Network, alongside Poche Centres at the University of Melbourne, the University of Sydney, the University of Western Australia, and Flinders University in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

We provide national and international leadership in Indigenous health research and research workforce development, striving to improve life expectancy and reduce health inequities and injustices in Australia and internationally. Our work is guided by Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, ensuring that our research is strengths-based, community driven, and impactful.

Dedicated to improving Indigenous health, we undertake and facilitate transdisciplinary research that enhances health systems and addresses the broader determinants of health. Our life-course approach ensures that our research aligns with the priorities of our partners and communities, working towards real-world improvements in Indigenous health.

The Centre's expertise spans a range of health areas, including infectious diseases, urban Indigenous health, antiracism strategies in health care, models of care, blood-borne viruses, sexual and reproductive health, maternal and child health, alcohol and other drug use, mental health, life course epidemiology, chronic diseases, health promotion policy and practice.

We work in urban, regional, and remote communities across Australia and internationally, partnering with Indigenous organisations, health services and researchers to create meaningful change.

A core focus of the Centre is developing the next generation of Indigenous health research leaders. Through training, mentorship, and capacity-building initiatives, we support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and early career researchers, to be the next generation of leaders. Our Centre also supports non Indigenous who are dedicated to changing the status quo in many of our communities. Our collaborative research efforts ensure that Indigenous voices, leadership, and governance are embedded in every stage of our work.

Through research excellence, collaboration, and a commitment to Indigenous-led solutions, the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health is working towards a future where all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have access to culturally safe, effective, and equitable healthcare.

## Our vision

To achieve equitable health and wellbeing for Indigenous peoples through research excellence:

- Our communities drive our research agenda
- We work with partners to deliver meaningful change
- We privilege Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies
- We support our people to become the future leaders in health research



## Operationalising our vision

We strive to operationalise our vision through community engagement, nurturing the next generation of Indigenous health researchers, privileging Indigenous knowledges and supporting a skilled and culturally safe health workforce.

## Community engagement strategy

Our Community Engagement focuses on strengthening existing partnerships and establishing new collaborations with organisations dedicated to improving health care for urban Indigenous peoples. We are committed to fostering meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships that identify gaps in Indigenous health service delivery and co-design research methodologies to support real-world implementation. Internally, the Centre works across UQ to promote research that aligns with our vision, reinforcing our commitment to Indigenous health and strengthening collaboration across disciplines.

## Indigenous health researchers

Developing and supporting the next generation of Indigenous health research leaders is a priority for the UQ Poche Centre. We provide training, mentorship, and pathways to increase Indigenous representation in research, including opportunities through Higher Degree by Research (HDR) programs. Additionally, we support non-Indigenous researchers who share a commitment to Indigenous health priorities and align with the Centre's core strategies.

## Health workforce training

Educating and training a skilled and culturally safe health workforce is fundamental to achieving health equity for Indigenous peoples. The UQ Poche Centre privileges Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and works closely with Indigenous leaders to instil best practices in our research. The Centre supports UQ in preparing future health professionals to deliver culturally safe care. Our role is increasingly advisory and facilitative, assisting in the integration of Indigenous health perspectives into education and training. As part of this, we facilitate student placements that enhance understanding of Indigenous health and provide exposure to career pathways in the sector.

## Future proofing our vision

In 2024, the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health began developing a new strategic plan to guide our work, and is set for implementation in 2025. Setting a renewed strategic direction ensures we continue to meet the needs of Indigenous communities, advance research excellence, and create lasting positive change. The new plan will build on our strengths while focusing on research and innovation, enhancing research training and student experiences, strengthening community engagement, supporting our team, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Through collaboration and Indigenous leadership, we remain committed to improving health outcomes and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



# Statement from our Chair

**Professor Louise Hickson AM**

It was a pleasure to Chair the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health Advisory Board in 2024. The Centre continues to go from strength to strength, as evident in this report. I will point out a few highlights in these opening remarks.



From an academic perspective, the Centre continues to shine by publishing 136 research papers and securing \$16,369,510 in new research grants. It is a highly competitive environment to obtain such grants, and Centre staff submitted a total of 29 funding applications throughout the year, highlighting their continued efforts to expand research opportunities and collaborations.

Publications are one way of disseminating research findings and key messages. However, we are all aware of the need to spread the word through many different channels in order to make a difference to Indigenous health in the community. The Centre's media presence reached an audience of 300 million people through 143 media items. There was strong online engagement, with 16,577 website visitors and 41,851 website views, spanning 96 countries. In addition, the Centre hosted online and face-to-face events, including the UQ Poche Seminar Series and the NAIDOC Seminar.

Partnerships are at the core of the Centre's success and have been a feature of activities in 2024. The Centre has continued to strengthen its work with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), the Poche Indigenous Health Network, Metro North Hospital and Health Service, the Inala Indigenous Health Service, and more than 70 other health and health-related organisations.

Engagement with Indigenous communities remained at the forefront, with the Centre participating in events such as Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week, Jobs for Mob Expo, the Murri School Health Expo and the Queensland Murri Carnival.

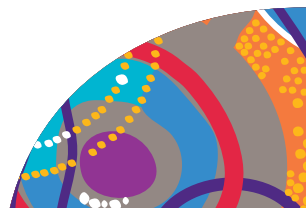
The Centre's workforce continues to grow and, in 2024, comprised 56 staff members, including 27 academics, 23 research professionals, 6 operations and research support staff and 18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It is also exciting to see the next generation emerging, and the Centre supported 17 Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students in 2024, including 10 who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Three PhD students successfully submitted their theses during the year. The Pathways to a PhD: Doing Research for Mob program continued, providing aspiring Indigenous researchers mentorship and support.

In 2025, the Centre will undergo a formal review, providing an opportunity to assess progress and refine strategies for continued growth and impact. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Poche family, acknowledging their ongoing support and generosity while also honouring the legacy of Kay van Norton Poche AO following her passing in 2024.

**Professor Louise Hickson AM**

Executive Dean, Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences,

The University of Queensland.





# Statement from Professor Tom Calma AO FAA FAHA FASSA

I am honoured to contribute to the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, as an inaugural member of the Board. Since its establishment in 2015, the Centre has been dedicated to advancing Indigenous health research and fostering strong partnerships with community and health service organisations.

The Centre's initiatives support a strong research culture and foster the development of emerging Indigenous researchers. The Centre's research has a strong focus on urban Indigenous health delivery and evaluation that sets it aside from other research centres nationally. A hallmark is also the collaboration with UQ to expose more children and youth to a university environment to demonstrate that they can aspire to complete schooling and take on tertiary studies.

In 2024, the Centre published over 130 research outputs and secured over \$16 million in new grant funding. The Poche Centre expanded partnerships with health and community organisations and grew its team with additional academics, research professionals, and support staff. The Centre also broadened opportunities for emerging researchers and students, reinforcing its commitment to nurturing future talent. These outcomes reflect the Centre's ongoing work in advancing Indigenous health research and growing a cohort of Indigenous academics and professionals.

The Centre's work has contributed to progress in Indigenous health research by integrating academic research with community priorities, ensuring that its work addresses the unique needs of Indigenous communities. By combining academic insights with community experiences, the Centre supports Indigenous communities through a collaborative approach that fosters a sustainable future and promotes social equity.

The UQ Poche Centre remains committed to advancing Indigenous health research and improving outcomes for the communities it works with. The Board recognises the valuable contributions of the team and partners and looks forward to ongoing efforts that advance equitable health and wellbeing for Indigenous peoples through research excellence.

**Professor Tom Calma**  
**AO FAA FAHA FASSA**

National Patron Poche Centres



# Director's report

Professor James Ward

This past year, 2024, the Centre has continued to make a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and communities nationally. We have continued to grow our team, consolidated our commitment to impactful research and fostered significant partnerships that have been instrumental in advancing our research impact for the communities we work with.



Our research spans sexual and reproductive health, life course epidemiology, health services research particularly focused on models of care, data linkage studies, implementation of antiracism strategies, our burgeoning urban Indigenous health research agenda, chronic care health services research and a mums and bubs program. During 2024, we were granted over \$16 million to continue working in these areas. The Centre almost doubled the number of publications from the previous year. The significance of our work has been magnified through extensive media and social media posts, reaching over 300 million people globally. This visibility reflects the breadth of work undertaken at the Centre, its relevance and the urgency of our work in Indigenous health, positioning the Centre as a leading voice in the discourse on health equity.

We've seen growth in our educational initiatives, with the UQ Poche Centre cohort of 17 PhD students including 10 Indigenous students. The Pathways to a PhD: Doing Research for Mob program is central to our capacity-building efforts.

Ten participants had the privilege of learning from international leaders in Indigenous health research and workforce development during the three-day intensive workshop to develop the next generation of Aboriginal researchers. We will continue this initiative in 2025.

Our partnerships have been instrumental in advancing our research and community engagement goals. Collaborations with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, Poche Indigenous Health Network, Metro North Hospital and Health Service and the Inala Indigenous Health Service, as well as over 70 health and health-related organisations, have been fundamental in propelling our initiatives and efforts in community outreach and research endeavours. During 2024, we continued our work in building further partnerships, such as our new partnership with Goondir Health in South West Queensland.

I am proud of our Centre's growth and the impact of our work on Indigenous health and wellbeing. I am grateful to the Poche Family, our Advisory Board, our staff and Elder in Residence, Auntie Mary Martin AM, partners, and the many communities we work with.

*"During 2024, we were granted over \$16 million to continue working in these areas."*





Their contributions and support are invaluable to our achievements.

2025 sees us celebrating a decade of the UQ Poche Centre, and in September, we will host a celebration event highlighting our achievements. As we look to the future, I am hopeful for further expansion of our team, continued impactful research, and fostering enhanced collaborations and much more community engagement.

Our commitment lies in nurturing the next generation of researchers and effecting meaningful change in Indigenous communities, building upon existing alliances and welcoming new partnerships.

I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to our success this year, particularly all of the staff of UQ Poche. Your dedication, expertise, and passion are the heart of the UQ Poche Centre. Thank you for your essential role in our collective efforts. Together, we will continue to strive for excellence in Indigenous health research, reduce health inequity and improve health outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

**Professor James Ward**  
Director,

UQ Poche Centre of Indigenous Health,  
The University of Queensland

## Honouring the legacy of Kay Van Norton Poche AO

The UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health pays tribute to the late Kay Van Norton Poche AO, whose generosity and dedication to Indigenous health have left a lasting impact. Kay passed away in Sydney on 14 June 2024, leaving behind a profound legacy of philanthropy and commitment to improving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Alongside her husband, Greg Poche AO, Kay's extraordinary support led to the establishment of the Poche Indigenous Health Network, including Poche Centres at the University of Queensland, the University of Melbourne, the University of Sydney, the University of Western Australia, and Flinders University. Their vision has helped drive vital research, education, and community engagement initiatives that continue to improve health outcomes for Indigenous communities across Australia.

Kay and Greg's generosity has enabled meaningful contributions to Indigenous health research and workforce development, supporting efforts to reduce disparities and improve access to culturally safe care. Their belief in the power of collaboration and knowledge-sharing has strengthened pathways for Indigenous leadership in health and continues to shape a more equitable future.

Kay's impact was widely recognised, including her appointment as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2019, as well as honorary doctorates acknowledging her contributions. She and Greg were awarded a Doctor Honoris Causa from UQ in 2016 for their role in advancing Indigenous health initiatives.

Kay's compassion, generosity, and unwavering commitment to creating change will continue to inspire the work of the UQ Poche Centre, the Poche Network and the many lives touched by her philanthropy. We remain committed to honouring Kay's legacy by continuing the work she helped make possible.

# Our people

## Staff



56

Staff in 2024



27

Academics



23

Research professionals



6

Operations and research support



18

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff

## Students



17

Higher degree by research students



10

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students



3

PhD submissions



6

Undergrad and master's student placements

## Advisory board



**Professor Louise Hickson, AM**  
(Board Chair)  
Executive Dean  
UQ Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences



**Professor Tom Calma, AO FAA FAHA FASSA**  
National Patron Poche Centres



**Adjunct Professor Adrian Carson, AM**  
Chief Executive Officer  
(January - October 2024)  
Institute of Urban Indigenous Health



**Adjunct Associate Professor Wayne AhBoo**  
Chief Executive Officer  
(October 2024 - )  
Institute of Urban Indigenous Health



**Professor Geoff McColl**  
Executive Dean  
UQ Faculty of Medicine



**Professor Bronwyn Fredericks**  
UQ Deputy Vice-Chancellor  
(Indigenous Engagement)



**Professor James Ward**  
Director  
UQ Poche Centre of Indigenous Health



**Britt Walker**  
Poche Family





## Executive team



**Professor James Ward\***  
Director



**Professor Roxanne Bainbridge\***  
Deputy Director



**Professor Anthony Shakeshaft**  
Professor of Indigenous Health Services Research



**Heather Young**  
Centre Manager  
(January – August 2024)



**Sharon Hiserman**  
Centre Manager  
(August – December 2024)

## Elder-in-Residence



**Dr Aunty Mary Martin, AM\***

\*Indigenous staff members



## Academics

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**Professor  
Roxanne Bainbridge\***

Deputy Director

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**Associate Professor  
Federica Barzi**

Principal Research Fellow

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**Dr Tahmina Begum**

Research Fellow

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**Dr Clare Bradley**

ATLAS Program Manager

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**Dr Anton Clifford-Motopi**

Senior Research Fellow

---

**Associate Professor  
Judith Dean**

Principal Research Fellow

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**Carol El-Hayek**

Senior Research Fellow

---

**Dr Salenna Elliott**

Senior Research Fellow

---

**Associate Professor  
Yaqoot Fatima**

Principal Research Fellow

---

**James Fowler**

Research Officer

---

**Dr Penny Haora**

Research Fellow

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**Stephen Harfield\***

Senior Research Fellow

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**Dr Md. Mehedi Hasan**

Postdoctoral Research Fellow

---

**Associate Professor  
Xiang-Yu (Janet) Hou**

Principal Research Fellow

---

**Dr Edmund Kanmiki**

Research Fellow

---

**Natasha Lee\***

Research Fellow

---

**Dr Stuart Leske**

Program Manager

---

**Professor Abdullah Mamun**

Principal Research Fellow

---

**Dr Saira Mathew**

Research Fellow

---

**Dr Kiara Minto**

Research Fellow

---

**Dr Sandi Mitchell**

Research Fellow

---

**Dr Victor Oguoma**

Senior Research Fellow

---

**Dr Saira Sanjida**

Research Fellow

---

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**Christopher Sexton**

Senior Principal Scientist

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**Dr K M Shahunja**

Research Fellow

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**Professor  
Anthony Shakeshaft**

Professor of Indigenous Health  
Services Research

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**Dr Shea Spierings\***

Postdoctoral Research Fellow

---

**Janet Stajic\***

Research Assistant

---

**Dr Daniel Sullivan**

Research Fellow

---

**Tolassa Ushula**

Senior Research Fellow

---

**Dr Richard Violette**

Research Fellow

---

**Professor James Ward\***

Director

---

**Dr Rani West\***

Research Fellow

---

**Shellee Williams**

Senior Research Officer

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## Research professionals

### Te Ackinclose\*

Data Intern

### Caitie Ashby

Research Assistant

### Renee Caple\*

Clinical Research Assistant

### Shubham Chawre

Data Analyst

### Karen Chong\*

Clinical Research Assistant

### Thilini Nisansala Egoda Kapuralalage

Research Assistant

### Markesh Fanti\*

Clinical Research Assistant

### Erin Flynn

Senior Research Study Coordinator

### Alan Ho

Data Analyst

### Carl Honeysett\*

Principal Research and Engagement Coordinator

### Dr Parham Kebria

Senior Data Scientist

### Mina Kinghorn

Research Translation and Impact Manager

### Mariah Laza\*

Senior Community Engagement Officer

### Dr Kate Lewis

Data Manager

### Dr Wathsala Mohotti

Data Analyst

### Zoë Nano

Research Assistant

### Robert Palm\*

Senior Community Engagement Officer

### Gianna Pavilion

Research Assistant

### Jethro Romer\*

Principal Health Coordinator

### Dr Claudio Sanhueza

Senior Data Scientist

### Paul Schwenn

Research Data Scientist

### Kellie Stacy\*

Senior Research Project Officer

### Lauren Trask

ATLAS CQI Research Officer

### Roslyn Von Senden\*

Community Engagement Manager

### Jaidev Vasudevan

Casual Senior Research Assistant

### Dr Jessica Wade\*

Principal Research Technician

### Jane Wallace\*

Principal Research Technician

### Britta Wigginton

Senior Research Assistant

## Operations and research support

### Mikhalyn Campbell\*

Community Engagement Officer

### Stephanie Evans\*

Project Officer

### Kirra Geeves

Senior Advisor,  
Marketing and Communications

### Rebekah Hauiti\*

HDR Engagement Coordinator

### Arielle Henaway\*

Executive Assistant

### Sharon Hiserman

Centre Manager

### Maria Lawton\*

Administration Assistant

### Dana Mam\*

Community Engagement Officer

### Bridget Moore

Research Operations Coordinator

### Heather Young

Centre Manager

\*Indigenous staff members

# Staff achievements

In 2024, staff at the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health achieved significant milestones across research, leadership, and community engagement. These accomplishments reflect the dedication and expertise of our team in advancing Indigenous health.

Recognising these achievements is an opportunity to celebrate the impact of our work and the contributions of our team. Congratulations to all staff for their hard work and commitment— your efforts continue to make a meaningful difference.



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## Mikhalyn Campbell

Promoted to Community Engagement Officer, September 2024.

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## Associate Professor Judith Dean

Awarded the Sexual Health Society of Queensland and the Australian SH HIV Nurses Association Best Poster Award at the Joint International Union of STI World Congress and the Australasian SRH Conference, September 2024.

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## Associate Professor Yaqoot Fatima

Awarded the Early to Mid-Career Researcher Industry Engagement Award at the UQ Research Partnerships and Translation Awards, October 2024.

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## James Fowler

Awarded the 2024 Research Excellence Award by the Council of Academic Public Health Institutions Australasia, October 2024.

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## Dr Edmund Kanmiki

Awarded the 2024 Knowledge Transfer Rising Star Award from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course, 2024.

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## Professor Abdullah Mamun

Promoted to Professor, September 2024.

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## Robert Palm

Promoted to Senior Community Engagement Officer, 2024.

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## Kellie Stacy

Promoted to Principal Research Technician, 2024.

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## Janet Stajic

Promoted to Research Fellow, September 2024.

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## Professor James Ward

Awarded the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences Outstanding First Nations Researcher Medal, October 2024.

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## Professor James Ward

Elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences, October 2024.

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## Let's Yarn About Sleep project team

Awarded the UQ Research Culture Award for Public Engagement and Community-led Research, October 2024.

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## Poche Centre Operations Team

Awarded the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences Reconciliation Award, November 2024.

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## Spotlight on research professionals

# Strengthening Indigenous leadership in research

Robbie Palm, a proud Wakka Wakka man from Cherbourg with connections to Kamilaroi and Bindal Country, is undertaking a Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Theory & Practice through the Lowitja Institute. As a Senior Community Engagement Officer for the IMPACT STI Project, Robbie has spent years working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in urban, rural, and remote settings, and he sees this qualification as a way to further strengthen his role in research.

