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Artwork: by Hughie Brent. This artwork is/was featured on the following page:
[Respiratory Health](#)

Communiqué



Welcome



The year has started strong, and I have had the privilege of travelling to Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide to meet with Australian HealthInfoNet partners, as well as a trip to funders and partners in Canberra in late 2024. While in Canberra, I met with leaders and teams from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, Indigenous Allied Health Australia, CATSINAM, Palliative Care Australia, the Healing Foundation, Rural Doctors Australia, the National Rural Health Alliance and our funders from the Department of Health and Aging.

In Melbourne, I had productive meetings with a variety of peak bodies to discuss how the InfoNet supports their work, including

Allied Health Professionals Australia, Health Justice Australia, RANZCOG, VAACHO, Victorian Health Department, SNAICC, the Lowitja Institute, the Minum Barrang: Indigenous Eye Health Unit, the Australian Psychological Society, RACGP, the Victorian Alcohol and Other Drug Association and Kidney Health Australia, SNAICC. It was especially great to learn about SNAICC's work with the *Connected Beginnings* Program. The InfoNet team are also looking forward to exhibiting at SNAICC's upcoming conference, *Our Culture, Keep it Strong, We Belong*.

Not to be outdone, our partners in Sydney welcomed me in March including meetings

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



Bep Uink with some of the CATSINaM leadership team

with the Australasia Society for HIV, Viral Medicine and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM), the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, HealthDirect, Rural Doctors Network, Network of Alcohol and Other Drug Agencies, the First Nations Eye Health Alliance, the Mental Health Coordinating Council, the Brien Holden Foundation, the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance, the Sax Institute, the Australian Medical Council, and NSW Department of Aboriginal Affairs. I was especially delighted to hear about the work of the **First Nations Eye Health Alliance**, which represents a genuine shift in self-empowered and community-controlled health solutions, and how non-Aboriginal organisations have supported this transition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Eye Health. I am excited to be attending their upcoming conference, *Seeing Our Way* - in Boorloo (Perth) from 27th-29th May.

A highlight of the year so far was a visit from the deadly team at the CSIRO Australian e-Health Research Centre. The team held a workshop for HealthInfoNet staff on how AI can be used for good in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healthcare, as well as what trends and issues we need to consider. See more below.

Our focus at the HealthInfoNet now turns to our Online Community Consultation



Bep Uink, Camilla Rowland - Palliative Care Australia and Tara Hoyne

sessions. We are running nine sessions over the course of 2 weeks in May (5th- 16th) to seek feedback on our Strategic Plan. I invite each of you to sign up for a session based on the following groups:

- Regional, rural & remote: Monday 5 May 11:00am-12:00pm (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)
- Tertiary education students: Monday 5 May 12:30pm-1:30pm (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)
- Higher education (university/TAFE/RTOs) & research institutes: Tuesday 6 May 10:30am-11:30am (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)
- University Librarians: Friday 9 May 9:00am-10:00am (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)
- Aboriginal Health Workers and

community members (Mob only): Friday 9 May 10:30am-11:30am (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)

- Aboriginal community controlled health organisations: Monday 12 May 9:00am-10:00am (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)
- Environmental health workforce: Wednesday 14 May 9:30am-10:30am (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)
- Justice sector: Friday 16 May 9:00am-10:00am (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#)
- Health Practitioners: Friday 16 May 10:30am-11:30am (AWST) - [EVENT LINK](#).

I hope to see you there!

Professor Bep Uink

Adelaide Roundtable

In April we held a Roundtable meeting with stakeholders in Adelaide where I updated attendees on our work and also captured feedback to inform our strategic planning.

Our guest presenters were:

- SA Health - Chief Aboriginal Health Officer, Kurt Towers
- Ninti One – Kerindy Clarke (the Tackling Indigenous Smoking program)
- Australian Drug and Alcohol Council (ADAC) - CEO Scott Wilson
- Aboriginal Health Council of SA (AHCSA) - CEO, Tanya McGregor
- Northern Adelaide Local Health Network (NALHN) - Executive Director of Aboriginal Health, Toni Shearing

It was a pleasure to meet our TIS portal funders and AODKC reference group member Scott Wilson as well as some of our SA partners and senior leaders in Aboriginal health. Meetings and presentations were also held with other stakeholders while in Adelaide. The Roundtable was an excellent reminder of one of the things I love the most about working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector - our ability to come together and support one another to get the job done. Thank you to each of our guests and presenters.



