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Director's Communiqué

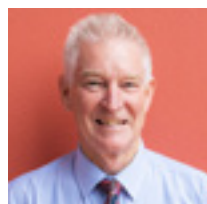
Director's welcome

Welcome to my first Communiqué of 2021. We find ourselves still in the grip of COVID-19. Despite the efforts of many, it continues to disrupt our lives in so many ways, both personally and professionally. And yet we continue to persist as well, finding creative and innovative ways to go about our daily lives as best we can in trying circumstances. Despite a few hiccoughs the vaccination rollout is (finally) gaining momentum. While we have become a little vaccine hesitant due to the clotting issues associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine it is still vitally important that we follow the best health advice available. Which is exactly what Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have been doing around Australia since the pandemic was declared. Due to the outstanding response from the community and the strong leadership in the sector, the impact of COVID - 19 on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities has not been as bad as many feared at the outset. I want to pay tribute to all the front-line health sector workers and the Indigenous led organisations like NACCHO who have been a beacon of leadership and support throughout.

At the HealthInfoNet we are proud to stand behind and support all those who work every day to make a positive difference in these most trying of times. But they have had plenty of practice because they give their all, every day, day in day out, month in month out, year in year out and have done so for decades.

We are doing our best to keep in touch with you all but I must confess that I miss you all in the many face to face meetings we used to have. I have not travelled since February last year and while Zoom and Teams have been a great way to stay in touch, it's just not the same as sitting across a table in your office or in a café nearby having a chat. I would normally have made 10 or 12 trips to various parts of Australia over the last year. . . and HealthInfoNet staff would have attended many conferences to meet you, our users to introduce you to, or update you about our work and the new knowledge exchange resources we have created. There is a little light at the end of the tunnel. We have tentatively begun to schedule actual travel again and I and all the staff eagerly look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months.

Thank you for your ongoing support. Even while we have been distant from one another physically, your visits to our web resource have been very, very welcome and we stand as always ready to support your vital work in any way we can.



Professor Neil Drew

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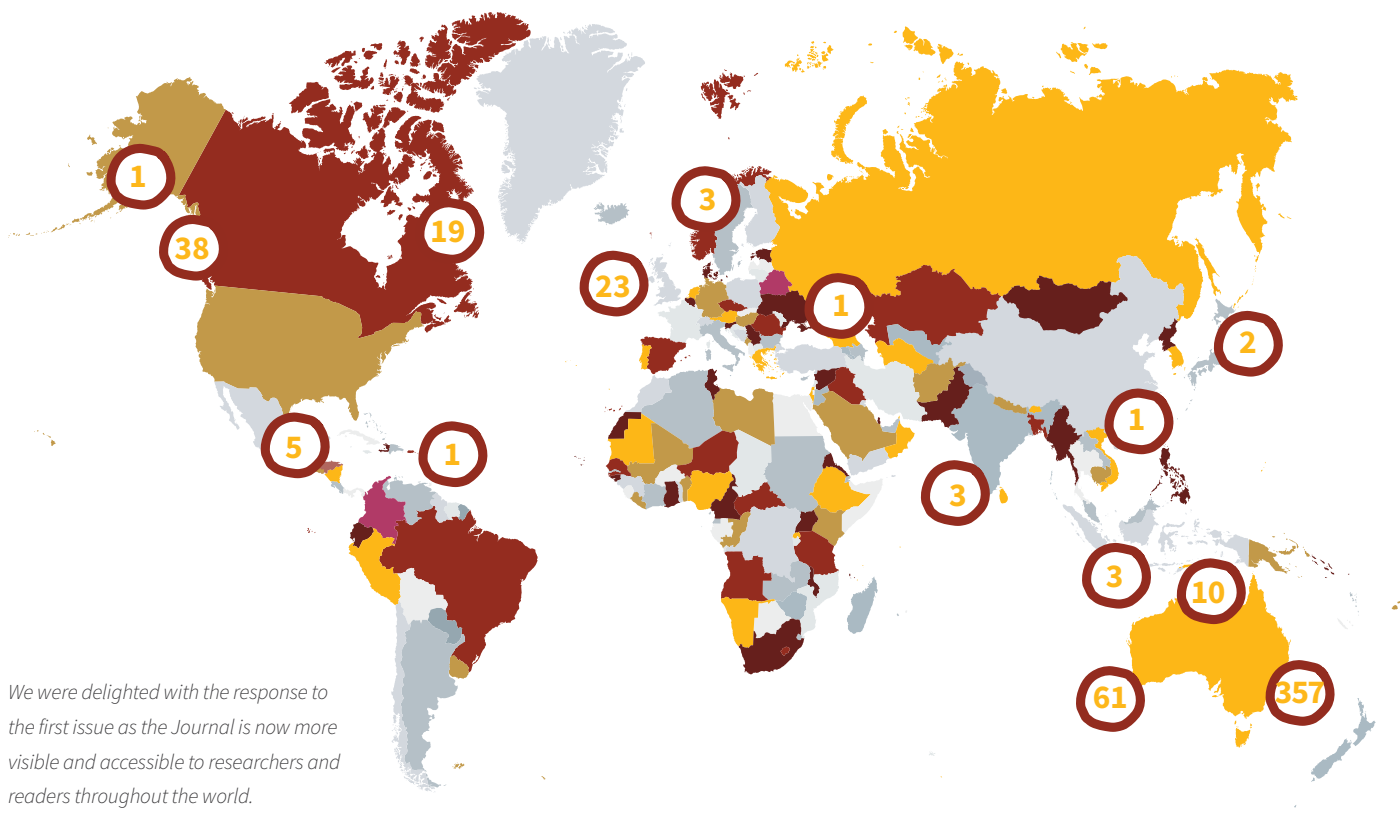
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The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of Australia and the Torres Strait. We respect all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—their customs and their beliefs. We also pay our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