When Robbie first stepped into research as a Research Assistant, he had no prior experience in the field. Discussions about research protocols, ethics, and systematic reviews often felt overwhelming, making him feel out of place in his job. His motivation for enrolling to study a Certificate IV was to gain confidence and feel comfortable in his role while also developing the skills to put what he learned into practice when working with communities in Far North Queensland.

One key moment in the course that resonated with Robbie was a session on qualitative and quantitative data. Prior to this, he had heard the terms but was unsure of their meaning and the differences between them. *"Having a yarn with my teachers, they were able to not only teach me the definition of these terms but also helped me identify times where I may have presented or collected different types of data. I found that I actually knew the difference between the types of data, and to me, that gave me a lot of confidence".*

For Robbie, working towards his Certificate IV has been a confidence-building experience, showing him that he is capable of leading research that serves his mob. *"Going into this course, I lacked confidence in my abilities within the research world, and the thought of a PhD felt like a distant dream. Now, I know I have the skills to be a researcher and to lead work that truly meets my people's needs".*

With plans to pursue a master's degree, Robbie sees his journey in research as part of a broader movement for community-led research. Through the course, he has gained a deeper understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems and methodologies, reinforcing the importance of community involvement in research and how it strengthens the relationship between research and community. He has been inspired by strong leaders who have shown what it means to do research the right way—by ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are at the centre.



Robbie Palm

*"Research that involves our mob should be led by our people and have strong direction and influence by our communities".*



Growing our future

# Higher degree by research students

## YEAR 1

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### Cecilia Castiello

**Deadly Fit Mums: Yarning about health and wellbeing of Mums and their families**

The research explores how the Deadly Fit Mums (DFM) program, implemented across various Birthing on Country (BiOC) sites, contributes to improving maternal and infant health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It examines the program's cultural acceptability and effectiveness, as well as clinical and behavioural indicators that demonstrate its impact. The study also investigates the role of the ATOMIC goal-setting tool in empowering participants and aligning their health goals with broader wellbeing priorities.

**Advisors:** Associate Professor Federica Barzi, Associate Professor Judith Dean and Dr Kai Wheeler.

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### Tammy Hatherill\*

**First Nations Traditional Healing within the Australian Healthcare System**

This project explores First Nations traditional healing and Australia's current policies and procedures for its use in the healthcare system, specifically within mental health.

**Advisors:** Professor Roxanne Bainbridge, Associate Professor Judith Dean, Dr Hayley Williams and Dr Rowena Friend.

### Ishrat Jahan

**Sleep Health of First Nations adolescents: Opportunities for early intervention for improved health and wellbeing outcomes**

**Advisors:** Dr Shannon Edmed, Professor Yaqoot Fatima, Dr Daniel Sullivan and Dr Victor Oguoma.

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### Helena King

**Multilevel, community co-designed interventions to control sexually transmitted infections affecting 15- 29-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Far North Queensland**

Despite targeted interventions, STIs that are easily detected and treated persist at unacceptable levels within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This project aims to design, implement and evaluate community co-designed and endorsed multilevel interventions to reduce STIs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and eliminate the inequitable burden of these infectious diseases.

**Advisors:** Professor James Ward and Associate Professor Judith Dean.

### Dr Sheethal Kalmadka

**Challenges and opportunities in sleep health service provision within primary care settings in Australia**

**Advisors:** Dr Shannon Edmed, Professor Yaqoot Fatima and Dr Daniel Sullivan.

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### Brielle Pery\*

**Integration and expansion of the ATLAS sentinel surveillance system to improve infectious disease outcomes for Indigenous Australians**

This project will investigate the integration and expansion of the ATLAS sentinel surveillance system to include vaccine-preventable diseases. In turn, this expansion expects to improve infectious disease outcomes for Indigenous Australians.

**Advisors:** Professor James Ward and Professor Thomas Snelling.



## YEAR 2

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### Md Ashraful Alam

#### **Adverse Childhood Experiences and Health Outcomes in Indigenous Population: A Life Course Approach**

This research aims to investigate the experience of ACEs, and their health impact and identify prevention strategies in the Indigenous population using a life course approach.

**Advisors:** Professor Abdullah Mamun, Professor Leonie Callaway and Professor James Ward.

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### Thuy Linh Duong

#### **Impacts of Gestational Diabetes Mellitus on Women and Children in Queensland, Australia: Trends, Determinants, and Comparison Across Indigenous and non-Indigenous Communities**

Using linkage datasets, this project will provide insights into how gestational diabetes has changed over the past decade in Queensland and its impacts on perinatal and long-term outcomes for both mothers and their offspring.

**Advisors:** Professor Abdullah Mamun, Professor James Ward, and Professor Harold David McIntyre.

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### Amanda Sibosado\*

#### **Co-designing an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation to better meet the needs of Aboriginal young people in Western Australia**

The aim of this Aboriginal Participatory Action Research study is to understand from the perspectives of Aboriginal young people (aged 16-24) how co-design can be reimaged through a culture lens to effectively engage with Aboriginal young people in co-design processes in Boorloo (Perth). The study will partner with young people, who will be supported by Elders and other Aboriginal people who have experience working with youth in co-design. Together we will develop a theoretical framework and/or resources to ensure the needs of Aboriginal young people (aged 16-24) in Boorloo, Perth are met when they are engaged in co-designing health services, policy and research. Central to reaching the aim is to privilege youth voices in order to gain an understanding of what young people themselves say will enable their meaningful engagement in co-design projects.

**Advisors:** Associate Professor Judith Dean, Associate Professor Lisa Fitzgerald and Dr Michelle Webb.

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### Hannah Taylor\*

#### **The impact of coercive control on First Nations school-age children's education and social and emotional wellbeing**

**Advisors:** Professor Gail Garvey, Dr Silke Meyer, Roxanne Bainbridge and Associate Professor Nina Landsbury.

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### Clara Walker

#### **Understanding fertility and pre-conception health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Queensland**

This research uses linked Queensland Health data to estimate the prevalence and impact of pre-conception risk and protective factors for infertility and reproductive health outcomes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Queensland and understand the impact of geographical remoteness on fertility and pre-conception health.

**Advisors:** Associate Professor Federica Barzi, Professor James Ward and Associate Professor Jacqueline Boyle.

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\*Indigenous staff members

## YEAR 3

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### **Amba-Rose Atkinson\***

**Understanding the relationship between the health of wajaar (Country) and of First Nations waarru-biin (peoples), and its contribution towards environmental, climate, and health solutions**

**Advisors:** Professor James Ward, Dr Veronica Matthews, Dr Nina Lansbury and Professor Elizabeth Eakin.

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### **Stephen Harfield\***

**Strengthening primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents living in urban settings**

The PhD is conducted in partnership with IUIH and member services to explore how primary health care services can be strengthened to respond to the health and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-24 years living in urban southeast Queensland.

**Advisors:** Professor James Ward, Professor Gita Mishra and Associate Professor Peter Azzopardi.

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### **Natasha Lee\***

**Redefining public health on Indigenous terms that better serves an Indigenous public good**

This project explores Indigenous perspectives on public health, focusing on Indigenous intellectual sovereignty, truth-telling, and self-determination. It aims to illuminate and redefine a richer understanding of Indigenous public health as defined by Indigenous peoples themselves. The project examines the experiences, knowledge, and insights of Indigenous peoples working in various areas of public health, including health research, service delivery, academia, and health policy. It seeks to bring together the collective wisdom and efforts that will contribute to the ongoing development of this field. The findings from this research have the potential to enhance public health teaching and practices that centre the needs and aspirations of Indigenous peoples.

**Advisors:** Associate Professor Lisa Fitzgerald, Professor Chelsea Watego and Dr Bryan Mukandi.

## THESIS SUBMITTED IN 2024

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### **Condy Canuto\***

The utility of the Annual Health Check (MBS item 715) for STI testing within an urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Health Service

**Advisors:** Professor James Ward, Associate Professor Jon Willis, Associate Professor Judith Dean and Mr Joseph Debattista.

This project aims to enhance STI detection and control strategies, specifically for chlamydia and gonorrhoea, using the Annual Health Check (AHC) within an urban Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS).

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### **Janet Stajic\***

The Unknown Warriors: Continuing the Fight of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Practitioner (A&TSIHWP) Workforce in Urban South East Queensland

This doctoral research focuses on the experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander health workers and health practitioners, recognising their unique contributions to the Australian health system. Using Indigenist research methodology and yarning, this research centres this workforce as experts and privileges their voices in illuminating understandings of enabling workforce environments.

**Advisors:** Associate Professor Lisa Fitzgerald, Professor Chelsea Watego and Dr Bryan Mukandi.

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### **Kate Thompson\***

Enhancing Children's Journey in Out-of-Home Care: A Multi- perspective Study (a focus on kinship care among Indigenous families)

**Advisors:** Professor Karen Healy, Dr Jemma Venables and Dr Carmen Parter.

\*Indigenous staff members



Stephen  
Harfield

## Higher Degree by Research spotlights

# Improving primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

Stephen Harfield is a Narungga and Ngarrindjeri man from South Australia, a Senior Research Fellow at the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, and a PhD candidate with the School of Public Health at UQ.

Stephen's PhD, conducted in partnership with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (UIIH) and its member services, explores how primary health care services can be strengthened to meet the health and wellbeing needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-24 years living in urban South East Queensland. Primary health care is the backbone of any healthcare system, essential for intervening early and improving health outcomes. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people do not access primary health care at the same rate as other Australians, despite their needs. Stephen's research seeks to identify opportunities to strengthen primary health care services and to improve access and care for young people.

Working with UIIH has been integral to shaping Stephen's research.

*"Their deep connection to the communities they serve ensures that the research I'm conducting addresses community needs and is of benefit".*

This collaboration has grounded his research in the real-world experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services and young people.

It has given him a nuanced understanding of how young people access, interact with, and experience primary health care, directly influencing his research questions, methods, and methodology.

Access to primary health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people is influenced by multiple factors at the healthcare system, community, household, and individual levels. Barriers to access include service availability and cost of services, provider communication skills, confidentiality and privacy concerns, low health literacy, and awareness of available services. Stephen's research has provided the opportunity to privilege the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, identifying ways to strengthen primary health care to meet their needs. *"The aim is to provide health services and governments with the evidence and knowledge to create real change that will have a direct impact on improving health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people".*

Stephen's research highlights that primary health care services must be youth-friendly, culturally safe, and create more opportunities for young people to engage and access care. *"To support this, young people need to be involved in the design and implementation of health services".* To improve outcomes, government investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health services is needed to increase the capacity of these services to provide holistic, culturally safe care.

Additionally, building the health workforce is essential, ensuring providers have the skills and knowledge to effectively engage and care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Stephen emphasises that research about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people must involve them directly. *"Through their roles as advisory group members and participants, their voices, stories, and perspectives become central to the research, ensuring that the findings will have a meaningful impact on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people".* His partnership with UIIH and its member services has been invaluable, ensuring his research addresses community needs, with guidance from health staff and supervisors shaping his approach and methodology. Additionally, Stephen acknowledges the essential role of his supervisors, whose expertise and support have helped ensure his research is conducted respectfully and meaningfully.

Stephen advises future Indigenous health researchers to ensure they have the right support academically and personally, as these networks will be essential throughout the journey. *"Surround yourself with other PhD candidates—no one knows this journey better. Share your experiences and ask for help when needed".* He encourages students to focus on the bigger picture and not stress over every detail. Above all, he highlights the importance of writing regularly.

*"Write! You'll thank yourself for it later".*

# Aboriginal health worker, researcher, and advocate for change

Janet Stajic is a Yidinji-Jirrbal woman of Far North Queensland who grew up in Brisbane. She has worked in community development, community services, clinical services, program management, policy, and research across various sectors.

Janet  
Stajic

In 2024, Janet submitted her PhD, *The Unknown Warriors: Continuing the Fight of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Practitioner (A&TSIHWP) Workforce in Urban South East Queensland*, which explored the racialisation of this workforce and its positioning within the Australian health system, concepts of care that extend beyond biomedical concepts, and the limitations of the Australian health system in caring for this workforce. These research findings enable greater understandings of the types of barriers A&TSIHWP commonly face in their workplaces, including interpersonal and structural racism, and provide insight into workplace environments that empower them to thrive, maximising the impact of this workforce on the Australian health system.

**What led you to pursue your PhD research, “The Unknown Warriors: continuing the fight of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Practitioner (A&TSIHWP) workforce in urban South East Queensland”?**

My interest in this research topic stemmed from my experiences working as an A&TSIHW, which I first trained as in 2008. My motivation was due to an enduring interest I had in health, and a strong desire to improve the lives of my people. Before long, I began to experience first-hand the hierarchical nature of the health system workforce and the undervaluing of the role, as many A&TSIHWP experience, despite the diverse skills, unique expertise and knowledge the workforce brings.

Over 10 years later, despite tireless efforts by this workforce and its peak body in advocating for better recognition, there had been little change. I’ve learned that research can be used as a valuable advocacy tool, giving a voice to our people, and I felt a responsibility to try to make a difference.

**What was your chosen methodology, and why was it relevant to your PhD research?**

Indigenous Women’s Standpoint Theory provided a framework for my research where Indigenous sovereignty was foundational and constituted the interconnectedness of our ways of knowing, being, and doing. This positionality was drawn from my lived experiences as an Aboriginal woman and A&TSIHW. Critical Race Theory was relevant to this research as I wanted to understand how power via race was operating, given this workforce is the only racially-defined health workforce in Australia, and due to its positioning at the bottom of the health system workforce hierarchy. This research did not seek to prove or disprove whether racism exists, but instead understand A&TSIHWP experiences and navigations of it, privileging their testimonies. I applied Indigenist Research Methodology which is carried out by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers and informed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants, with the goal to be of service to and inform the Indigenous liberation struggle, to be free of oppression, and to gain power.

It requires an understanding of the colonial history of Australia and its impact on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and upholding: resistance as the emancipatory imperative; political integrity; and the privileging of Indigenous voices. I chose a qualitative approach to this research given its cultural appropriateness and valuing of storytelling, with Yarning as the chosen method to foster truth telling by A&TSIHWP participants.

**What are the key findings and implications of your PhD research?**

My overall goal of undertaking this research was to bring greater recognition to the A&TSIHWP professional workforce in the hope that they feel heard and empowered. The research findings hold multiple implications for policy, practice, advocacy, education and training, theory, and subsequent research. Two key research implications are: ‘Closing the Gap’; and eliminating racism from the Australian health system. This workforce has a unique role in health service delivery and is best positioned to reduce barriers to ensuring provision of culturally safe care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, contributing to ‘closing the gap’ in health and life outcomes. The Australian health system is founded upon western biomedical frameworks and models of care which are often in conflict with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander holistic health care frameworks and concepts of care.





## Supporting stronger futures by improving maternal and infant health

Cecilia Castiello is a PhD candidate at the UQ Poche Centre with a background in Social Sciences and Health Policy and is passionate about health equity and community-led solutions.

This research found a clear contradiction between the aspirational goals of a 'health system free of racism' and the experiences of A&TSIHWP. These findings enable greater understandings of the types of barriers A&TSIHWP commonly face in their workplaces, including both interpersonal and structural racism, and provide insight into workplace environments that empower them to thrive, maximising the impact of this workforce on the Australian health system. A&TSIHWP were identified as the original anti-racists, having developed and implemented their own unwritten anti-racism strategies for decades. Anti-racism policies need to include the dismantling of structures that prevent the expansion and progression of this workforce. A&TSIHWP should be seen and valued as a part of the solution and their experiences and knowledges should be upheld in building evidence to inform policy at various levels within the health system. These systemic issues need to be addressed if there is a real commitment to growing the A&TSIHWP workforce and 'closing the gap' in health equity in Australia.

Her research career began in regional and remote communities, where she worked for community-controlled organisations in Kenya and Uganda, focusing on sexual and women's health. These experiences ignited her passion for health equity and community-led research, leading her to migrate to Meaanjin/Magandjin. Cecilia has worked across Australia and internationally in Indigenous health, developing a strengths-based research approach that prioritises community-driven solutions.

Cecilia's current research at the UQ Poche Centre builds on this commitment, focusing on maternal and infant health through the evaluation of the Deadly Fit Mums program and the Birthing in Our Community model in her PhD *"Deadly Fit Mums: Yarning about health and wellbeing of Mums and their families"*. Cecilia believes that ensuring mothers have comprehensive, culturally responsive care can lead to significant, long-term benefits for maternal and infant health.

Joining the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health has allowed Cecilia to conduct research that is embedded in community priorities. The Centre's emphasis on Indigenous-led methodologies and partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) has ensured that community-driven priorities remain central to her project. She has also benefited from the mentorship of experienced researchers from varied professional backgrounds, which has deepened her expertise in qualitative and quantitative research methods and data analysis.

Cecilia's research indicates holistic, culturally safe programs like Deadly Fit Mums can significantly enhance maternal wellbeing by addressing physical health and social and emotional support. Her findings suggest that integrating culturally appropriate fitness and nutrition programs within existing maternal health services increases engagement and empowers women in their health journeys.

For Cecilia, witnessing the impact of community-led maternal health programs has been particularly rewarding. Hearing directly from mothers about their increased confidence and wellbeing and seeing the dedication of ACCHO staff in delivering culturally safe care reaffirms the importance of strengths-based, community-driven research. Working alongside the frontline staff has been inspiring, highlighting the powerful role of community-controlled models of care in supporting women and families.

Cecilia hopes her research will strengthen the evidence base for culturally responsive maternal health interventions and advocate for their broader implementation. By demonstrating the effectiveness of community-led programs like Deadly Fit Mums, she aims to inform policy changes that prioritise Indigenous-led health models and help secure long-term funding for these vital services.

Beyond her PhD, Cecilia plans to continue working at the intersection of research, policy, and program evaluation, focusing on Indigenous health and community-led initiatives. She is particularly interested in exploring the scalability and sustainability of successful maternal health interventions, potentially informing national policy. She hopes to apply her research skills in an international setting, leveraging her experience in health equity to contribute to global maternal and child health initiatives.

Cecilia Castiello



# Advancing STI research through community collaboration

Helena King is a public health researcher, Registered Nurse, and Immunisation Provider, currently undertaking a PhD at the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health. Her PhD, *“Multilevel, community co-designed interventions to control sexually transmitted infections affecting 15-29-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Far North Queensland”*, builds on extensive experience in First Nations health, clinical education, and health service management.



Helena's commitment to health equity was shaped by a visit to the UNHCR Dadaab refugee complex in Kenya in 1992, sparking a career dedicated to improving social determinants of health. As an emergency nurse in inner-city Melbourne during the late 1990s heroin epidemic, she witnessed the devastating impact of end-stage hepatitis C and AIDS—diseases now manageable with modern treatments. Later, while working in rural New Zealand and completing her master's research, she encountered the stark inequities of preventable acute rheumatic fever, which continues to affect Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Māori children at some of the highest rates in the world.