Adelaide Roundtable presenters 2025



Some of the Adelaide Roundtable attendees

AI Workshop with CSIRO



Ray, Bep, Lucy and Andrew

In March, we hosted three guests from CSIRO in Brisbane who ran a half-day session as part of a national research project to get our input into the use of AI in our work. Their project aims to build an evidence base of the applicability, concerns, and opportunities of AI in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

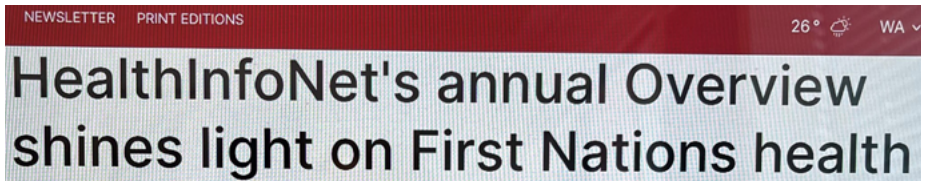
Dr Andrew Goodman, Prof. Ray Mahoney and Dr Lucy Shinnars facilitated the workshop and are part of the team consulting around the country in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector.

Our annual Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status is now online

Our premier knowledge exchange product was launched in March. While you can access continual updates online, which we introduced last year, our *Overview* is still comprehensively updated once a year and available as an annual publication, along with helpful PowerPoint presentations of tables, a plain language infographic summary, and a short video of key highlights. *Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2024* provides

New this year:

1. Closing the Gap 'target boxes' indicates where health and wellbeing topics align with national policy been led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
2. We continue to develop capacity to accurately and authentically represent the data and statistics that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities. It is a journey that we share with other data-driven organisations, such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, and is buoyed by the recent release of the Framework for Indigenous Data Governance. A statement on how the principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Data Sovereignty have been embedded appears in the *Overview*.



HealthInfoNet's annual Overview shines light on First Nations health

Giovanni Torre - March 10, 2025



NIT featured the Overview

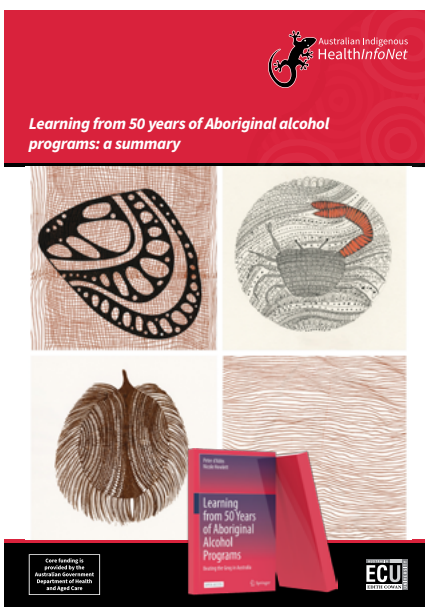
The *Overview* should be read in the context of our ongoing commitment to presenting data that empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities while acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ongoing efforts to improve the quality of current data sources in Australia. All data presented is secondary data, meaning that it has been collected by organisations outside of the HealthInfoNet. With this in mind, we have applied the principles of the Maïam nayri Wingara Indigenous Data Sovereignty Collective to the *Overview*.



AOD summary

Also in February, our Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre research team produced a **summary** of the key findings from a book titled 'Learning from 50 years of Aboriginal Alcohol Programs: Beating the Grog in Australia' by Peter d'Abbs and Nicole Hewlett. Accompanying the *Summary* is a factsheet and a short video of key findings. *Learning from 50 years of Aboriginal Alcohol Programs: a summary*

Our *Summary* identifies the many actions and measures taken to prevent and reduce alcohol harms among Aboriginal peoples as well as the historical context for those actions. The *Summary* was written by HealthInfoNet AOD research staff. It identifies the strategies that best address and prevent harms from alcohol use with an emphasis on community-wide approaches and community-led approaches to addressing harms.



New review says cultural safety and community-led approaches critical for effective BBV prevention and treatment

We are delighted to share our latest health topic review, which was launched in February.

A new review of epidemiology, prevention and management of blood-borne viruses (BBV) experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples shows that

colonisation and historical trauma continue to impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes related to BBVs, including higher rates of hepatitis B, hepatitis C, and HIV. Accompanying the review is a summary, factsheet and video.