HealthBulletin Journal



We were delighted with the response to the first issue as the Journal is now more visible and accessible to researchers and readers throughout the world.

We had a wonderful response to our first issue of the 'Next Gen' HealthBulletin Journal via Edith Cowan University (ECU)'s Research Online institutional repository. As a result, the Journal is now more visible and accessible to researchers and readers throughout the world. The remit of the Journal remains the same: to facilitate access to information to support those working in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector.

Issue 2 will be available soon. Our Research Online dashboard shows that we have attracted 567 readers from all over the world. This is a really encouraging outcome. The reach of the Journal should assist in attracting new readers from around the world and of course authors. Obviously our first priority is to engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector workforce, but showcasing the work of Australian researchers to the world will be a great service. I am also hopeful that

it will help grow our HealthInfoNet user base internationally. We are currently seeking a new name for the journal and will let you know when it officially launches.

Papers can be submitted [here](#). Please note in order to make a submission you will need to create a log in for ECU Research Online.

HealthBulletin Journal

Tackling Indigenous Smoking update

Jane Burns and Ashleigh Parnell attended - via zoom - the National Best Practice Unit Tackling Indigenous Smoking (NBPU TIS) Planning Days on 2-3 February. During the planning days the NBPU TIS met to discuss the Action Plan for 2021. The days were attended by the NBPU TIS consortium, Professor Tom Calma AO (National TIS Coordinator), Australian National University

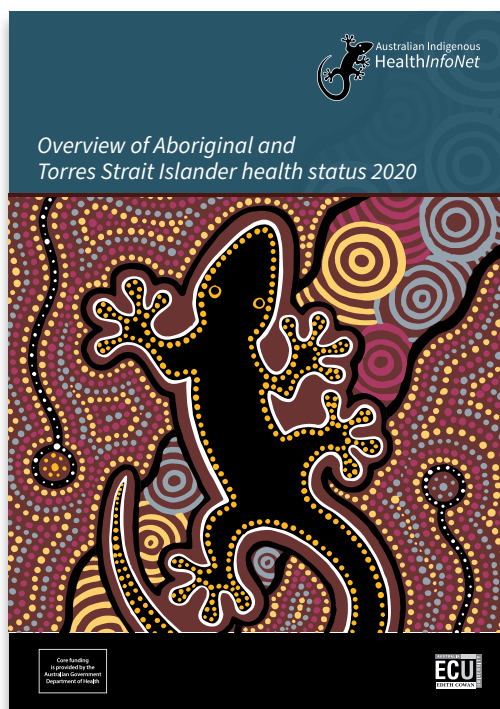
and CIRCA researchers, and Department of Health staff. The in-person meeting was held in Adelaide, with Kaurna and Narrunga man Mickey Kumatpi Marrutya O'Brien providing a wonderful Welcome to Country. Significant projects for the NBPU TIS up to June 2022 will be prioritising activities supporting pregnant women and supporting tobacco control campaigns in remote areas.