At the University of Southern Queensland, Helena led collaborative research projects focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health in the Darling Downs region, contributing to the creation of Aboriginal liaison roles in emergency departments, educational resources for Aboriginal health workers, and the establishment of a First Nations advocacy panel. Now at the UQ Poche Centre, she is fulfilling a long-held dream of working with Professor James Ward and Associate Professor Judith Dean—national leaders in sexually transmitted infections (STIs) research—to advance sustainable, community-led health initiatives.

Helena believes that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research must be co-designed to ensure cultural appropriateness, address community needs, and give communities control over their information. STIs disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities due to limited access to culturally appropriate healthcare and broader social determinants. She hopes that embedding community ownership in interventions will improve STI awareness, testing rates, and access to treatment.

A proud member of the Poche research team, Helena values the collaboration and mentorship that have shaped her research journey. Working within the Poche Network and ATLAS surveillance system has broadened her expertise, and guidance from the Centre's Aboriginal research team has deepened her understanding of Indigenous methodologies and ways of knowing and doing. She looks forward to building on the relationships Poche Centre staff in Cairns have established with Aboriginal communities in Far North Queensland, strengthening partnerships with local health services, and engaging in conversations about the impact of multilevel STI interventions.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Helena's HDR studies has been the support of her colleagues and Elder in Residence, Dr Aunty Mary Martin AM.

The knowledge shared by her Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues and Aunty Mary has provided a strong foundation for embedding Indigenous methodologies into her research. Working with an established network of Poche researchers has helped her stay connected to her study sites, ensuring a strong foundation for her research.

Helena hopes her research will contribute to improving health outcomes and policies by addressing the persistent burden of STIs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Rather than relying on single-level approaches, her research champions the concept that the interdependence and synergy of many levels of health interventions co-designed by the local communities they are targeted towards, will improve STI control. By measuring care cascades—tracking clinic access, testing, re-testing, and treatment—her research seeks to demonstrate that community-driven, multi-layered strategies are not only culturally appropriate and sustainable but can also reduce STI transmission and improve long-term health outcomes.

Looking ahead, Helena is focused on making the most of her HDR studies at the Poche Centre, taking advantage of courses and networking opportunities in STI control, epidemiology, and surveillance. She hopes to undertake an HDR placement with the World Health Organization and ultimately work at a government level to drive health equity and justice for all Australians.



# Placement students

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## Stefani Andani

Winter Research Scholar  
Master of Public Health

**Advisor:** Dr Stuart Leske

**Project:** Health services in urban areas for Indigenous people.

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## Angelina Barbieri-Yates

Placement Student  
Bachelor of Health Science

**Advisors:** James Fowler and  
Associate Professor Judith Dean

**Project:** A systematic review exploring experiences of healthcare from the perspective of Indigenous LGBTQIASGBB2S+ peoples and service providers in CANZUS countries.

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## Alyssa Cormick

Placement Student  
Master of Psychology (Health)

**Advisors:** Associate Professor  
Judith Dean, Dr Kiara Minto,  
Kellie Stacy and Jethro Romer

**Project:** A scoping review aiming to explore the empirical literature on ToP and contraceptive care for First Nations people in these four nations, identifying potential barriers, facilitators and recommendations for care.

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## Annabel Douglas

Winter Research Scholar  
Bachelor of Nursing /  
Bachelor of Midwifery

**Advisors:** Associate Professor  
Judith Dean and Dr Penny Haora

**Project:** Birthing in Our Community (BiOC) – Healthy Mums & Bubs, and including the Deadly Fit Mums program.

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## Murray Hall

Summer Research Scholar  
Bachelor of Science Program,  
School of Public Health

**Advisor:** Dr Stuart Leske

**Project:** A review of Australian hospital policy initiatives to increase anti-racism and cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients.

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## Minnie Hazell

Winter Research Scholar  
Bachelor of Health Sciences  
(Clinical Health)

**Advisor:** Dr Kiara Minto

**Project:** Relationships and sexual health education for young Australians.

*“Over the course of four weeks, I engaged with the real processes and software needed for health research; finally bringing theory from my Health Sciences degree to life in a positive research environment. Guided by an experienced and supportive supervisor, we nurtured my interest in advancing the sexual health of young people, while also developing my skills in open-science research through a meaningful project. My time at the Poche Centre was an enriching and valuable opportunity that equipped me with the confidence needed to contribute purposefully to health in priority populations.”*

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## Yash Mugadur

Winter Research Scholar  
Bachelor of Science,  
Majoring in Biomedical Science

**Advisor:** Dr Victor Oguoma

**Project:** A systematic review project looking at digital innovation integrated models of care for management of multiple chronic diseases in First Nations peoples across the globe.

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## Zoë Nano

Bachelor of Health Science (Honours),  
with a major in Public Health

**Advisors:** Associate Professor  
Federica Barzi, Associate Professor  
Judith Dean and Dr Salenna Elliot

**Project:** Investigated how sexual health knowledge relates to sexual behaviours, sexually transmissible infections (STI) and blood-borne virus testing and STI diagnosis among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people using the GOANNA Survey 2 data.

*“My journey with Poche started in 2022, when I joined as an undergraduate student completing a research project course using GOANNA Survey 2 data. In 2023, I returned as a Research Assistant for BiOC and Deadly Fit Mums, before stepping into the Project Officer role for Young Deadly Free. In 2024, I transitioned into a postgraduate research role while working part-time on Young Deadly Free. Being part of Poche has been such a rewarding experience. It’s given me the chance to contribute to strengths-based, Indigenous-led health research, work alongside incredible mentors, and grow both personally and professionally. I’m excited to keep learning and making a positive impact in this space!”*

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### John Ngo

Placement Student  
Master of Public Health

**Advisors:** Dr Penny Haora, Kellie Stacy and Associate Professor Judith Dean

**Project:** Scoping review mapping the literature on evaluations of initiatives directed at optimising the early childhood of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.

*“My most valued learning from working with the UQ Poche Centre has been the additional insight into how research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples should be conducted. Hopefully, I now carry with me a bit more cultural competence, which will be invaluable wherever I end up. I also felt privileged to have had access to a treasure trove of knowledge and experience from a network of individuals who are all passionate about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ health.”*

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### Vaidehi Pawar

Winter Research Scholar  
Master of Public Health

**Advisor:** Dr Edmund Kanmiki

**Project:** Effect of climate change on the health of Indigenous people. An exploratory scoping review.

*“This research opportunity marked a pivotal moment in my professional career. It allowed me to contribute to impactful research while also collaborating with dedicated individuals committed to advancing Indigenous health. The outstanding guidance and support at every step of the process is incomparable. The entire team at the UQ Poche Centre made this experience truly memorable.”*

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### Edward Plant

Placement Student  
Master of Public Health

**Advisors:** James Fowler and Associate Professor Judith Dean

**Project:** Grey literature search identifying and exploring services provided for Indigenous LGBTQIASGBB2S+ peoples in Australia.

*“I am extremely grateful for having been afforded the opportunity to work with, and learn from, the amazing team at UQ Poche. The generosity of my supervisors with their time, patience and teaching has fostered my learning with respect to Indigenous Health across many domains, as well as specifics in qualitative research methods, and how to improve health equity for Indigenous LGBTQIASGBB2S+ peoples. Much of this has also enriched my clinical practice as a G.P. registrar at an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation. Wherever my career takes me, I will carry the lessons learned from the UQ Poche team and strive to make a meaningful impact together with Indigenous Australians and Indigenous peoples globally.”*

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### Lucabella Rynne

Placement Student  
Bachelor of Health Science Public Health

**Advisor:** Kellie Stacy

**Project:** Supporting the GOANNA Survey 3.

*“During my placement with Kellie at the UQ Poche Centre, I gained invaluable insight into the coordination of the Goanna Survey 3, which focuses on STIs and BBVs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 16–29 years old. I learned about the complexities of ethical approvals, stakeholder engagement, and large-scale data collection. Shadowing Kellie highlighted the importance of culturally safe research practices and strengthened my understanding of Indigenous health. The experience reinforced my passion for public health and research, and I truly appreciated working in such a supportive environment that prioritises community-driven initiatives.”*

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### Anne van der Breggen

Placement Student  
Master International Health at the KIT  
Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam

**Advisors:** Dr Stuart Leske, Dr Saira Sanjida and Associate Professor Judith Dean

**Project:** A systematic review of interventions to reduce racism, prejudice, bias or discrimination or increase cultural safety for Indigenous people in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States in hospitals and tertiary health care settings.

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### Linglong (Natalie) Xu

Winter Research Scholar  
Bachelor of Science

**Advisor:** Dr Victor Oguoma

**Project:** A systematic review project looking at digital innovation integrated models of care for management of multiple chronic diseases in First Nations peoples across the globe.

*“This project has been a deeply meaningful experience for me, offering the opportunity that my interests and knowledge can be applied in the real world and potentially make a genuine difference for Indigenous Australians. Everyone at the Poche Centre is incredibly friendly and kind, and they are all knowledgeable, coming from diverse backgrounds with unique perspectives on projects. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work at the Poche.”*

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## Pathways to a PhD

# Doing research for Mob

For the third consecutive year, the Pathways to a PhD: Doing Research for Mob program has provided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates an invaluable opportunity to explore doctoral study options. In 2024, we welcomed 13 participants from across the country, representing a 30% increase in attendance from 2023, reflecting the success of our broadened advertising strategy in reaching aspiring Indigenous researchers.

The experience was transformative for many attendees, with several expressing their enthusiasm and intention to pursue a PhD. Already, one participant has secured enrolment for Semester 1, 2025, while another is preparing to commence with the UQ Poche Centre in Research Quarter 3, 2025. These early commitments are a testament to the program's impact in building confidence and clarity around postgraduate pathways.

The program's influence extends beyond immediate enrolments. Our team remains in ongoing discussions with multiple participants, providing guidance on alternative pathways to strengthen their eligibility for a PhD. Two individuals have already enrolled in a Master's Coursework with a research component, and we continue to support others in developing their research portfolios.

A highlight of the program is hearing firsthand how it has empowered participants to take the next step in their academic journey. Participant Tanika Perry shared, *"I attended the Pathways program in 2024, and it changed my perspective on further study options."*

*The courage it gave me supported me to look into my options for 2025—where I am enrolling into my master's. I couldn't recommend this program more to gain clarity on your next study pathway."*

Another participant, Kate Jeffrey said, *"The Pathways Program was pivotal in my development of an understanding of how to move my research idea into fruition. The core differences in this program are that it is delivered in a culturally safe space and way."*

*It was beautiful to make connections with mob from across Australia and those connections and the support has continued beyond the program."*

Beyond academic outcomes, the program fosters a strong sense of community among participants, helping them build connections with like-minded peers, leading Indigenous academics, and potential supervisors. The ability to network in a culturally safe and supportive environment is a crucial component of the program's success.

The impact of this initiative is already evident and the ongoing success stories of past attendees reinforces the importance of ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander candidates have access to culturally appropriate guidance and mentorship. Since its 2022 inception, the program has welcomed 43 participants, resulting in 9 confirmed PhD enrolments. The student support team at the UQ Poche Centre remains actively engaged with participants and the wider community to support entry into HDR programs.

The continuous cycle of feedback remains vital to refining and enhancing the Pathways to a PhD program.

As we plan for 2025, we are committed to expanding support structures, ensuring that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people feel confident navigating the research landscape and achieving their academic aspirations. The 2025 program will evolve to meet and greet sessions with potential advisors, in-depth information on Indigenous data governance, Indigenous data sovereignty and cultural obligations, and obligations to community.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the academics, speakers, and staff who have made this year's program such a success. Most importantly, we celebrate the dedication and ambition of our participants. We look forward to witnessing their continued contributions to academia and the broader community.



# Research achievements

At the UQ Poche Centre, we are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples by supporting community ties to reduce health inequity.

Our engagement strategy enhances connections with existing allies and new organisations in the healthcare sector, ensuring our research directly contributes to our vision and impact. Collaborations with key healthcare services are vital to our success, driving our initiatives and bolstering community outreach. These collective efforts underline our dedication to advancing Indigenous health research and achieving meaningful health outcomes for Indigenous communities across Australia.

## Research

\$16.3M

New grants awarded in 2024\*

29

Funding applications submitted in 2024

12

Funding applications submitted and awaiting outcomes

## Academic work

136

Publications

35

Citations

35%

Cited publications

51

Collaborative publications\*\*

143

Media items

300 million

Audience reach\*\*\*

## Online engagement

16,577

Website visitors

41,851

Website views

96

Countries in the website's geographic distribution

\* Includes grants awarded in 2024 with funding commencing in 2025

\*\* Publications involving collaboration with universities, research institutes, hospitals and medical centres in Australia

\*\*\* Based on the 2023 Media Summary from the University of Queensland



# Research projects

## National STI and BBV health promotion campaign: Young Deadly Free

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE (2020-2025) |  
LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

The Young Deadly Free project began in 2016 and continually evolves based on feedback and the needs of the communities it aims to support. The project aims to increase sexually transmissible infection (STI) and blood-borne virus (BBV) testing and treatment rates among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people by working with stakeholders to develop engaging resources for young people, clinicians, and those who support them.

In 2024, Young Deadly Free launched a suite of nine new sexual health promotion videos for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in urban and regional areas. The launch was covered in the National Indigenous Times and the First Nations Telegraph, helping to amplify the project's reach and impact. The project saw the release of the HIV Education Kit for World AIDS Day and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV Awareness Week and held a photo shoot for a new series of sexual health and wellbeing posters that will be available to sexual health services in 2025.

The project continued to strengthen its digital presence in 2024 with social media reach and engagement, the development of a new style guide and updates to online resources, including the project website.

Discussions were also held with the Central and Northern Land Councils about potential translations of existing animations on sexually transmissible infections, HIV, and syphilis to improve accessibility and engagement.

Young Deadly Free continued its relationship with HERO Condoms to support sexual health awareness and STI prevention in Indigenous communities. This collaboration has increased condom availability and helped promote safe sexual practices through community events and outreach initiatives.

During the year, the project also developed the Young Deadly Free teacher resource and accompanying fact sheets, created in partnership with the Northern Territory Department of Education. The updated resource aligns with the current curriculum and provides a culturally appropriate, school-based relationships and sexuality education program. The new fact sheets cover sexual consent, healthy relationships, and the rights of young people.

Young Deadly Free had a presence at several community events, hosting stalls to engage with young people and promote sexual health awareness. The project participated in the UQ St Lucia Orientation Week Market Day, the NAIDOC Week Musgrave Park Family Fun Day, and a National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation Conference, providing resources and information to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Looking forward, Young Deadly Free is working toward expanding its reach, refining resources based on community feedback, and strengthening engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. The project aims to enhance its impact through ongoing partnerships, new materials, and targeted campaigns while continuing research and evaluation to support long-term health equity.



### 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow  
and Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Judith Dean**  
Principal Research Fellow

**Dr Kiara Minto**  
Research Fellow

**Dr Jessica Wade**  
Research Officer

**Amanda Sibosado**  
Research Officer

**Zoë Nano**  
Project Officer

**Dana Mam**  
Project Officer



# Integration and expansion of a sentinel surveillance system to improve infectious disease outcomes for Indigenous Australians; the ATLAS network, and improving surveillance infrastructure for Indigenous primary health care

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURES FUND – PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RESEARCH DATA INFRASTRUCTURE (2021-2025), NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL COUNCIL – PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT (2021-2026) AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE (2021-2026) | LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

Since its establishment in 2016, the ATLAS Indigenous Primary Care Surveillance and Research Network (ATLAS) has been instrumental in strengthening the understanding and response to sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and blood-borne viruses (BBVs) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) sector, ATLAS has grown to include approximately 90 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service (ACCHS) clinical sites across Australia.

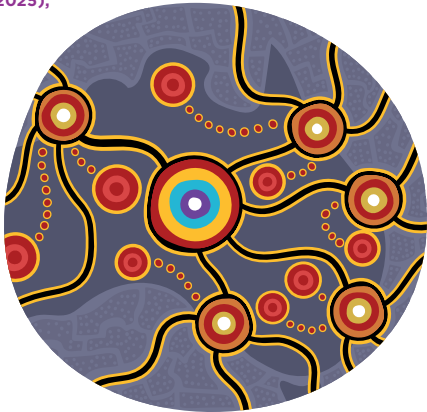
The network provides participating ACCHOs with service-level or site-specific reports and dashboard analyses, giving them a comprehensive view of STI and BBV screening, positivity, treatment completion and outcomes at their clinics. This allows services to contextualise state and national data with their own local insights while enhancing their capacity for continuous quality improvement initiatives.

In 2024, ATLAS continued to grow its national footprint, with new agreements signed with ACCHOs in Victoria, the Northern Territory, Western Australia, and Queensland. Expansion discussions are also ongoing with services in the Northern Territory and Tasmania.

In addition to expanding the number of participating services, ATLAS has been progressing efforts to extend its scope beyond STIs and BBVs to include vaccine-preventable diseases and other infectious conditions, reinforcing its role as Australia's only comprehensive Indigenous primary care surveillance network.

In March 2024, ATLAS farewelled Clare Bradley, who had been the Program Manager since the network's inception. Clare played a significant role in establishing ATLAS, maintaining and strengthening collaborations with ACCHOs, and managing the program's operations. Her contributions were instrumental in shaping the network and supporting its growth into a national surveillance and research initiative. While her departure marked a transition for the program, ATLAS continued to evolve throughout the year, with new team members bringing specialised expertise to develop and refine data systems and work closely with ACCHOs and clinical services to enable ATLAS to continuously adapt in response to the needs of Indigenous communities.

Looking to the project's future, the focus remains on expanding the reach and utility of ATLAS while ensuring the program continues to strengthen infrastructure to sustainably support evidence based clinical care and ACCHO-led service delivery. ATLAS will continue to support efforts to reduce the impact of STIs and BBVs while aligning with the priorities of Indigenous communities across Australia.



The ATLAS artwork was created by Jordan Lovegrove, Ngarrindjeri Graphic Artist & Designer

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Research Lead and Chief Investigator

**Dr Claire Bradley**  
Program Manager

**Carol El-Hayek**  
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**Shellee Williams**  
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**Dr Rani West**  
Research Fellow

**Dr Claudio Sanhueza**  
Senior Data Scientist

**Dr Wathsala Mohotti**  
Data Analyst

**Shubham Chawre**  
Data Analyst

**Alan Ho**  
Data Analyst

**Dr Kate Lewis**  
Data Manager

**Lauren Trask**  
CQI Research Officer

**Dr Parham Kebria**  
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## ATLAS Stakeholder Workshop

In October 2024, ATLAS hosted a two-day Stakeholder Workshop in Meanjin, on Yuggera and Turrbal Country (Brisbane) for members of the network to connect and discuss current priorities in sexual health, STI and BBV prevention and ways in which ATLAS can better support service CQI initiatives. Each year, the workshop grows in member service representation, with thirty-nine delegates attending from ACCHS across Australia in 2024.



Respected Yuggera Elder, Uncle Steven Coghill gave a Welcome to Country, and special guests Professor Aunty Gracelyn Smallwood (OAM) and Dr Aunty Mary Martin (AO) shared stories and inspiring insights from their years of experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Dr Rani West was the Master of Ceremonies for the two-day workshop and ATLAS Chief Investigator Professor James Ward, opened with an overview of ATLAS, its establishment, purpose and evolution. Ms Shellee Williams and Dr Parham Kebria discussed the research and data infrastructure of ATLAS, the network's operations and updates. Professor Douglas Boyle, Director HaBIC, Research Information Technology, elaborated on this and spoke to the GRHANITE computer software that supports ATLAS and the process by which it deidentifies data extracted from electronic medical record systems.