The authors of the review noted that addressing the ongoing challenges of BBVs among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples requires a multifaceted approach that prioritises cultural safety, community empowerment, and health system reforms. While significant progress has been made, particularly through Aboriginal-led health services and peer-based initiatives, there remain critical gaps in service delivery, screening, and treatment accessibility, particularly for remote and high-risk populations. Ongoing research and targeted



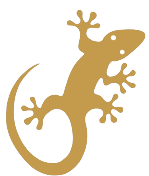
interventions are essential to inform culturally appropriate and effective public health strategies. By continuing to invest in these areas, future efforts can significantly reduce the burden of BBVs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and promote better health outcomes.

HTLV-1 Portal and user feedback

In 2024, the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) funded us to create and promote an HTLV-1 Portal that collated HTLV-1 resources of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Human T-cell lymphotropic virus type 1 (HTLV-1) is an ancient human retrovirus which affects T lymphocytes, a type of white blood cell. While current evidence suggests most people with HTLV-1 will remain well, in a small number of people, HTLV-1 can cause serious illness. Aboriginal communities in Central Australia have some of the highest rates of HTLV-1 in the world.

The purpose of the Portal was to facilitate rapid access to information for a target audience of health professionals, people with HTLV-1, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, researchers and other stakeholders, supporting their professional development and evidence-based decision making. The Portal was launched on 30 April 2024 and is hosted on the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet website <https://healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/learn/health-topics/htlv-1/>

Call for papers for our Journal



Journal of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

The Journal of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet has been published online since 2020. In that time, it has received over 42,000 downloads, in 141 countries and 910 institutions around the world.

If you would like to improve the reach and impact of your work, we invite you to submit an article to our rapidly growing publication.

We are seeking papers from researchers and practitioners that address key issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The Journal of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet aims to facilitate access to

high-quality information that supports those working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector. The Journal reflects its wide range of readers - policy makers, service providers, researchers, students and the general community - by keeping people informed about recent research and promoting access to knowledge that is timely, accessible and relevant to their everyday practice.

We are accepting:

- original research articles - full reports of significant research
- health topic reviews - general evidence-based summaries of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and reviews of specific topics

- brief reports - brief research reports or summaries of innovative health promotion or preventive health programs
- book reviews on titles that inform and support everyday practice.

Visit our Journal [here](#) to submit your work. All submissions are subject to double-blind peer review.

Contact details:

Professor Neil Drew Editor

Journal of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

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Email: n.drew@ecu.edu.au

Tackling Indigenous Smoking news

The TIS portal is specifically for TIS workforce however anyone can access the main content. The workforce regularly share success stories and these are worth a read of how they are making a difference in their communities <https://tacklingsmoking.org.au/sharing-our-stories/>

A new video was recently produced by us which gives a great overview on what's there https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O11xtT_OrZY



A recent user survey of the Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre

52% of AOD users accessed the Portal for work, 27.8% for study and 11.1% for their community. The highest number of Portal sessions were from WA (28% of sessions), followed by NSW (20%) and Victoria (18%). Some users said:

Great to have so much in one place, thanks. GP, remote NT

This is a fantastic education portal to familiarise healthcare professions to move towards improved healthcare. Respiratory Scientist, NT

It's really helpful to have a resource page with collated resources for learning more about it. GP, remote NT

Federal Budget 2025-26

As always, the morning after the budget announcement, we collated relevant information in our Australian Indigenous HealthBulletin article: [Budget 2025-26: information of relevance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing](#) to access information related to the Budget and its implications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

Staff planning day

Mid-January on one of Perth's scorching Birak days, we held a team building/ideas development day with the team which will all form part of the strategic plan that we are compiling. Later that month the team attended another broader planning day with the Centre we are part of at Kurongkurl Katitjin, ECU.

Conferences

1. Walawaani Conference - December 2024 (Presented and exhibited)
2. IAHA Conference - held late December 2024 (exhibited)
3. WANADA Conference – Perth, March (presented and exhibited)
4. EHA(WA) Conference – Perth, April (presented)



HealthInfoNet's Darren Deves with Walawaani conference delegate



Jan Allan Hamper winner, WANADA Conference



Karl Briscoe and Michelle Elwell IAHA Conference

Djeran—season of adulthood

Where we are located it is the Djeran season and the arrival of cooler nights. It's a time of significant change and transition, including shifts in weather patterns and preparation for the colder months.

Djeran is a time for traditional activities like courtship, marriage, and other ceremonies that mark the transition into adulthood within the Noongar culture. Find out more <http://www.bom.gov.au/iwk/calendars/nyoongar.shtml#djeran>