Annual Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status

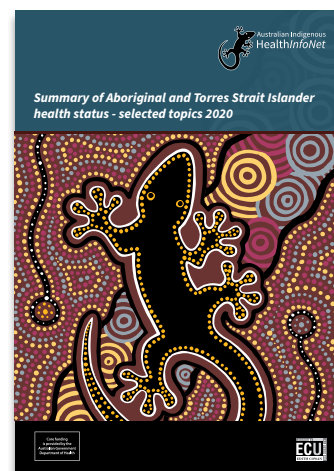
In March, we released the latest *Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status*. Our Overview is an authoritative review of the current health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We strive to provide an accurate and informative summary of the current health and well-being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. As part of our commitment to strengths based approaches and data sovereignty we have once again attempted to reduce our reliance on comparative data in favour of exploring the broad context of the lived experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and how this may impact their health journey.

As part of our ongoing commitment to knowledge exchange we also developed additional online tools to help you access the latest information from the 2020 Overview.



Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2020

Overview of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2020



Summary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2020



PowerPoint of the Summary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2020

PowerPoint summary of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health status 2020

Advisory Board meeting

Our first Advisory Board meeting for the year was held on Zoom in March. It was lovely to catch up with all the Board Members and to welcome some new members. Professor Roianne West, CEO of CATSINaM, a great friend to us at the HealthInfoNet who we've had a long association with, joined the Board and immediately stepped into the role as Chair of the Advisory Board. Thank you Roianne, I really look forward to working with you in this new role.

New book *Aboriginal Fields of Practice* released

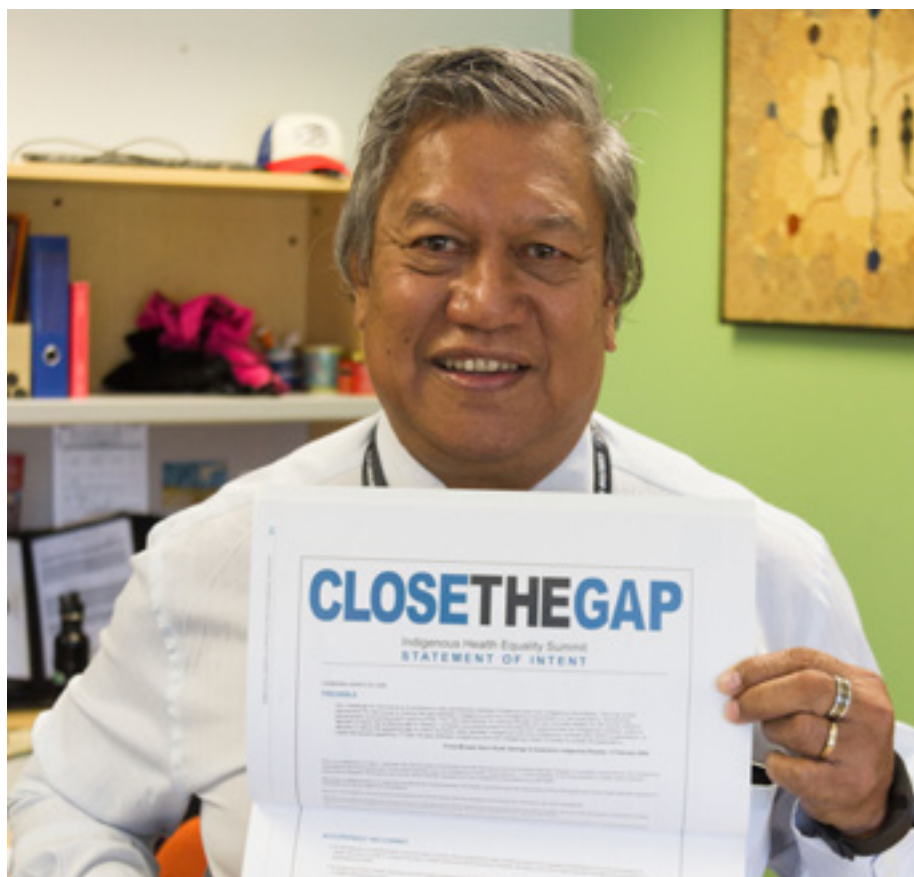
With co-authors James Smith and Jesse Fleay, Uncle Mick Adams co-authored a chapter, *How the Practical Perspectives of Health Impact on Aboriginal Males, Family and Communities* in a recently released book *Aboriginal Fields of Practice* edited by Bindi Bennett.