Collaborative workshops were conducted to build upon information shared in presentations and included opportunities to discuss practical strategies to maximise use of ATLAS data and the dashboard.

Professor Aunty Gracelyn Smallwood (OAM), proud Birrigubba, Kalkadoon and South Sea Islander woman, Registered Nurse, Midwife and Activist, shared knowledge and learnings from her life and career, reflecting on more than 50 years of activism in sexual health, focusing on STIs and HIV. Updates on syphilis and congenital syphilis were given by Dr Alison Chew (General Practitioner and Public Health Medical Registrar at Winnunga Nimmitjah) and Dr Diane Rowling (Sexual Health and Public Health Specialist Physician), and on STIs, HIV and Mpox by Dr Ian Anderson (Public Health Physician), also discussing sexual health wellbeing and language. A panel discussion featured member service data analysts and sexual health nurses from different jurisdictions and provided a platform for knowledge sharing on challenges and opportunities.

Delegates appreciated the opportunity to engage in open and respectful discussions, with many highlighting the structured networking sessions as a valuable part of the event.

The workshop reinforced the importance of community-driven approaches, providing the ATLAS team with valuable insights to further refine their support for ACCHOs. It also provided practical strategies that participants could apply within their services to enhance sexual health initiatives and continuous quality improvement.

The ATLAS team are constantly incorporating feedback to improve its usefulness to services and is committed to contributing to better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

*"Coming here for this workshop and speaking with other people in similar roles and hearing what they've got to say and strategies that they've tried, it makes such a big difference. ATLAS for me is more than just data collection and reporting, it feels a bit like a team who you don't work side by side with every day, but you come together and feel connected because you have similar situations"*

(Ruby Matthews, BRAMS)



# Eliminating endemic sexually transmissible infections in remote Australia using targeted multidisciplinary strategies

NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL - SYNERGY GRANT (2020-2025) |  
LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

In 2024, the ENDING-STI Synergy project team continued their efforts to combat sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in Katherine West, Northern Territory and Central Queensland.

Over recent years, the team has gathered extensive data to better understand the factors driving transmission of STIs and their impact in these regions. The multidisciplinary team of investigators has analysed and synthesised a wide range of information, including STI diagnoses and complications, STI testing and treatment data from participating health services, genomics data to map STI transmission networks, insights from focus groups and interviews with young people and health service staff and data on social determinants of health, such as income, employment, housing, and education. These efforts have built a comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities for addressing STIs in these communities.

Alongside this work, local study coordinators Rani Lawler and Jethro Romer have been establishing vital links between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members, health services and the 'University mob'. Key to strong community partnerships has been respectful engagement and two-way learning. To maintain these connections, the coordinators have travelled widely, covering hundreds to thousands of kilometres throughout the year. This work is not without challenges, and in the Northern Territory, research activities were suspended for several months due to extensive flooding, which forced the evacuation of some of the involved communities.

Despite the challenges, the team successfully consulted widely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives this year, seeking their ideas for actions to address STIs. This was followed by a codesign process, supported by facilitator Sue Mueller from the Better Together Collective, to share findings from the data synthesis and work collaboratively to prioritise which actions should be taken forward to the implementation and evaluation phases of the project. In Central Queensland, the codesign culminated in a full-day workshop in Rockhampton in June led by Jethro Romer and Professor James Ward and attended by fourteen Community Advisors. Codesign meetings continue with Community Advisors from each of the participating communities in the Northern Territory.

In September 2024, the ENDING STI team had an abstract titled 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Involvement in Research' selected for oral presentation at the 25th International Union Against Sexually Transmitted Infections (IUSTI) World Congress on Gadigal Country in Sydney. The abstract was presented by Robert Palm (IMPACT-STI) and Jethro Romer, with video input from Rani Lawler.

UQ Poche Centre investigators led by Professor James Ward successfully secured a Medical Research Future Fund grant (Multidisciplinary initiatives to impact incidence and prevalence of STIs among First Nations Peoples) to extend funding for the ENDING-STI Synergy and IMPACT-STI projects for a further four years, paving the way for the implementation and evaluation phases.

The project acknowledges and thanks participants, Community Advisors, partnering Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and other organisations in both regions for their valuable contribution and ongoing support.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

### Professor James Ward

Professorial Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

### Dr Salenna Elliott

National Study Coordinator

### Jethro Romer

Central Queensland Study Coordinator

### Jane Wallace

Principal Research Technician

### Associate Professor Federica Barzi

Biostatistician



**Rear L-R** - Jethro Romer, Sue Muller, Philip Hopkins, Jhi Hopkins, Professor James Ward, Renarta Whitcombe, Lexie Jarrett, Sonya Ingra, Jaucintha Iles, Maria Lawton, Shawn Doak.

**Front L-R**- Tylin Guthrie, Melaya Guthrie, Matthew O'Donnell, Karen Murphy, Elaine Williams.

# Third Australian cross-sectional survey of social and behavioural factors related to BBVs and STIs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples aged 16-29 years: GOANNA Survey 3

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND AGED CARE (2023-2026) |  
LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

GOANNA Survey 3 is the third national survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples aged 16-29. The project examines patterns of sexual health knowledge, behaviours and access to health services related to sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and blood-borne viruses (BBVs).

The study findings aim to improve the understanding of links between behaviour, sexual health knowledge, health care access and risk of STIs and BBVs in this priority population, monitor changes since previous surveys and identify emerging issues. This study is working to advance knowledge, scholarship, clinical and public health practice in STI and BBV transmission and prevention and help inform government policy and develop targeted interventions to reduce rates of STIs and BBVs in young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The project team has engaged with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations nationally and is pleased to partner with Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS), Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Service (QAIHC), Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (Congress), Danila Dilba Health Service and the Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales (AH&MRC).

We would also like to recognise the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (NACCHO) and Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO) for their support of the project.

We will continue to build collaborations with other Aboriginal community-controlled organisations to establish a network of GOANNA Survey partners across Australia. Prior to data collection beginning, the project team consulted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples aged 16-29 years to co-design and pilot test the updated questionnaire to ensure that the data collected meets the goals of the project and that the revised questionnaire is culturally safe and appropriate.

In-person data collection for the survey commenced with partnering organisation QAIHC in July 2024 at the Musgrave Park Family Fun Day during NAIDOC week. In September 2024, online data collection began, supported by a targeted advertising campaign on Facebook and Instagram to broaden reach and engagement.

The project team acknowledges and appreciates the support of the following organisations for promoting the online survey through their social media platforms: 2Spirits, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia, Geraldton Aboriginal Medical Service, The Yep Project, Maari Ma Health, Office of Gender Equity and Diversity, Many Genders One Voice, South West Aboriginal Women's Collective, Margaret River Community Centre, Her Rules Her Game, Queensland Council for LGBTI Health, and the Tjindu Foundation. Their efforts have played a valuable role in expanding the survey's reach and engagement.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Kellie Stacy**  
Study Coordinator

**Dr Salenna Elliott**  
Project Investigator and Mentor



The Goanna Artwork was created by Aunty Rochelle Patten, an Elder of the Cumeragunja community.





# Implementing a precision public health approach to eliminate sexually transmitted infections and control HIV in remote Australia

NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL - IDEAS GRANT (2020-2025) |  
LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD



The IMPACT-STI project takes a multi-disciplinary precision public health approach to addressing and eliminating sexually transmissible infections (STIs) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, working closely with local government and Aboriginal community-controlled health services.

In 2024, the project held regular Community Coalition meetings, bringing together community representatives, health professionals, and stakeholders to discuss local health needs and guide the direction of the study. The IMPACT-STI project worked closely with six Aboriginal Medical Services; Apunipima, Mamu, Mulungu, Wuchopperen, Gurriny Yealamuck, and stakeholders in the communities to develop community-led strategies for improving sexual health outcomes. These meetings provided a space for open discussions, where members shared insights, contributed ideas, and ensured the research remained community-led and relevant. Discussions focused on community health needs, with a primary focus on empowering the Community Coalition to consider “Ideas for Action” for the ongoing study. Their involvement helped shape ongoing discussions and supported the project’s commitment to collaboration. These meetings will continue as an essential part of the project, fostering partnerships and strengthening local engagement in sexual health research.

On 18 June, the study hosted a Community Knowledge Gathering workshop at the Tjapukai Cultural Centre, bringing together 15 community members, health professionals, and local stakeholders to discuss baseline data and workshop ideas for action aimed at addressing sexual health in the Cairns and hinterlands region. This gathering provided an opportunity for networking and discussions on ideas for action to tackle STIs. This workshop was an opportunity for community members to actively contribute to IMPACT-STIs’ “Ideas for Action”, that aim to address health issues within their communities. The gathering highlighted the importance of community-driven initiatives and collaborative efforts among stakeholders to promote sexual health awareness and strategies within the region.

In July, Research Fellow, Sandi Mitchell and Senior Community Engagement Officer Robbie Palm participated in the Yarrabah NAIDOC celebration and helped with the Gurriny Yealamuck Youth Clinic activities.

Robbie Palm presented at the 25th International Union Against Sexually Transmitted Infections World Congress in Sydney in September, emphasising the critical role of community involvement in sexual health research and sharing insights from the IMPACT-STI project. The congress brought together participants from various countries to discuss their work in sexual health and learn from each other’s experiences.

In November, Senior Community Engagement Officer Mariah Laza participated in the Against STIs Golf Day in Innisfail, organised by Mamu Health Service. The community event aimed to promote the Enhanced Syphilis Response Program, Syphilis Point-of-Care Testing, and the long-term health effects of STIs within the community and surrounding areas.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
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**Dr Clare Bradley**  
Chief Investigator

**Dr Salenna Elliott**  
Chief Investigator

**Dr Sandi Mitchell**  
Research Fellow and  
Senior Research Officer

**Robert Palm**  
Senior Community Engagement Officer

**Mariah Laza**  
Senior Community Engagement Officer

**Carl Honeysett**  
Principal Research and  
Engagement Coordinator

The IMPACT STI artwork was created by artist Tahalani Djarnda Hunter, a proud Djabugay woman.





# Implementation of anti-racism strategies to improve health outcomes for First Nations peoples in a large urban hospital

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - 2022 INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESEARCH (2023-2025) |  
LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

Racism remains a significant barrier to equitable health care and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, affecting access, service delivery, and patient engagement.

A national survey reported that 32.4% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients experienced racial discrimination in medical settings most or all of the time, leading to delays in seeking care, avoidance of health services, and failure to follow up on essential treatments. Despite evidence of racism in hospital settings, there is limited research on effective interventions to address it.

This project represents an important and timely step toward addressing racism in hospital care, making it one of the first initiatives of its kind in a major Australian public hospital. The research seeks to understand how racism manifests in hospital care, identify system-level enablers and constraints for anti-racist strategies, and determine the levers that promote the adoption of anti-racist practices in everyday hospital care. The project involves the development, piloting, and evaluation of an anti-racism intervention informed by Indigenous perspectives and experiences.

Through engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health consumers, service area staff, and hospital leadership, the project will identify factors contributing to racism across personal, interpersonal, and institutional levels.

Co-design workshops will develop flexible strategies to support the intervention, ensuring that learnings translate into daily hospital practices. The intervention will be piloted in two service areas, with feasibility and acceptability assessments guiding its refinement. The research will also explore pathways for future scalability to extend its impact beyond the initial pilot phase.

In 2024, the project advanced efforts to implement anti-racism strategies in hospital care. Engagement with health consumers, hospital staff, and leadership has shaped culturally safe interventions and strengthened reporting mechanisms for racism-related incidents. The team presented findings at the Caboolture, Kilcoy, and Woodford (CKW) Research Symposium in October 2024, highlighting research insights. Ongoing work focuses on addressing systemic barriers, ensuring sustainability, and embedding Indigenous-led approaches in hospital practices.

The project is building a comprehensive dataset on racism in hospital care and improving reporting pathways for health consumers and staff. An Indigenous-led co-design process is guiding the development of anti-racism strategies, with a flexible intervention model supporting future scalability. A feasibility-tested intervention, including cultural safety audits and training, will help sustain change. By embedding Indigenous leadership, the project aims to drive lasting improvements in health equity and culturally safe care.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
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**Professor Anthony Shakeshaft**  
Professorial Research Fellow  
and Investigator

**Dr Shea Spierings**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
and Investigator

**Associate Professor Janet Xiang-Yu Hou**  
Research Fellow and Investigator

**Dr Saira Sajinda**  
Research Fellow and Investigator

**Dr Anton Clifford-Motopi**  
Senior Research Fellow and Investigator

**Natasha Lee**  
Research Fellow and Study Coordinator

**Richard Violette**  
Research Fellow and Study Coordinator

# Developing a model of care for LGBTQI Sistergirls and Brotherboys Communities within Urban Aboriginal Medical Services: Blak and Proud

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND – EMERGING PRIORITIES AND CONSUMER DRIVEN RESEARCH INITIATIVE – 2023 MODELS OF CARE FOR SEXUALITY & GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE & PEOPLE WITH INNATE VARIATIONS OF SEX CHARACTERISTICS (2024–2027) | LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

The Blak and Proud project is focused on creating more affirming and safe healthcare experiences for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Brotherboy and Sistergirl folk within Aboriginal Medical Services.

A core part of this work is the development of the 'BLAK PRIDE Model of Care', co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Brotherboy and Sistergirls and Healthcare Providers. The model will be trialled in 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane' and continually refined to be scalable across multiple health sectors. Additionally, the project is developing the 'BLAK PRIDE Certification', a tiered program to identify, support, and guide Aboriginal Medical Services in providing inclusive and affirming care.

This work builds on the Poche Centre's existing relationships with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Services Brisbane while fostering new collaborations with 2Spirits, the Queensland Council for LGBTI Health, and other health services across Queensland. The establishment of the Blak and Proud Community Reference Group ensures ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Brotherboy and Sistergirl communities across South-East Queensland.

In 2024, the project welcomed two students, Angelina Barbieri-Yates and Edward Plant, who conducted a systematic scoping review of the literature exploring the healthcare experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ Brotherboy and Sistergirl folk. These findings are being analysed and are due to be published in 2025.

Building on the foundations established in 2024, the Blak and Proud project is moving toward a formal study launch in 2025. Developed during a challenging period in Queensland's history, with the repeal of the Path to Treaty and ongoing restrictions on gender-affirming care, this work remains vital. The project seeks to generate meaningful insights, translate them into actionable strategies, and create a scalable Model of Care that supports long-term change across communities, health services, and government policy.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow  
and Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Judith Dean**  
Principal Research Fellow  
and Investigator

**James Fowler**  
Senior Research Officer





## Centre of Research Excellence in Urban Indigenous Health

NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE - NHMRC CENTRES OF RESEARCH EXCELLENCE (2022-2027) |  
LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

The Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) in Urban Indigenous Health is a 5-year program of research.

The UQ Poche Centre has worked with the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) on the Urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Dashboard, which will be hosted on the AIHW website. The dashboard will visualise data on health determinants and health outcomes and will be key to identifying, highlighting and monitoring health outcomes, health services and the broader determinants of health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in each Australian capital city.

The purpose of the dashboard is to fill important knowledge gaps in urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people epidemiology and assist in planning research, interventions, and services implementation to improve the health and wellbeing of urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The dashboard will show unpublished data from 2011 and will include regional profiles and data on perinatal health, type 2 diabetes, chronic kidney disease, cancer, mortality, hospitalisations, and emergency department presentations by age and sex. A beta version of the dashboard is scheduled to be launched in 2025.

Efforts to progress the dashboard have involved regular meetings of a working group made up of AIHW and UQ Poche Centre staff involving governance from a Project Management Group. This group comprises staff from urban community-controlled health services members of the Research Alliance for Urban Community-Controlled Health Services (RAUCCHS).

Ngarrindjeri artist Jordan Lovegrove created artwork for the project and has written the following artist's statement:

*"The artwork shows the value of avoiding aggregate and restricted data, instead providing data that recognises geographical diversity and provides evidence for community-level planning and service delivery. The meeting places with connected pathways represent the capital cities, with different elements within them conveying that the situation is different in each capital city despite sharing some commonalities depicted by the circles."*

### 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow  
and Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Federica Barzi**  
Principal Research Fellow (Biostatistician)  
and Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Judith Dean**  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Dr Shea Spierings**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
and Investigator

**Dr Clare Bradley**  
Senior Research Fellow and Investigator

**Dr Stuart Leske**  
Program Manager



# Closing the final gaps in maternal and infant health: the Deadly Fit Mums program

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - 2021 MATERNAL HEALTH AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES (2023-2026) | LED BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR FEDERICA BARZI

The Deadly Fit Mums (DFM) program is integrated into the Indigenous-led Birthing in Our Community (BiOC) program.

It aims to implement best practice primary prevention and management strategies perinatally through the promotion of lifestyle modifications. Led by exercise physiologists and allied health professionals, DFM encourages pregnant women to increase physical activity and follow a healthy diet. Throughout the four-year grant, the team at the UQ Poche Centre will evaluate the DFM program's effectiveness in improving perinatal health outcomes for mothers and babies and its acceptability and feasibility for expansion across greater Brisbane.

The program is delivered in partnership with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service (ATSICHS) Brisbane, Morton ATSICHS, My Midwives, Yulu-Burri-Ba Aboriginal Corporation for Community Health, UQ Human Movement and Nutrition Sciences, and the UQ School of Public Health.

In 2024, the DFM program focused on gaining a deeper understanding of its implementation, particularly community engagement in exercise sessions and gathering technical knowledge about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Outcome Measure for Integrated Care (ATOMIC) tool. In October 2024, the UQ Poche Centre team visited one of the DFM sites at Redlands Integrated Early Years Place in Capalaba. This visit provided valuable hands-on experience in how the program operates within the community and offered insights from exercise physiotherapists regarding mothers' engagement. A highlight of the day was spending time with the Play Group Team of BiOC Bubs as they created beautiful artwork.

As the ATOMIC tool is relatively new, Dr Tahmina Begum attended a professional training session in November to strengthen her knowledge of its application and use. The session was organised by IUIH, and the rest of the Poche team will participate in the next round of training. In September 2024, Cecilia Castiello began her PhD, *"Deadly Fit Mums: Yarning about health and wellbeing of Mums and their families"*, with the DFM program under the supervision of Associate Professor Federica Barzi, Associate Professor Judith Dean, and Dr Kai Wheeler.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Associate Professor Federica Barzi**  
Principal Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Dr Victor Oguoma**  
Senior Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Judith Dean**  
Principal Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Professor Abdullah Mamun**  
Principal Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Dr Tahmina Begum**  
Research Fellow and Study Coordinator

**Dr Penny Haora**  
Research Fellow

**Cecilia Castiello**  
PhD Candidate





# The LEWIS Study (LEarning, Wondering and Inquiring: Leading System reform, elevating health and wellbeing of our families through BiOC)

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - EMERGING PRIORITIES AND CONSUMER DRIVEN RESEARCH INITIATIVE -  
2021 IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER MOTHERS AND BABIES (2022-2027) |  
LED BY THE INSTITUTE OF URBAN INDIGENOUS HEALTH

The LEWIS is a study led by the Institute of Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) in close partnership with the UQ Poche Centre with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of Australian First Nations babies and families in Southeast Queensland.

By evaluating the feasibility, scalability, sustainability, and cost benefit of the program, this study aims to gather evidence to support the effective scale up of Birthing in our Community (BiOC) programs in Southeast Queensland and nationally. The study name was decided following consultation with the IUIH BiOC staff and mums to capture the aim of the study and acknowledge Lewis', the first Bub 'born within the BiOC program.

In 2024, Investigators continued to meet regularly and, with the support of the Working Group, gained ethical clearance for the Qualitative arm of the study in March.

This allowed data collection to commence in partnership with the teams at each of the BiOC sites, with IUIH community researchers conducting in-depth interviews with women and staff about their experiences in the BiOC program.

During 2024, student Cecilia Castiello commenced her PhD with the LEWIS team, focusing on the Deadly Fit Mums component of the BiOC Program while supporting qualitative data collection.

The LEWIS study has prioritised strengthening relationships and working closely with BiOC program teams to ensure the research is aligned with program needs and remains safe and responsive for the women and families participating. With strong foundations established in 2024, the team is on track to secure ethical clearance for the quantitative and economic evaluation studies in early 2025, paving the way for further research and impact.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Federica Barzi**  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Judith Dean**  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Dr Tahmina Begum**  
Research Fellow

**Dr Penny Haora**  
Research Fellow

**Cecilia Castiello**  
PhD Candidate





## Type 2 diabetes prevalence and management in patients attending an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service in Southeast Queensland over a twelve-year period: factors associated with good management and low risk of hospitalisation

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESEARCH GRANT (2022-2025) |  
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR FEDERICA BARZI

Inala Diabetes Care (INDICARE) is a multi-organisation data-linkage project investigating the management of type 2 diabetes to prevent hospitalisations related to this disease in an urban Indigenous community.

With funding from the Medical Research Future Fund Indigenous Health Research grant, this project aims to identify culturally appropriate and effective strategies to identify treatment that optimises the management of T2D in Indigenous peoples across Australia, especially those living in urban areas. The objectives are to describe type 2 diabetes prevalence and management in patients attending the Southern Queensland Centre of Excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care located in Inala (Inala COE) over a twelve-year period (2010-2022).

To achieve the aim and objectives, this project will link clinical data from the Inala COE, hospitalisation data from Queensland Health (QH), and data for diabetes medications from the Australian Government Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme that is maintained by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

This project has made significant progress throughout the year. Research ethics and governance for data acquisition was completed by Tahmina Begum and Federica Barzi.

During this time, Christopher Sexton coordinated and collaborated with Inala COE clinicians and researchers Geoff Spurling and Prabha Lakhan to prepare clinical data for merging. All data has been provided to AIHW, who have joined their data with records from Inala COE and QH. The linkage was completed at the end of 2024, and data analyses will start in 2025.

All progress on this project has been overseen and discussed with the Inala Community Jury for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research.

### 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Associate Professor Federica Barzi**  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow  
and Chief Investigator

**Stephen Harfield**  
Chief Investigator

**Dr Tahmina Begum**  
Research Fellow

**Christopher Sexton**  
Senior Principal Scientist

# Designing multidisciplinary, co-designed innovative, client-centred models for Indigenous mental health services in South East Queensland

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESEARCH GRANT (2022-2025) | LED BY PROFESSOR ROXANNE BAINBRIDGE

This project aims to improve Indigenous mental health care by addressing barriers to timely, culturally safe services.

In partnership with the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health and Metro North Hospital and Health Service, the research examines how Indigenous peoples engage with mental health services and identifies priority gaps in access and resourcing.

Using a socio-ecological model, the project explores the personal, community, and system-level factors that influence service use. An important focus is the co-design of innovative, client-centred models of care, ensuring solutions are grounded in Indigenous worldviews and lived experiences.

In 2024, the project progressed towards implementation through active engagement with Indigenous communities, healthcare providers, and service users. This collaboration is key in translating research into meaningful change. However, gaps in policy, strategy, and resources within the mainstream healthcare system continue to challenge long-term sustainability.

By embedding Indigenous leadership and co-design principles, this project is driving community-led solutions to strengthen mental health services and improve outcomes across South East Queensland.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor Roxanne Bainbridge**  
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**Dr Shea Spierings**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor  
Janet Xiang-Yu Hou**  
Research Fellow and Study Coordinator

# Evaluation of the Yarns Heal Suicide Prevention Campaign

QUEENSLAND MENTAL HEALTH COMMISSION (2024) | LED BY 2SPIRITS

The Yarns Heal Suicide Prevention Campaign is a community-driven suicide prevention project focused on supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy folk.

This project is led by 2Spirits with extensive community guidance through ‘Local Expert Groups’ across six corridors throughout Queensland. It is also supported by a Specialist Advisory Group, who played a crucial role in maintaining cultural expertise and responsibilities, acting as the strategic conduit to uphold two-way protocols throughout the project. It brings together a range of strategies and resources to help bring knowledge, education, and connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to help promote the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy folk.

The UQ Poche Centre was invited by 2Spirits to help evaluate the Yarns Heal program. The evaluation involved eight yarning circles with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy folk and members of Local Expert Groups. These yarning circles will be analysed in 2025 in an iterative, collaborative manner with staff from 2Spirits, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirl and Brotherboy folk.

The generosity of participants in sharing their experiences has provided valuable insights into the lives and needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander LGBTIQ+ Sistergirls and Brotherboys.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow

**Associate Professor Judith Dean**  
Principal Research Fellow

**James Fowler**  
Senior Research Officer

In 2025, the UQ Poche Centre will work with 2Spirits to develop a series of outputs that will support the returning of this knowledge back to communities and develop actionable wellbeing strategies, guided by the Local Expert Groups.

# Preventing non-communicable diseases among Indigenous children and youth in major cities of Australia

NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL - GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CHRONIC DISEASES (2024-2029) | PROFESSOR ABDULLAH MAMUN

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth living in cities are one of the fastest growing populations in Australia. However, they continue to experience social disadvantage and face a significantly higher risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes and mental health challenges, compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts.

Indigenous children and youth living in cities in Australia experience higher rates of obesity and are at greater risk of type 2 diabetes compared to those in remote areas. Culturally safe, responsive, and effective interventions developed and led by Indigenous Australians are essential to prevent the emergence of NCD risks among urban Indigenous children and youth.

This study is built on a partnership between our multidisciplinary research team and urban Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) in two state capital cities, Brisbane and Darwin. Together, we are co-developing and delivering a best-evidence behavioural intervention program embedded within the ACCHS's existing service delivery model of care.

Tailored to children and youth in critical developmental stages of their life course, this program will be evaluated for its implementation and effectiveness. Through this research, we aim to support efforts to reduce health inequities and improve quality of life.

As a part of this work, the project is collaborating with two urban Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS) in two capital cities of Australia. One of the services is the Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health in Ipswich, Queensland.

On 11 November 2024, the research team from the Poche Centre visited the Ipswich clinic of Kambu Health and met with the researchers, clinical staff, and administrators. During this meeting, they exchanged views regarding the project's launch and gained deeper insights into their services, capacity, and infrastructure. This visit marked a significant milestone in strengthening the partnership with Kambu Health for the project.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor Abdullah Mamun**  
Principal Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Professor James Ward**  
Professorial Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Professor Anthony Shakeshaft**  
Professorial Research Fellow and Investigator

**Professor Yaqoot Fatima**  
Principal Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Associate Professor Judith Dean**  
Principal Research Fellow and Chief Investigator

**Dr KM Shahunja**  
Research Fellow

**Dr Edmund Kanmiki**  
Research Fellow

*Indigenous children and youth living in cities in Australia experience higher rates of obesity and are at greater risk of type 2 diabetes compared to those in remote areas.*



# ARC Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL - ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE (2021-2028) |  
LED BY PROFESSOR JANEEN BAXTER, UQ ISSR

The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course (the Life Course Centre, LCC) is a research initiative dedicated to using evidence-based research to create positive change for people experiencing disadvantage.

Administered by the Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR), the study partners with the University of Western Australia, the University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne, ten international universities, six government departments, and several non-governmental organisations. Chief Investigator Professor Abdullah Mamun from the Poche Centre is actively engaged in several research projects aimed at generating evidence to address deep and persistent health and wellbeing disparities.

The first project is a collaboration with Queensland Health that investigates the links between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and adverse health outcomes, developing culturally appropriate toolkits for health practitioners, families, and communities. The second project focuses on multimorbidity among First Nations people, examining its determinants and relationship with disadvantage to provide evidence for effective interventions and inform healthcare policies.

The third project explores healthy aging in Australia, systematically analysing existing studies to improve health and wellbeing across the life course. This project is a partnership between the World Health Organization and the Life Course Centre investigators from the UQ Poche Centre, ISSR and Telethon Kids Institute.

The fourth project addresses diabetes prevention and management among Indigenous women and youth, reviewing effective interventions for gestational diabetes and youth-onset Type 2 diabetes to reduce health disparities.

The fifth project examines perinatal outcomes among Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, identifying risk factors and trends to guide targeted interventions. This study is a collaboration between the UQ Poche Centre, Metro North Hospital, and Queensland Health. The sixth project applies machine learning to predict suicide risks among adolescents, while the seventh project analyses the impact of non-traditional environmental factors on pregnancy and birth outcomes in Queensland, integrating data to inform better health policies.

Professor Mamun contributed to international discussions on life-course research in 2024. He attended the Society for Longitudinal and Life Course Studies Annual International Conference at the University of Essex in September, where he presented a project brief on a scoping review of Australian longitudinal studies and linked data for examining healthy aging. Later in the year, he participated in a workshop on healthy aging over the life course, organised by the World Health Organization in Geneva in December, further strengthening global research collaborations in this area.

Researchers from the project team contributed to several high-impact publications in 2024, including “Research needed on urban Indigenous health inequalities”, “Multimorbidity among the Indigenous population:

*A systematic review and meta-analysis” and “Burden of out-of-pocket payment for maternal healthcare and its catastrophic effects in the era of free maternal and child health policy in Ghana”.*

The team continues to foster emerging research and capacity building. Md Ashraf Alam successfully completed his second PhD progress review, examining the impact of adverse childhood experiences on Indigenous health outcomes using a life-course approach. Additionally, the team secured funding for four early-career research projects to be implemented in 2025, focusing on rheumatic heart disease among First Nations people, adolescent sleep loss and suicidal behaviours, maternal healthcare empowerment for First Nations, and co-developing asthma education tools for Indigenous communities.

### 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor Abdullah Mamun**  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

**Dr KM Shahunja**  
Research Fellow

**Dr Edmund Kanmiki**  
Research Fellow

**Dr Md. Mehedi Hasan**  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow

**Md Ashraf Alam**  
PhD Student

**Thilini Nisansala Egoda Kapuralalage**  
Research Assistant

**Linh Duong**  
PhD Student

# Implementing a Life Course Approach for NCD Prevention and Reduction in Antenatal and Postnatal Care in Nepal

NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL - GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CHRONIC DISEASES (2023-2028) | LED BY PROFESSOR ABDULLAH MAMUN

This project focuses on integrating non-communicable disease (NCD) risk prevention into maternal health care in Nepal, aiming to improve long-term health outcomes across generations. The high burden of NCDs disproportionately affects Low- and Middle-income Countries (LMICs), where 85% of premature NCD deaths occur. Given the strong links between maternal and child health and NCDs, integrating NCD prevention into antenatal and postnatal care is essential for making the most of limited healthcare resources. Through an iterative co-creation process involving women, healthcare providers, and community members, this project aims to co-create and evaluate tailored strategies to integrate NCD risk prevention into maternal healthcare in Nepal. The project will develop and implement evidence-based interventions for tobacco and alcohol avoidance, healthy eating, and psychosocial support during pregnancy and postpartum. A cluster randomised controlled trial will evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions in reducing NCD risks for mothers and children.

By applying a life course and implementation science approach, this research contributes to reducing health inequities, improving quality of life and advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3.4. Findings will inform and strengthen preventive health programs and policies in Nepal and globally. In 2024, the project made significant progress, with the signing of a Memorandum of Institutional Agreement and ethics approval secured from the Nepal Health Research Council.

# Exposure to Trihalomethanes in pregnancy and birth outcomes in queensland: Integrated data analysis for better policy and health outcomes

NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL - PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (2020-2024) | LED BY PROFESSOR ABDULLAH MAMUN

This project explores how exposure to trihalomethanes (THMs) in household drinking water may impact pregnancy outcomes in Queensland. Growing global research suggests that water disinfection by-products, particularly THMs, could be linked to health concerns such as low birth weight, preterm delivery, and developmental issues.

This study, conducted in partnership with the University of Queensland, Queensland Health, and Queensland water utilities, aims to better understand the impact of THMs in drinking water on pregnancy outcomes. Researchers will analyse THM exceedance patterns and predictors in Queensland over the past decade, examine how exposure may be linked to outcomes such as low birth weight, small for gestational age and preterm birth, and assess current policies and response strategies to identify gaps in managing THM risks, particularly in high-risk areas. The findings will help to inform policy and improve health outcomes related to THM exposure during pregnancy.

The project team has completed the curated analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and shared preliminary results with partners. Five research papers are currently in development for publication. In 2024, key findings were presented at the toxicology and risk assessment conference in Canberra, and Dr Mehedi Hasan assumed leadership of the quantitative analysis, succeeding Dr Mamun Huda. The project is on track for completion in 2025, with various research dissemination activities planned.

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

Professor Abdullah Mamun  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

Professor Yaqoot Fatima  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

Dr Edmund Kanmiki  
Research Fellow

Dr Md. Mehedi Hasan  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow

The team developed and pilot-tested assessment tools, working with stakeholders and community members to co-develop the implementation strategy. Guided by a domestic and international advisory committee, the Nepal team is now prepared to begin fieldwork for the first phase of implementation. The project is conducted in collaboration with partners from Nepal (Dhulikhel Hospital, Kathmandu University Hospital, Nepal Health Research Council), Norway (Norwegian Institute of Public Health, University of Bergen),

and Australia (University of Queensland, Central Queensland University, Monash University).

## 2024 Poche Centre staff

Professor Abdullah Mamun  
Principal Research Fellow and  
Chief Investigator

Dr KM Shahunja  
Research Fellow



## Let's Yarn About Sleep

MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESEARCH 2020 INDIGENOUS HEALTH RESEARCH (2021-2024), NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL - PARTNERSHIP PROJECT (2022-2027), MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - EARLY TO MID CAREER RESEARCHERS (2023-2028), MEDICAL RESEARCH FUTURE FUND - 2023 MRFF OPTIMISING SCREENING DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT OF OBSTRUCTIVE SLEEP APNOEA (2024-2029) | LED BY PROFESSOR YAQOOT FATIMA

The Let's Yarn About Sleep project artwork was created by First Nations Artist Judith Rose.

In 2024, Let's Yarn About Sleep (LYAS) made a significant impact in First Nations sleep health research, securing major funding, expanding community partnerships, and sharing its research on national and international platforms.

With a focus on co-designed, culturally responsive interventions, the program continued its efforts to improve sleep and mental health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. During the year, LYAS secured two MRFF grants: one to integrate sleep into mental health initiatives for First Nations children and another to enhance Obstructive Sleep Apnoea screening and diagnosis through co-designed resources, community roadshows, and service partnerships.

LYAS was featured on the SBS TV series Australia's Sleep Revolution with Dr Michael Mosley, highlighting its community-led approach to sleep health. The episode showcased the program's work addressing sleep inequities in Indigenous communities and reinforcing the importance of culturally responsive sleep interventions. The series, which aired in March, helped amplify awareness of these issues.

On 25 March, LYAS hosted a Community Symposium in Mount Isa, bringing together over 120 attendees, including Kalkadoon Elders, government representatives, researchers, and local organisations. The event provided a platform for community members to share perspectives on improving sleep health for First Nations adolescents, reinforcing the importance of community-led solutions.

Professor Yaqoot Fatima and Uncle Wayne Williams presented at Cochrane Training's International PPI Network webinar in August, sharing the LYAS Community Engagement Framework. They highlighted the development of Australia's first Indigenous Sleep Coach training, the integration of sleep health programs in schools and health services, and how the framework fosters community ownership in research and service delivery.

In September, LYAS was featured on the ABC Radio National 'All in the Mind' Podcast episode Cranky and Depressed: Why Bad Sleep Equals Bad Mental Health. Team members Professor Yaqoot Fatima and Renee Caple shared insights on the connection between sleep and mental health, discussing the program's findings and their own experiences.

Research translation remained a priority for the team in 2024, with sleep health featured for the first time as a dedicated chapter in the National Guide to Preventive Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, published by NACCHO and RACGP. The team also expanded its co-design expertise, completing Narrative Therapy training and delivering facilitator training to support service providers in embedding sleep health programs into community practice.

### 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor Yaqoot Fatima**  
Research Lead and  
Chief Investigator

**Dr Daniel Sullivan**  
Research Fellow

**Mina Kinghorn**  
Senior Project Coordinator

**Roslyn Von Senden**  
Senior Project Coordinator

**Britta Wigginton**  
Senior Research Assistant

**Caitie Ashby**  
Research Assistant

**Karen Chong**  
Clinical Research Assistant

**Markesh Fanti**  
Clinical Research Assistant

Community engagement remained a focus for the team, with research and co-design workshops in Mount Isa, Boulia, Cloncurry, Cairns, and Mornington Island. The Tree of Life methodology was introduced as a culturally meaningful tool to explore community perspectives on sleep and health, receiving positive community feedback. LYAS also collaborated with the Northern Territory School of Distance Education to develop sleep health video resources, now included in the Year 9 Health capstone curriculum. In 2024, the impact of LYAS was recognised through the UQ Research Culture Award for Public Engagement & Community-led Research and the 2024 EMCR Industry Engagement Overall Award.





# Research updates

## **Intergenerational risk of diabetes in pregnancy across two generations and its impact on grandchild's perinatal health outcomes among Indigenous Australians in Northern Territories from 1984 to 2016**

This research project is a sub-study within a larger project funded by the Diabetes Australia Research Program. With approval from Menzies' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group, a research collaboration agreement has been signed between the UQ Poche Centre and Menzies. Under this agreement, Dr Tahmina Begum is co-leading the project from the Poche Centre alongside Dr Matthew Hare from Menzies. Associate Professor Federica Barzi, the former Chief Investigator of the original diabetes project, is providing high-level guidance. Dr Tahmina Begum secured a seed grant from the Poche Centre for this project, enabling her to establish new research partnerships and engage with leading researchers in the Indigenous health space. In April 2025, she will travel to the Northern Territory to meet the research team and present the initial study findings to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group. The project is expected to be completed by December 2025, with at least one peer-reviewed publication.

## **Understanding pre-conception sexual and reproductive health and fertility among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Queensland**

This two-year study, funded by the Queensland Sexual Research Fund in partnership with the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Alliance (NATSIWA), aims to estimate the factors associated with infertility among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland.

It explores how individuals and service providers understand infertility and pre-conception care. The study will link and analyse Queensland Health datasets to identify health determinants related to pregnancy outcomes and fertility, while qualitative data will provide insights into pre-conception health, fertility, and priority areas of need from the perspectives of health professionals and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The investigators of the study are Clara Walker, A/Prof Federica Barzi, Prof James Ward, A/Prof Jacqueline Boyle (Monash University), A/Prof Judith Dean, and Christopher Sexton. Initial quantitative data preparation and analysis is underway.

## **Professor Anthony Shakeshaft is Poche's representative in the Indigenous Hospital in the Home (I-HITH) project being conducted in collaboration with IUIH and Metro North Hospital and Health Services**

The I-HITH project aims to improve the integration of care between hospitals and Aboriginal Community Controlled Primary Care services to improve treatment outcomes and the overall health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This project will seek to understand the feasibility of delivering I-HITH in practice to provide clinically and culturally safe hospital-level care within (or closer) to a patient's home. The goal is to improve health outcomes, provide better access and more timely care, reduce discharge against medical advice and avoid potentially preventable hospitalisations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in metropolitan areas. This project is in its primary data collection stage and is due for completion in 2025.

## **Professor Anthony Shakeshaft led a team that completed an independent review of the NSW Government's Standardised Evaluation Analysis tool**

The significance of this research for the Poche Centre rests in the inequitable over-representation of Indigenous children in child protection systems in Australia. In 2022/23, Indigenous children were six times more likely to be notified to child protection, seven times more likely to be assessed as at risk of significant harm and 11 times more likely to be removed from their families. In 2024, the national Closing the Gap target for out-of-home care (Target 12) is one of only four that is worsening over time, and formal complaints have been lodged to the Australian Human Rights Commission (in NSW and WA) about discriminatory removal of Indigenous children from their families, which the peak body for Aboriginal children (SNAaIC) has called 'a second stolen generation'. Prof Shakeshaft and his team partnered with the NSW Government's Department of Communities and Justice to review their Standardised Evaluation Analysis tool which, when finalised, will allow the government to evaluate their child protection programs in as close to real time as possible. It will provide the capacity to maintain and expand programs that are working well for Indigenous children in contact with child protection and identify opportunities for improving the effectiveness of other programs.



**Professor Anthony Shakeshaft is leading Poche's collaboration with Danila Dilba Health Service to improve screening and co-design a care co-ordination approach to optimise outcomes for childhood neurodevelopmental disability**

Danila Dilba Health Service is increasing the quality and breadth of its services for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and developmental delay. Current best practice in responding to childhood neurodevelopmental disability comprises two components: i) screening using best-evidence measures; and ii) providing early intervention. This project brings together the clinical service expertise of Danila Dilba Health Services with the research expertise of UQ's Poche Centre for Indigenous Health to co-design a care co-ordination approach to optimise treatment outcomes for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families. This project includes a services mapping exercise and yarning circles with staff and families, the data from which will be used to build culturally validated screening into the routine delivery of Danila Dilba's health care services so that at-risk children are identified as early as possible and referred for specialist care as appropriate.

**Professor Anthony Shakeshaft is working closely with his UQ Poche Centre teams to deliver outcomes on a number of projects APPRISE**

This project examines different aspects of the impact of COVID-19 on First Nations communities in Australia. One aspect of this project, led by Dr Shea Spierings, was to examine the knowledge and attitudes of First Nations people about COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations, the results of which were published in 2024 in the Medical Journal of Australia "Knowledge about COVID-19 vaccines among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and attitudes to and behaviours regarding COVID-19 and influenza vaccination: a survey". A second aspect, also led by Dr Spierings, will identify trusted sources of information for First Nations people about COVID-19 and its symptoms. A third paper, led by Dr Saira Mathew, is a systematic review that aims to distil the key features of effective First Nations governance during extraordinary events, such as pandemics.

**Child Sexual Abuse**

A key Poche Team (Dr Saira Mathew, Dr Kiara Minto, A/Prof Jude Dean, Dr Sarah Graham, Prof James Ward and our colleague Birri O'Dea) are working on two projects aimed at synthesising current research literature in relation to child sexual abuse. The first is a scoping review of the First Nations-specific CSA research literature from CANZUS countries, the aim of which is to identify existing research evidence that could be used to enhance the sustainability or effectiveness of programs to support child sexual abuse survivors. The second is to systematically review current research evidence on the factors associated with the retraction and recantation of childhood sexual abuse allegations. The aim is to identify the strategies that are associated with a reduced likelihood of withdrawing allegations.

**Building a new collaboration with UQ's Rural Clinical School**

As part of its ongoing development of new collaborations, UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health formally met with staff from UQ's Rural Clinical School in 2024. A meet and greet was held on 16 October 2024 at UQ's Boyce Gardens in Toowoomba. UQ staff were Professor Anthony Shakeshaft, Clara Walker, Dr Victor Oguoma and Dr Richard Violette. UQ's Rural Clinical School staff were A/Prof. Srinivas (Sri) Kondalsamy-Chennakesavan (Head of Research), Dr Bushra Nasir (Director, ID-INSPIRED), A/Prof Riitta Partanen (Director, Rural Clinical School) and Dr Emma Friesen (Research Manager). A key outcome of this initial meeting was a subsequent consultation between A/Prof. Sri Kondalsamy-Chennakesavan, Prof Anthony Shakeshaft and UQ's Major Initiatives team to discuss the possibility of obtaining funding from the National Indigenous Australians Agency to support the evaluation and development of community-based Indigenous health and wellbeing programs in South-West Queensland. Future opportunities will be explored in 2025, including the possibility of engaging with Carbal Aboriginal Medical Service in South-West Queensland and Indigenous health services in UQ's other Rural Clinical School locations.

# Collaborations



## Research Alliance for Urban Community Controlled Health Services

The UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health established the Research Alliance for Urban Community Controlled Health Services (RAUCCHS) in 2022. This alliance unites researchers at the UQ Poche Centre and ATSICCHS providers in capital cities, who design and carry out a national Indigenous urban health research agenda. The Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) in Urban Indigenous Health funds RAUCCHS meetings and activities focusing on health services research.

The alliance supports the UQ Poche Centre by addressing community-identified needs for its urban health services research. In 2024, UQ Poche researchers and RAUCCHS members met virtually in April and face-to-face in October to set research priorities identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Services.

The CRE in Urban Indigenous Health Research advanced Australia’s first urban First Nations health research agenda in 2024. At the October 2024 meeting of RAUCCHS members, discussions highlighted the need for the agenda to focus on health and health services research, identifying the health factors that drive people to use services.

During 2024, the UQ Poche Centre worked with RAUCCHS members to complete the “State of the Play” report. The report will be owned by RAUCCHS members and be publicly accessible upon its launch in 2025. Kooma artist and Project Officer with the UQ Poche Centre, Steph Evans, has been developing a logo for RAUCCHS and is assisting with the design of the State of Play Report. Also, in 2024, four RAUCCHS team members worked on finalising a manuscript reporting on interviews with RAUCCHS members about a research agenda for urban health services.

### 2024 Poche Centre staff

Professor James Ward  
Professorial Research Fellow

Professor Anthony Shakeshaft  
Professorial Research Fellow

Professor Abdullah Mamun  
Senior Principal Research Fellow

Dr Anton Clifford-Motopi  
Senior Research Fellow

Associate Professor Federica Barzi  
Principal Research Fellow

Janet Stajic  
Research Fellow

Dr Stuart Leske  
Program Manager





## The Research Alliance for Urban Goori Health

METRO NORTH HEALTH AND THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES (2021-2025) | LED BY PROFESSOR JAMES WARD

**The Research Alliance for Urban Goori Health (RAUGH) project is a tripartite association between the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health, Metro North Hospital and Health Service and the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH). Established in 2021, the project aims to close the gap in life expectancy and achieve health equality for urban First Peoples in greater Brisbane North through applied research in priority areas in healthcare pathways - across the continuum of care and across the lifespan.**

The RAUGH partnership focuses on co-designed services and workforce development to enhance health equity for urban First Nations peoples. Its operations are guided by a Data Governance Framework rooted in Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance, ensuring practices from data access to dissemination uphold First Peoples' rights and promote self-determination in the Metro North region. To manage the project functions, a RAUGH Governance Committee was established. The committee comprises the partners' leading members and community members and meets bi-monthly. Since 2021, it has been successfully operated and guided by its members and oversees all approvals for RAUGH projects.

RAUGH's endeavours are strategically aligned with priority areas, including research, evaluation, knowledge translation, workforce development, engagement, and partnerships. This approach aims to establish and conduct research programs covering the entire healthcare spectrum - from primary to tertiary systems. A significant focus is placed on leveraging external research funding to enhance health services, programs, and policies tailored to the needs of urban First Peoples. Since the establishment of the RAUGH project, several national health and medical research grants have been secured under the RAUGH Governance. These include implementing anti-racism strategies, improving First Nations maternal and child health, developing models for Indigenous mental health services and the Centre of Research Excellence in urban Indigenous health.

Throughout the Launch Phase with the partner organisations, RAUGH initiates its core research as a data linkage project to identify critical data gaps and improve data governance, facilitating the development of co-designed models of care that prioritise cultural safety and patient experiences. The RAUGH Data Linkage project represents a significant step forward in integrating health data across different services.

For the first time, it involves linking data from IUIH, a community-controlled health service in a capital city, with Queensland Health data from Metro North Health, Australia's largest hospital and health service. The project has received initial ethics and Public Health Act approvals, marking a milestone in its development. This data linkage project is an opportunity to implement Indigenous Data Sovereignty practices, the right of Indigenous Peoples to own, control, access, and possess data that derive from them and pertain to their members, knowledge systems, customs, resources, or territories. The data linkage process is underway, and investigators are preparing the Indigenous Data Governance, Management, and Statistical Analysis Plan.

It is very exciting that RAUGH has run its Launch Phase (2022-2024) with an extension until 2025 and is moving forward to the Establishment Phase with new opportunities and collaborations. The collaborators are preparing a strategic plan and research priorities according to the guidance of the community and the RAUGH Governance.

### 2024 Poche Centre staff

**Professor James Ward**  
Executive Director

**Dr Saira Sanjida**  
Research Fellow

## Engagement map

The UQ Poche Centre collaborates with communities and partners across Australia to support Indigenous health research and initiatives. This map provides an overview of the locations where we are engaged in projects and partnerships, reflecting our commitment to improving health outcomes alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



## Building new partnerships



### Goondir Health Services

Goondir Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation for Health Services (Goondir Health Services) is an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service providing primary health care and related health services to the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) communities from Oakey in the South East of Queensland, Australia to St George in the South West of Queensland, Australia. In 2024, the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health began developing a partnership with Goondir Health Services, including co-developing an MRFF Alcohol and Other Drugs grant application, 'The co-design and uptake of a community-driven approach to alcohol treatment for First Nations people and communities: Clean Slate Indigenous'.

### Guiding Local Opportunities for Wellbeing (GLOWS) Indigenous Health Grant Program

On 18 January, in collaboration with Gilead Sciences and the Lowitja Institute, the Poche Centre announced the Guiding Local Opportunities for Wellbeing (GLOWS) Indigenous Health Grant Program, a new \$4.4 million, three-year initiative aimed at eliminating HIV and viral hepatitis in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The program provides scholarships and research grants to Indigenous community organisations and their partners for research focused on these health issues. Indigenous communities continue to experience higher rates of HIV and viral hepatitis diagnosis compared to the non-Indigenous population despite medical advancements. The GLOWS program aims to address these health disparities by investing in community-led research and initiatives to help reduce the prevalence of these diseases in Indigenous communities.



# Stakeholder engagement through committee representation

Our staff contribute their expertise across a range of committees, helping to translate research into impact. Their involvement supports collaboration, drives policy discussions, and contributes to shaping better health and research outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

**ASHM Board National Sexual Health Advisory Committee, providing expert technical advice and strategic direction to the ASHM Board**

Associate Professor Judith Dean

**CSIRO Health and Biosecurity Committee, Member**

Professor James Ward

**CSIRO Minimising Antimicrobial Resistance Action Group, Member**

Professor James Ward

**Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Science HDR committee, Poche Centre for Indigenous Health Representative**

Associate Professor Judith Dean

**Faculty of Health, Medicine and Behavioural Science Research Committee, Member**

Professor Anthony Shakeshaft

**First Nations Health Governance Group, Member**

Professor James Ward

**HaBS EMCA/R Committee, Member representing Poche Centre for Indigenous Health**

Dr Penny Haora

**HMBS Health and Safety Committee, Member**

Dr Tahmina Begum

**HMBS Wisdom Council, Member**

Professor James Ward

**Metro North Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Oversight Committee, Member**

Professor James Ward

**National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Protection Committee, Member**

Professor James Ward

**National Syphilis Working Group, Member**

Professor James Ward

**NSW Department of Corrective Services Deaths in Custody Reference Group, Chair**

Professor James Ward

**NT Government Sexual Health Advisory Committee, Member**

Professor James Ward

**Research Advisory Committee, Smart Recovery Australia, Member**

Professor Anthony Shakeshaft

**School of Public Health EMCR committee, Member**

Dr Penny Haora

**UQ Health, Safety and Wellness Committee, Member**

Dr Tahmina Begum

**World Health Organization (WHO) expert panel member for the global initiative Healthy Ageing Over the Life Course**

Professor Abdullah Mamun

**World Health Organization (WHO) expert panel member for the global initiative Adolescent Wellbeing Measurements**

Professor Abdullah Mamun



# Key conferences

In 2024, UQ Poche Centre staff shared their research at numerous national and international conferences, delivering oral and poster presentations. Presenting at these events is an important opportunity to showcase our work, contribute to discussions in Indigenous health, and engage with experts and communities beyond our Centre.

These presentations help strengthen collaborations, inform policy and practice, and ensure our research has a broader impact. The table below highlights the conferences where our staff presented throughout the year, reflecting our commitment to advancing Indigenous health research to national and global audiences.

Date	Conference	Location	Presenter/s
18-24 February	AUREA Aromatic-spectrum Awareness Week	Online	James Fowler
7-10 March 2024	Annual Conference of the Consortium of Universities for Global Health	California, United States of America	Dr Edmund Kanmiki
11-12 March 2024	United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs meeting	Vienna, Austria	Prof James Ward
19 April 2024	United Nations (UN) Indigenous Peoples Forum "Dialogue on Indigenous-Led Solutions in Substance Use Policy"	New York, United States of America	Prof James Ward
22-24 April 2024	World Health Summit Regional Meeting	Naarm (Melbourne)	Prof James Ward
1-3 May 2024	Gilead Global Health Equity Summit	California, United States of America	Prof James Ward
11-13 June 2024	Communicable Diseases and Immunisation Conference	Meanjin (Brisbane)	A/Prof Judith Dean, Shellee Williams
1-2 July 2024	Applied Research in Crime and Justice Conference	Meanjin (Brisbane)	Prof James Ward
3 July 2024	The Australian Society of Microbiology Conference	Meanjin (Brisbane)	Prof James Ward
11 July 2024	Aged Care Quality & Safety Commission NAIDOC Event	Online	Prof James Ward
22 July 2024	Queensland Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies Conference	Meanjin (Brisbane)	Prof James Ward
19-26 July 2024	25th International AIDS Society Conference	Munich, Germany	A/Prof Judith Dean, Prof James Ward
1-3 August 2024	Viral Hepatitis Conference	Garamilla (Darwin)	Prof James Ward, Dr Rani West
29 August 2024	RSTMH Online Research in Progress 2024	Online	Dr Edmund Kanmiki
30 August 2024	Wear It Purple Day Research Seminar	Meanjin (Brisbane)	James Fowler
2-4 September 2024	2024 National Association for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners National Conference	Boorloo (Perth)	Janet Stajic
5 September 2024	Metro North Health Research Summit	Meanjin (Brisbane)	Prof James Ward
16-18 September 2024	Australasian HIV & AIDS Conference	Gadigal Country (Sydney)	Prof James Ward, A/Prof Judith Dean
17-20 September 2024	International Union of STI World Congress and Australasian Sexual and Reproductive Health Conference	Gadigal Country (Sydney)	A/Prof Judith Dean, Robert Palm, Jethro Romer, Prof James Ward, Rani West
26-27 September 2024	CAPHIA Teaching and Learning Conference	Meanjin (Brisbane)	James Fowler
27 September 2024	ASMR QLD Postgraduate and ECR Conference	Meanjin (Brisbane)	Ashraful Alam
9-10 October 2024	Deadly Sex Congress	Meanjin (Brisbane)	Prof James Ward, Dr Rani West
15-16 October 2024	National Association for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner Stakeholder Workshop and Knowledge Sharing Forum	Canberra	Janet Stajic
16 October 2024	4th Annual Caboolture, Kilcoy and Woodford Corrections Health Research Symposium 2024	Caboolture	Natasha Lee
16-19 October 2024	Sleep DownUnder 2024 Conference	Gold Coast	Markesh Fanti, A/Prof Yaqoot Fatima, Dr Daniel Sullivan, Roslyn Von Senden
22-23 October 2024	First Nations Health Equity in Action Conference	Meanjin (Brisbane)	Prof James Ward
24-27 November 2024	Society of Australasian Social Psychologists Conference	Canberra	James Fowler, Dr Kiara Minto
27-29 November 2024	Eliminating Cervical Cancer 2024 Conference	Naarm (Melbourne)	A/Prof Judith Dean

# Publications

In 2024, Poche Centre staff and affiliates published 136 books, journal articles, reports, and conference papers. Below is a selection of Indigenous papers to demonstrate the scope of the work. Please see our website for further publications.

## Journal articles

- Baillie, J., Matthews, V., Laycock, A., Conte, K., Feeney, L. and Bainbridge, R. (2024) Reflecting on the quality of a methodologically pluralist evaluation of a large-scale Indigenous health research collaboration in Australia. *BMJ Global Health*, 9(8): 1-10.
- Causar, L., Ward, J., Smith, K., Saha, A., Andrewartha, K., Wand, H., et al. (2024) Clinical effectiveness and analytical quality of a national point-of-care testing network for sexually transmitted infections integrated into rural and remote primary care clinics in Australia, 2016–2022: an observational program evaluation. *The Lancet Regional Health - Western Pacific*, 48: 1-12.
- Clifford-Motopi, A., Brown (Nununcal), R., White (Palawa Iningai), A., Harald (Gangulu), P., Butler, D., Mathew, S., et al. (2024) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members' experiences of care in an urban Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service transforming to a Patient Centred Medical Home. *Australian Journal of Primary Health*, 30(3): 1-10.
- Clifford-Motopi, A., Gardner, K., Brown (Nununcal), R., White (Palawa Iningai), A., Harald (Gangulu), P., Butler, D., et al. (2024) Transformation to a Patient Centred Medical Home in an Urban Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service: A Qualitative Study Using Normalisation Process Theory. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 31(1).
- Conte, K., Laycock, A., Baillie, J., Walke, E., Onnis, L., Feeney, L., Langham, E., et al. (2024) Producing knowledge together: a participatory approach to synthesising research across a large-scale collaboration in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. *Health Research Policy and Systems*, 22(1).
- Dias-Karunaratne, N., Whop, L., Ward, J., Vujovich-Dunn, C., Amin, J., Dakinewich, A., et al. (2024) Representation of marginalised populations in digital surveillance for notifiable conditions in Australia: a systematic review. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 144(3): 162-173.
- Elliott, S., Flynn, E., Mathew, S., Hajarizadeh, B., Martinello, M., Wand, H., Ward, J. (2024) Prevalence of hepatitis C virus exposure and infection among Indigenous and tribal populations: a global systematic review and meta-analysis. *Public Health*, 233: 65-73.
- Engstrom, T., Lobo, E., Watego, K., Nelson, C., Wang, J., Wong, H., Ward, J., et al. (2024) Indigenous data governance approaches applied in research using routinely collected health data: a scoping review. *npj Digital Medicine*, 7(1): 1-9.
- Fatima, K., Varela, S., Fatima, Y., Lindsay, D., Gray, M. and Cairns, A. (2024) Impact of sleep on educational outcome of Indigenous Australian children: A systematic review. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 32(4): 672-683.
- Fredericks, B., Bradfield, A., Ward, J., Spierings, S., McAvoy, S., Combo, T., et al. (2024) 'We know what our communities need': What the Indigenous health sector reveals about pandemic preparedness in urban Indigenous communities in Australia. *First Nations Health and Wellbeing - The Lowitja Journal*, 2.
- Fredericks, B., Bradfield, A., McAvoy, S., Ward, J., Spierings, S., Combo, T. et al. (2024). Responding to COVID-19: How group model building can assist the health and wellbeing of urban Indigenous communities in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 59, 462-486.
- Gibson, M., Leske, S., Ward, R., Rachow, A. and Kolves, K. (2024) Racial discrimination and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide mortality rates in Queensland. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*.
- Gibson, M., Leske, S., Ward, R., Weir, B., Russell, K. and Kolves, K. (2024) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth suicide mortality and previous mental health, suicidality and service use in Queensland, Australia, from 2001 to 2021. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 35.
- Harfield, S., Azzopardi, P., Mishra, G. and Ward, J. (2024) An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescent model of primary health care. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 221(10): 512-515.
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- Henderson A., Shakeshaft A., Allan J., Wallace R., Barker D., Farnbach S. A pilot study examining the impact of a pragmatic process for improving the cultural responsiveness of non-Aboriginal alcohol and other drug treatment services using routinely collected data in Australia. *Journal of Health Services Research & Policy*, 0(0), 2024.
- Huda, M., Ward, J. and Mamun, A. (2024) Measuring progress toward the Closing the Gap healthy birthweight target for Indigenous babies: an analysis of Queensland perinatal data, 2011–2020. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 221(5): 277-278.
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- Long, S., Ross, C., Koops, J., Coulthard, K., Nelson, J., Shapkota, A., Barzi, F., et al. (2024) Engagement and partnership with consumers and communities in the co-design and conduct of Research: Lessons from the Intravenous iron polymaltose for First Nations Australian patients with high FERRitin levels on haemodialysis (INFERR) clinical trial. *Research Involvement and Engagement*, 10(1): 1-12.
- Mamun, A., Kanmiki, E., Leske, S., Stajic, J. and Ward, J. (2024) Research needed on urban Indigenous health inequalities. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 102(2): 146-148.
- Marshall, H., Ward, J., Wang, B., Andraweera, P., McMillan, M., Flood, L., et al. (2024) Comprehensive observational study evaluating the enduring effectiveness of 4CMenB, the meningococcal B vaccine against gonococcal infections in the Northern Territory and South Australia, Australia: study protocol. *BMJ Open*, 14(5): 1-8.
- Pearson, O., Air, T., Humphrey, G., Bradley, C., Tunny, N., Brown, A., et al. (2024) Aged care service use by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people after aged care eligibility assessments, 2017-2019: a population-based retrospective cohort study. *Medical Journal of Australia*, 221(1): 31-38.
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- Shahunja, K., Ushula, T., Hussain, M., Pati, S. and Mamun, A. (2024) Multimorbidity among the Indigenous population: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 98: 8-17.
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- Walker, C., Begum, T., Boyle, J., Ward, J. and Barzi, F. (2024) Pre-conception health of Indigenous peoples in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States: a scoping.
- Wood, A., Boyle, J., Barr, E., Barzi, F., Hare, M., Titmuss, A., et al. (2024) Corrigendum to "Type 2 diabetes after a pregnancy with gestational diabetes among First Nations women in Australia: The PANDORA study" [Diabetes Res. Clin. Pract. 181 (2021) 109092]. *Diabetes Research and Clinical Practice*, 213: 1-1.
- Zhang, L., Hou, X and Liu, Y. (2024) Measuring mental health service accessibility for Indigenous populations: a systematic review. *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, 12(1): 1-19.

## Research reports

- Maurer, D., Williamson, D., Stanley, L., Suleman, A., Ward, J., Barzi, F., et al. (2024) Queensland First Nations Peoples Burden of Disease Report 2018.

## Conference papers

- Causar, L., Anderson, D., Andrewartha, K., Armstrong, P., Atkinson, D., Badman, S., Ward, J., et al. (2024). Clinical effectiveness, sustainability and quality of a large, decentralised molecular point-of-care testing network for STIs in regional and remote primary care clinics in Australia. In *Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Annual Meeting of the Infectious-Diseases-Society-for-Obstetrics-and-Gynecology (IDSOG)*, Boston Ma, (S151-S152). Aug 04-06, 2022.
- Maidment, S., Kahl, K., Allen, J., Briggs, M., Haroa, P., Wellington, C., et al. (2024). Birthing as the first cultural ceremony: Qualitative findings from the Building On Our Strengths (BOOS) study at Waminda. In *Women and Birth. Australian College of Midwives National Conference - Moving Midwifery Forward*, Melbourne, VIC Australia, (101675-101675). 10 - 12 September 2024.

# New grants awarded

## Medical Research Future Fund - 2023 MRFF Models of Care for Sexuality and Gender Diverse People and People with Innate Variations of Sex Characteristics

**Blak and Proud: Safe and Deadly health care.** CIs **Ward J, Blackman R, Dean J, Leitch J, Harvey C, Langham E, Nelson C, Aitken S, Chong L, Bisshop F, Coffey FL, Murdoch J, Byrne R** \$980,279 (2024-2027)

This project is an Indigenous-led, controlled and governed, multifaceted, holistic study aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous LGBTQI+ people living in Southeast Queensland (SEQ). Gaps in health outcomes are significant for First Nations LGBTQI+ peoples who face intersectional disadvantages at multiple levels. This study comprises: (i) yarns and patient journey mapping with LGBTQISGBB people to understand health care needs; (ii) adaptation, implementation and evaluation of a model of care, for LGBTQI+ people; and (iii) development of a BLAK PRIDE certification program to guide Indigenous primary care services in delivering responsive, person centred care for LGBTQISGBB. The entire study will make significant inroads to improving LGBTQI+ visibility and health service delivery for Indigenous people in SEQ.

## Medical Research Future Fund - Cardiovascular Health Mission

The CARDiovascular Risk assessment equations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (CARAT) Study.

CIs **Barzi F, Griffiths K, Woodward M, Bainbridge R, Barr E, Spurling G, Campbell L, Paige E, Brown G, Shakeshaft A, Oguoma V, Butler D, Sexton C, Ranasinghe I, Garbin C.** 2025-2028. \$859,143 (2025 – 2028)

Cardiovascular risk prediction tools in Australia are not accurate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is because they have not been developed specifically for Indigenous peoples. Thus, national guidelines for assessing and treating CVD risks are not suitable or applicable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations. This project proposed to fix this problem by using data from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to develop a more precise risk tool for their peoples.

## Medical Research Future Fund - Indigenous Health Research

**Multidisciplinary initiatives to impact incidence and prevalence of STIs among First Nations Peoples.** 2024-2028. CIs **Ward J, Dean J, Elliott S, Marshall H, Causer L, Barzi F, Preston-Thomas A, Cooney S, Mitchell S, Lawler R, Romer J.** \$2,637,674 (2024 – 2028)

This project addresses persistent sexually transmissible infections (STIs) among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and builds on existing relationships and research infrastructure in three regions to address both the prevalence and incidence of STIs. The project proposes to implement and evaluate multilevel, place-based, and community-endorsed interventions. Three major research frameworks will be deployed to evaluate our efforts. Community governance is central to this project.

## Medical Research Future Fund Optimising Screening Diagnosis and Management of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea

**Co-designing Obstructive Sleep Apnoea screening and diagnostic approaches for First Nations Australians: Strengthening clinical pathways with lived-experience support from community champions.** 2024-2029.

CIs **Fatima Y, Woodroffe T, Wheeler K, Sullivan D, von Senden R, Skinner T, Bucks R, Eastwood P, Chawla J, Potia A, Joo Tan E, Oguoma V, Nasir B, Nasir B, Martin P, Yiallourou S, Collaro A, Mihalopoulos C, Cooper R.** \$1,995,094

This work aims to improve Obstructive Sleep Apnoea screening and diagnosis in First Nations communities by leveraging partnerships with end users. The proposed program includes community roadshows and training consumers as local champions for improving Obstructive Sleep Apnoea awareness, developing new tools for Obstructive Sleep Apnoea screening, identifying new diagnostic indicators, trialling home-based diagnostic models, and evaluating their clinical and cost-effectiveness to ensure timely and culturally responsive screening and diagnosis of Obstructive Sleep Apnoea.

## Medical Research Future Fund Childhood Mental Health Research

**Untapping the potential of sleep health to improve prevention and management of mental health problems in First Nations Children.** CIs **Fatima Y, Wheeler K, Chawla J, Williams W, Potia A, Sullivan D, von Senden R, Huda M, Yap M, Blunden S, Wigginton B, Hou X, Anderson K, Tan E, Smith S.** \$4,997,586

Sleep health is an untapped opportunity to reduce the risk and severity of mental health issues in First Nations children.



In collaboration with First Nations communities and diverse industry partners, the project team will codesign and deliver resources to empower consumers and support service providers in integrating sleep into mental health promotion, protection, and support. Our work will also influence advocacy and policy for wider promotion and uptake of sleep in paediatric mental health initiatives.

### **National Health and Medical Research Council - Global Alliance for Chronic Disease**

**Preventing non-communicable diseases (PreventNCD) among Indigenous children and youth in major cities of Australia.** CIs Mamun A, Ward J, Shakeshaft A, Fatima Y, Dean J, McPhee R, Doran C, Huda M \$1,544,971 (2024 – 2029)

The overarching aim of this implementation research project is to build a partnership between a multidisciplinary research team and urban Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services in two state capital cities of Australia (Brisbane and Darwin) to co-develop and deliver a best-evidence behavioural intervention program that is embedded into the ACCHS's existing service delivery model of care. This program is tailored to children and youth who are in the critical developmental stages of their life course. The research team will evaluate both the implementation and effectiveness of the program. This implementation research will provide a solution to reduce health inequities and improve quality of life.

### **National Health and Medical Council – Centre of Research Excellence**

**Centre for Research Excellence in Neisseria disease control. 2025-2029.** CIs Marshall H, Ward J, Seib K, Richmond P, Lahra M, Wang B, Kahler C, van Hal S, Ong J, McMillan M. \$3,000,000 (University of Adelaide) (2025 – 2030)

Invasive meningococcal disease (IMD) caused by *Neisseria meningitidis* and gonorrhoea caused by *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* are diseases that cause an enormous health burden globally. Gonorrhoea, caused by a genetically closely related bacterium (90% homology), disproportionately impacts women, infants and First Nations young people. This Centre for Research Excellence in *Neisseria* disease control (NEIS CRE) will address the need for public health strategies to drive down disease (Invasive meningococcal disease and gonorrhoea) and prevent an escalating burden from antimicrobial resistance, with some cases of gonorrhoea now untreatable, especially in Central Australia.

### **Sexual Health Research Fund (Queensland Health)**

**Understanding pre-conception sexual and reproductive health and fertility among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Queensland. 2024-2026.** CIs Barzi F, Walker C, Ward J, Boyle J, Dean J, Sexton C \$79,885 (2024 – 2026)

The sexual and reproductive health of individuals before pregnancy can influence their ability to conceive a baby. This study aims to estimate the factors associated with infertility among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Queensland and explore what they and their service providers understand about pre-conception care.

### **Queensland Health**

**Maing Track Together: Queensland's Statewide First Nations Health Equity Implementation. 2024-2025.**

**CIs Bainbridge R, Martin M, Ballangarry J, Langham E, Doran C, Potts B, Begg S, Mathew S, Stajic J, Lawton M. \$274, 878**

This project is the first of three independent evaluations of all 16 Hospital and Health Service Health Equity Strategies utilising the monitoring and evaluation framework in *Making Tracks Together: Queensland's First Nations Health Equity Strategies Monitoring and Evaluation Framework*. The first independent evaluation will be an implementation evaluation, assessing the effectiveness of embedding Health Equity Strategies into Queensland's public health system as they aim to eliminate institutional racism and achieve health equity for and with First Nations people in Queensland.

# Research funding

## Category 1 projects

Funding partner	Project title	UQ Poche lead (CIA)	Funding amount
Funded in 2024			
National Health and Medical Research Council (2024–2029)	Preventing non-communicable diseases (PreventNCD) among Indigenous children and youth in major cities of Australia	Prof Abdullah Mamun	\$1,544,971
National Health and Medical Research Council (2024–2028)	A life course approach to early detection and prevention of noncommunicable diseases in priority populations	Prof Abdullah Mamun	\$2,897,165
Medical Research Future Fund (2024–2027)	Blak and Proud: Safe and deadly healthcare	Prof James Ward	\$986,490
Medical Research Future Fund (2024–2027)	PRIDE: Promoting queer-inclusive professional identities for diversity in primary healthcare	Dr Richard Violette (CIA Dr Megan Ross, UQ RECOVER Centre)	*funding provided to lead org UQ RECOVER
Medical Research Future Fund (2024–2029)	Co-designing Obstructive Sleep Apnoea screening and diagnostic approaches for First Nations Australians: Strengthening clinical pathways with lived-experience support from community champions	A/Prof Fatima Yaqoot	\$1,995,094.16
Continuing in 2024			
Australian Research Council (2023–2030)	ARC Centre of Excellence for Indigenous Futures	Prof James Ward (CIA Prof Brendan Hokowhitu, UQ CoE Indigenous Futures)	\$43,604,272 *provided to lead org UQ ARC CoE Indigenous Futures
National Health and Medical Research Council (2023–2028)	Implementing a life course approach to antenatal and postnatal care for prevention and reduction of non-communicable disease risks in Nepal (IpreventNCD)	Prof Abdualah Mamun	\$1,211,303
Medical Research Future Fund (2023–2028)	Obstructive sleep apnoea diagnosis and management in First Nations communities: community co-design, local capacity building and place-based models for sustainable success	A/Prof Fatima Yaqoot	\$4,063,176
Medical Research Future Fund (2023–2026)	Closing the final gaps in maternal and infant health: the Deadly Fit Mums Program	A/Prof Federica Barzi	\$1,806,991
Medical Research Future Fund (2023–2025)	Implementation of anti-racism strategies to improve health outcomes for First Nations peoples in a large urban hospital	Prof James Ward	\$980,279
Medical Research Future Fund (2022–2027)	Birthing in Our Community: gold standard Indigenous maternal infant health	Prof James Ward (CIA Adrian Carson - IUIH)	\$1,594,600
Medical Research Future Fund (2022–2027)	Scaling up infectious disease point-of-care testing for Indigenous people	Dr Clare Bradley (CIA Prof Rebecca Guy - UNSW)	\$542,696
National Health and Medical Research Council (2022–2027)	Centre of Research Excellence in Urban Indigenous Health	Prof James Ward	\$3,000,000



Funding partner	Project title	UQ Poche lead (CIA)	Funding amount
Medical Research Future Fund (2022–2027)	Healthy Environments And Lives (HEAL) - National Research Network on Human Health and Environmental Change (NHMRC Special Initiative in Human Health and Environmental Change)	Prof James Ward (CIA Prof Sotiris Vardoulakis - ANU)	*funding provided to lead org ANU
Medical Research Future Fund (2022–2026)	Digital infrastructure for improving First Nations maternal & child health	Prof James Ward (CIA Prof Clair Sullivan - UQ)	*funding provided to lead org UQ CHSR
Australian Research Council (2021–2027)	ARC Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course	Prof Abdullah Mamun (CIA Prof Janeen Baxter - UQ)	* funding provided to lead org UQ ISSR
Medical Research Future Fund (2021–2026)	Improving the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men in South Australia	Stephen Harfield (CIA Dr Justin Canuto - Flinders Uni)	*funding provided to lead org Flinders Uni
National Health and Medical Research Council (2021–2026)	National First Nations Research Network	Prof James Ward (CIA Prof Gail Garvey - UQ)	\$10,000,000 *funding provided to lead UQ CIA Garvey)
National Health and Medical Research Council (2021–2026)	Integration and expansion of a sentinel surveillance system to improve infectious disease outcomes for Indigenous Australians: the ATLAS network	Prof James Ward	\$1,137,219
National Health and Medical Research Council (2021–2026)	'Azithromycin before Birth'- Single dose azithromycin shortly before birth to reduce infection in Aboriginal mothers and babies: a randomised controlled trial	Dr Victor Oguoma (CIA Prof Peter Morris - Menzies)	*funding provided to lead org Menzies
Medical Research Future Fund (2021–2025)	Improving surveillance infrastructure for Indigenous primary health care	Prof James Ward	\$1,990,329
Medical Research Future Fund (2021–2025)	VOICE -Validating Outcomes by Including Consumer Experience. Developing a Patient Reported Experience Measure for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people accessing primary health care	Prof Roxanne Bainbridge (CIA Prof Megan Passey - Uni of Sydney)	*funding provided to lead or Uni of Sydney
National Health and Medical Research Council (2020–2027)	Sleep for Strong Souls (3S): Multisectoral partnership and codesigned solutions to improve the sleep health of First Nations Adolescents	A/Prof Fatima Yaqoot	\$986,555
National Health and Medical Research Council (2020–2025)	Progression of chronic kidney disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults: the eGFR3 Cohort Study	A/Prof Federica Barzi (CIA A/Prof Jaquelyne Hughes - Flinders Uni)	*funding provided to lead org Flinders Uni
National Health and Medical Research Council Ideas (2020–2025)	Implementing a precision public health approach to eliminate sexually transmitted infections and control HIV in remote Australia	Prof James Ward	\$2,460,597
National Health and Medical Research Council, Synergy (2020–2025)	Eliminating endemic sexually transmissible infections in remote Australia using targeted multidisciplinary strategies	Prof James Ward	\$4,985,500

## Category 1 projects (continued)

Funding partner	Project title	UQ Poche lead (CIA)	Funding amount
Medical Research Future Fund (2022–2025)	Multidisciplinary co-design of innovative, client centred models for Indigenous mental health services in South East Queensland	Prof Roxanne Bainbridge	\$999,912
Medical Research Future Fund (2022–2025)	Type 2 diabetes prevalence and management in patients attending an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service in Southeast Queensland over a twelve-year period: factors associated with good management and low risk of hospitalisation	A/Prof Federica Barzi	\$393,285
Completed in 2024			
National Health and Medical Research Council (2020–2024)	Developing and implementing an ethical framework for HIV Phylogenetic Analysis in Australia	Prof James Ward (Prof Sharon Lewin – Uni Melbourne)	*funding provided to lead org Uni Melbourne
National Health and Medical Research Council (2020–2024)	Exposure to Trihalomethanes in pregnancy and birth outcomes in Queensland: integrated data analysis and case studies for better policy and health outcomes (2020–2024)	Prof Abdullah Mamun	
Medical Research Future Fund (2020–2024)	Co-designed sleep health program to achieve better sleep and improved mental health symptoms in Indigenous adolescents	A/Prof Fatima Yaqoot	\$1,995,094
Medical Research Future Fund (2020–2024)	Transforming access, relational care, and primary health care in an urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population through patient-centred medical homes	Prof James Ward	\$1,209,747
Australian Research Council (2020–2024)	The developmental significance of sleep transition in early childhood	Prof Abdullah Mamun (CIA Dr Sally Staton, UQ)	*funding provided to lead UQ org
National Health and Medical Research Council (2019–2024)	Gono B Gone: Targeted immunisations programs for vulnerable children and young people against serious infectious diseases	Prof James Ward (CIA Prof Helen Marshall–Uni Adelaide)	*funding provided to lead org Uni Melbourne
National Health and Medical Research Council (2019–2024)	NT Safety and Efficacy of Iron in Haemodialysis Study	A/Prof Federica Barzi (CIA Prof William Majoni – Menzies)	*funding provided to lead org Menzies
National Health and Medical Research Council (2019–2024)	PANDORA (Pregnancy And Neonatal Diabetes Outcomes in Remote Australia) Generations	A/Prof Federica Barzi (CIA Prof Louise Maple Brown – Menzies)	*funding provided to lead org Menzies



## Category 2 – 4 projects

Funding partner	Project title	UQ Poche lead (CIA)	Funding amount
Funded in 2024			
Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (2024-2026)	Understanding pre-conception sexual and reproductive health and fertility among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in Queensland	A/Prof Federica Barzi	\$79,419
Services for Australian Rural & Remote Allied Health (2024-2025)	Evaluation of the Building the Rural and Remote Allied Health Assistant Workforce (BRAHAW) Project	Prof Roxanne Bainbridge	\$110,000
Queensland Health	Making Tracks Together: Queensland's Statewide First Nations Health Equity Strategies Implementation Evaluation	Prof Roxanne Bainbridge	\$250,000
Continuing in 2024			
Metro North Health (2022-2025)	Launch Phase Agreement - Research Alliance for Urban Goori Health	Prof James Ward	\$1,706,421
Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2021-2026)	The ATLAS STI and BBV sentinel surveillance network	Prof James Ward	\$910,000
Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2023-2026)	GOANNA Survey 3 Study: Third Australian cross-sectional survey of social and behavioural factors related to BBVs and STIs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples ages aged 16-29 years	Prof James Ward	\$800,000
Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2022-2025)	Young, Deadly and Free	Prof James Ward	\$956,623
Lowitja Institute (2023-2025)	Supporting agency and connectivity to drive primary healthcare for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in southeast Queensland	Stephen Harfield (led by the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health)	\$42,086
Completed in 2024			
National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (2024)	Achieving greater national consistency for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Health Practitioner professions	Prof Roxanne Bainbridge	\$300,000
NSW Government Communities & Justice (2023-2024)	Independent review of the NSW Government's Department of Communities and Justice's methods for rapid evaluation	Prof Anthony Shakeshaft	\$149,950
Queensland Mental Health Commission (2024)	Research services contract: Co-development of an evaluation strategy for the Yarns Heal Program	Prof James Ward (led by 2Spirits)	\$10,000
Burnet Institute	Eliminate Hepatitis C Project	Prof James Ward	\$646,064
Viertel Senior Medical Research Fellowship (2020-2024)	Improving STI and BBV outcomes and associated drivers among Aboriginal peoples	Prof James Ward	\$1,004,340
Health Developments Corporation	Analysis of Health Hub Morayfield (HHM) Use by Indigenous Patients in 2018 -2022: focusing on use of the Minor Accident and Illness Centre	Prof Xiang-Yu Hou	\$10,998

# Community engagement



## UQ Poche Seminar Series

The UQ Poche Centre Seminar Series continues to bring together the Indigenous health research community, fostering collaboration, knowledge exchange, and discussions on Indigenous health research. Featuring researchers, academics, HDR students, health professionals, and community leaders, the series provides a platform for important presentations that highlight emerging research, innovative methodologies, and strategies for improving health outcomes.

Throughout 2024, the series welcomed a diverse lineup of speakers, including internal presenters from the UQ Poche Centre and external experts from universities, research institutions, and community organisations. External speakers contributed valuable insights, introducing fresh perspectives and expanding conversations on critical health challenges, while internal presenters shared findings from ongoing research projects, offering an in-depth look at the Centre's work and impact.

Since its launch in 2022, the Seminar Series has established itself as an integral space for learning, collaboration, and engagement, strengthening connections between research, practice, and community.

### 2024 presentations

Dr Salenna Elliott, Jethro Romer, Rani Lawler and Jane Wallace: ENDING-STI Synergy Project



Dr Suzanne L. Stewart, University of Toronto: Indigenous ways of knowing, Indigenous research ethics and methodologies



Roslyn Von Senden and Dr Daniel Sullivan: Let's Yarn About Sleep



Professor Alex Brown, National Centre for Indigenous Genomics ANU: Empowering Indigenous Communities in Genomics



Dallas Leon, Institute for Urban Indigenous Health: Deadly Choices



Dr Clinton Schultz, Rhianna Patrick and Professor James Ward: Celebrating Blak Excellence



Raechel Wallace, NADA and Sara Farnbach, UNSW: Developing and evaluating an approach to improve cultural competence of mainstream drug and alcohol services in NSW



Dr Saira Sanjida and Dr Penny Haora: Poche Research Updates, Part 1



Dr Richard Violette, Dr Kiara Minto, and Dr Victor Oguoma: Poche Research Updates, Part 2



Dr Stuart Leske, Dr Anton Clifford-Motopi, and Dr Md. Mehedi Hasan: Poche Research Updates, Part 3



Dr Clinton Schultz, Blackdog Institute: What about Lore? The place of lore in Social and Emotional Wellbeing research, planning and work



Professor Abdullah Mamun, Dr K M Shahunja, and PhD scholar Md Ashraful Alam: Life Course Understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Exploring Global and Australian Context





## Reconciliation Week 2024: Now More Than Ever

National Reconciliation Week is an opportunity to reflect, learn, and take action towards reconciliation. The 2024 National Reconciliation Week theme, *Now More Than Ever*, called for a renewed commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights, recognition, and justice. It reminded us that reconciliation is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort to create meaningful change.

To mark the week, 27 May – 3 June 2024, the UQ Poche Centre hosted a weaving circle on 21 May, led by Durban Bagii artist Carly Wallace. This event provided a space for staff and community members to come together, share stories, and reflect on the strength of First Nations cultures and traditions.

In our Toowong office, we created a Sea of Hearts wall, an initiative that symbolises our collective commitment to reconciliation. Staff contributed handmade hearts, each representing a personal pledge to fostering understanding, respect, and stronger relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the broader Australian community. This served as a powerful reminder that reconciliation is built through shared action and ongoing commitment. As a Centre, we remain committed to fostering an environment of inclusivity and respect, ensuring that the spirit of reconciliation continues to guide our work throughout the year.



## NAIDOC Week 2024

NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture, and achievements, recognising the contributions of First Nations peoples to Australian society. The 2024 theme, *'Keep the Fire Burning!'*, honoured the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations cultures, with fire symbolising connection to Country, to each other, and to the rich traditions that continue to thrive.

As part of NAIDOC Week 2024, 7–14 July, the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health hosted a stall at the Musgrave Park Family Fun Day in Meanjin (Brisbane) on 12 July, engaging with community and sharing information about our research projects. Our team yarned with community members about our research, health programs, and education initiatives, sharing what we do, how we support mob, and ways to improve health together.

Members of the IMPACT-STI and LYAS teams participated in NAIDOC events across Yarrabah, Innisfail, Gimuy (Cairns), and Mount Isa. Robbie Palm supported the Yarri Juice Bar and helped run the Mamu NAIDOC Community Event, while Roslyn Von Senden and Markesh Fanti from the LYAS team hosted a booth at the Good Shepherd Catholic College and presented at the Mount Isa Special School.



## NAIDOC Week Seminar: Celebrating Blak Excellence

As part of NAIDOC Week 2024, the UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health hosted the NAIDOC Seminar: *Celebrating Blak Excellence*, aligning with the 2024 theme, *Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud*. The seminar celebrated the achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across diverse fields and provided a space to share stories, knowledge, and inspiration.

The seminar, with the Poche Centre's Dr Rani West as MC, began with a Welcome to Country from Uncle Steven Coghill, acknowledging the significance of the gathering and connection to Country. The event featured keynote talks from Clinton Schultz, Director of First Nations Strategy and Partnerships at the Blackdog Institute; Rhianna Patrick, freelance journalist, broadcaster, and audio content creator; and Professor James Ward, Director of the Poche Centre. Each speaker shared insights into their work in Indigenous health, media, and leadership, reflecting on their experiences and contributions. Their talks highlighted resilience, achievement, and the ongoing pursuit of equity.

The seminar also featured cultural performances, including the Wagga Torres Strait Islander Dance Company, showcasing Torres Strait Islander traditions through dance. Georgia Corowa, who sang and played guitar, delivered a moving musical performance that brought people together through music and storytelling.

Thank you to all who attended and joined us in celebrating the achievements, strength, and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.





## UQ Jobs for Our Mob Careers Expo

On 3 September 2024, the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit hosted the Jobs for Our Mob Careers Expo, bringing together students and organisations to explore career pathways for Mob. Representing our Centre, Rebekah Hauti and Mikhalyne Campbell attended the event, sharing insights about our research and the opportunities available at the Poche Centre.

With over 20 attendees, the expo provided a valuable opportunity to engage with students, discuss career possibilities in Indigenous health research, and highlight the impact of our work. Events like these are important for our Centre to connect with future researchers and professionals, fostering pathways for First Nations students in health and academia.



## Queensland Murri Carnival

On 25 and 27 September 2024, members of our Centre attended the Queensland Murri Carnival at the South Pine Sporting Complex, helping to facilitate sexual health workshops and educational activities for students participating in the carnival. The event provided a valuable opportunity to engage with young people, encourage conversations about health and wellbeing, and promote culturally safe health education. Kellie Stacy, Lucabella Rynne, Dr Penny Haora, Dr Rani West, Dr Kiara Minto, Sharon Hiserman, Mikhalyne Campbell, and Kirra Geeves supported interactive sessions, reinforcing the importance of accessible and inclusive health information. Through initiatives like these, our Centre remains committed to working alongside communities to empower and inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



## Murri School Health Expo

On 16 October 2024, our Centre participated in the Murri School Health Expo for the first time, hosting a stall to engage children in interactive activities about health research. The expo, held annually at the Murri School in Acacia Ridge, provides students with hands-on experiences to explore different health professions and career pathways.

At our stall, we introduced kids to the role of a researcher through games and discussions, encouraging curiosity and questions about health careers. Lucabella Rynne, our Indigenous Bachelor of Health Sciences placement student, developed and planned the activities for the stall and was there on the day to lead the engagement with students.

With great engagement this year, the team is already looking at ways to enhance our presence at next year's expo and hopes to involve more staff in 2025.





# Health workforce and staff development

## Academic writing workshop

As part of its skill development program, UQ Poche Centre for Indigenous Health hosted an Academic Writing Workshop on 16 April 2024, delivered by Prof Anthony Shakeshaft. The aim of the workshop was to explore the technical aspects of writing an academic paper for publication. It was designed to be useful for people with any level of writing experience, even those who may not be directly involved in writing or reviewing academic papers in their day-to-day jobs. Although there are many aspects to consider when writing an academic paper (e.g. which journal is appropriate, authorship guidelines, acknowledgements and writing from a strengths-based perspective), this workshop explored how academic papers are structured to optimise the focus on their key points. It involved a presentation and Q&A session with Prof Shakeshaft to explore key concepts, followed by a practical component to allow participants to start to apply those concepts. Given the workshop was well attended and received great feedback from participants, consideration is being given to exploring other aspects of academic writing in future skill development workshops.

## Staff retreats

Staff retreats provide an invaluable opportunity for the UQ Poche Centre team to come together, reflect, and collaborate. These gatherings allow space for meaningful discussions, strengthening connections and reinforcing our shared commitment to Indigenous health research. In 2024, the Centre held two retreats focused on knowledge-sharing, strategic planning, and fostering a strong, connected team.

Our first retreat was held on 13-14 May at the Jagera Community Hall in Musgrave Park, a culturally significant site in Meanjin (Brisbane). Over two days, staff engaged in discussions on Indigenous health methodologies, research values, and Centre priorities. The retreat began with a Welcome to Country by Uncle Steven Coghill and a session on Indigenous research methodologies led by Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson. A team scavenger hunt through Musgrave Park brought fun and teamwork to the day.

On the second day, Dr Aunty Mary Martin AM led a session exploring our Centre's conception of health and how the Poche Centre values can be applied in personal and professional spaces. This was followed by a session with Sammy Leone, who shared his background and introduced his work with First Nations People Consultancy, laying the foundations for future discussions on the values and organisational culture.

The retreat concluded with a Centre strategy update from Centre Director, Professor James Ward.

The second retreat, held on 3-4 December at the State Library of Queensland and the Poche Centre in Toowong, provided a space for reflection and forward planning. Day one began with a Welcome to Country by Gaja Kerry Charlton, followed by a presentation from Professor James Ward on the Centre's progress and future direction. The afternoon featured a strategic planning session led by Dr Celia Webby, encouraging staff to collaborate on shaping the Centre's next steps. A team scavenger hunt wrapped up the day, bringing plenty of laughs and a bit of friendly competition.

On the second day, Ms Tanja Hirvonen from ABSTARR Consulting facilitated a session on trauma-informed research in Indigenous health, followed by a paint-and-sip session with artist Neta-Rie Mabo, where everyone had the chance to unwind and get creative in a relaxed setting. The retreat wrapped up with the Centre's End of Year Celebration – a chance to step away from work and enjoy some well earned downtime together. With a lively Grinch Grab gift exchange, many rounds of darts, and plenty of great food and drinks, it was a fantastic way to end the retreat, filled with laughter and good company.



# Finances

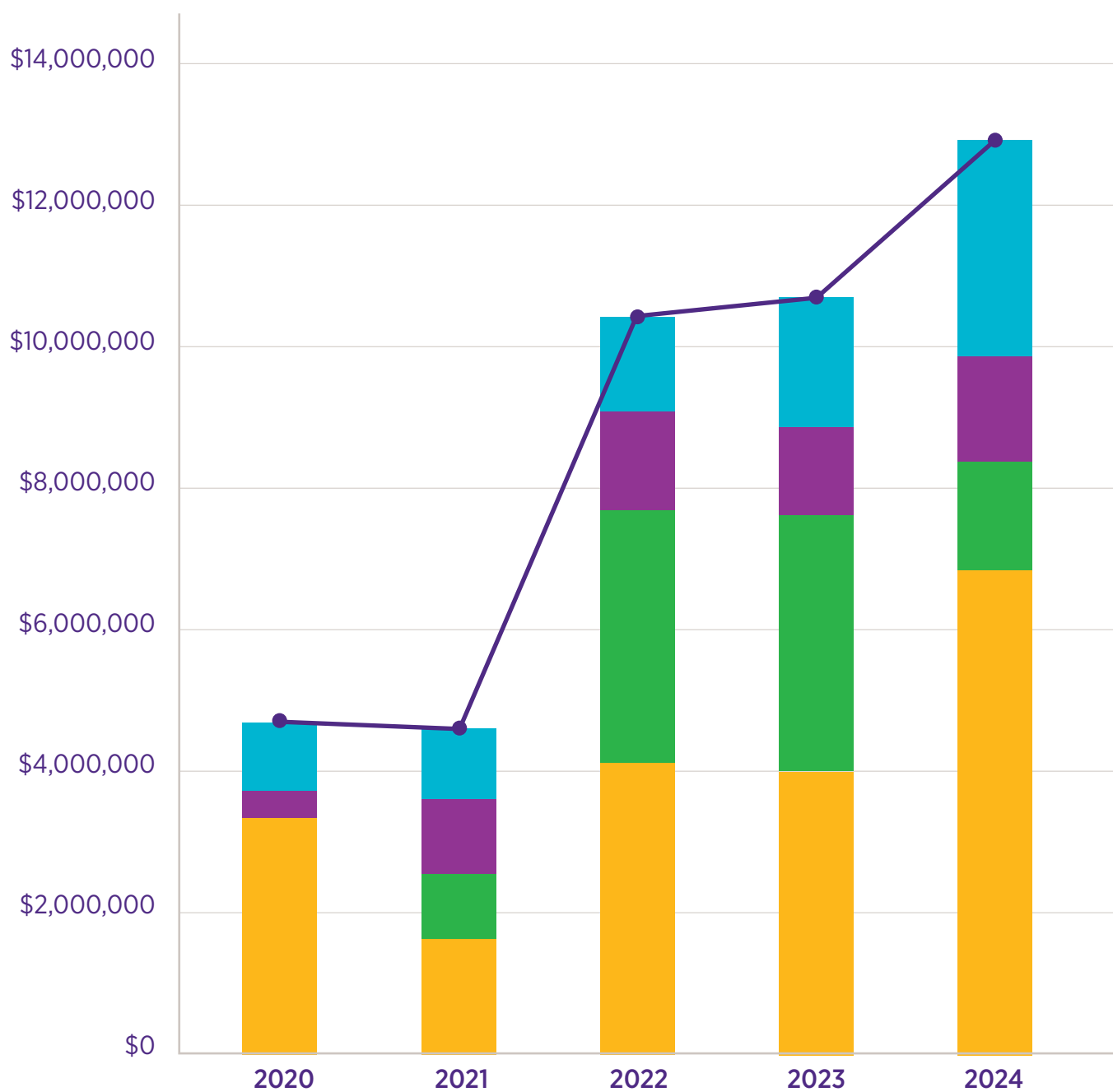
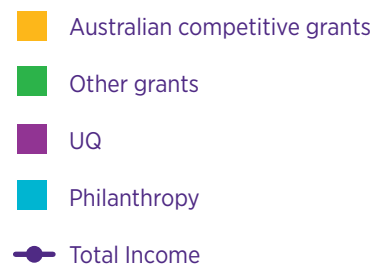
## Income sources 2024

Australian Competitive Grants	\$6,893,460	54%
Other Grants	\$1,443,098	11%
Philanthropy	\$2,983,458	23%
The University of Queensland	\$1,520,714	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,840,730</b>	

## Total expenses 2024

Scholarships	\$88,957	1%
Collaborative Research	\$2,239,383	20%
Salaries	\$7,357,889	67%
Other Research Costs	\$1,333,434	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$11,019,663</b>	

## Income by type 2020-2024



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