Inaugural Chair of Advisory Board, Roianne West

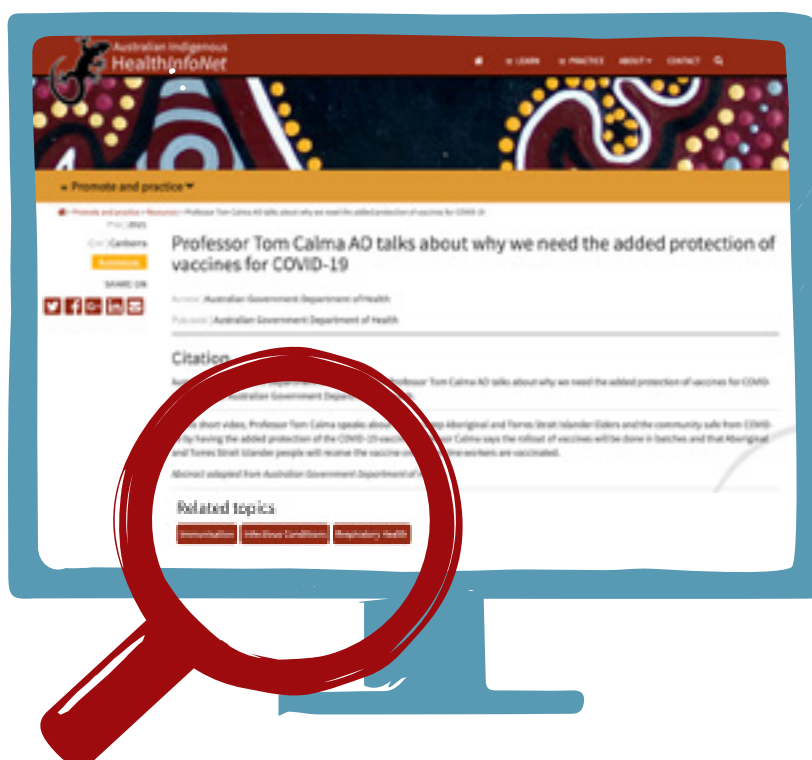
National Close the Gap day 17 March

National Close the Gap Day is an important milestone event. Some of you may be aware that our Senior Research Fellow Dr Uncle Mick Adams in 2008 was part of the partnership to develop the Statement of Intent when he was Chairperson of NACCHO. As always we promoted the campaign leading up to the event and on the day on our website and our social media channels. We also updated our Closing the Gap section on our website. A key part of the upgrade was to produce a much more accessible timeline of events in the campaign. Let us know what you think.



It's now easier and quicker to find related content on our website

Our in house custom built website has been updated to include any related topics to the item searched or viewed by our users. This new 'Related Topics' section at the bottom of our content pages will navigate users to topics that are relevant to the current item being viewed.



Primary research



Focus group for National Consultation Review, Roanna Lobo (Curtin University), Kristy Stewart (Cancer Council WA), Natalie Ciccone (ECU), Leanne Pilkington (WA Health), Neil Drew and Michelle Elwell.

COVID-19 project

Uncle Mick and I conducted some meetings/ focus groups in Bunbury WA in March as part of a project focusing on gaining a better understanding of how online knowledge about COVID-19 is 'activated' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and on the role of natural helpers who are at the crucial interface between community members and the services that support them.

We are delighted to be collaborating closely with Karen Jetta, the Student Success and Engagement Officer from the ECU Bunbury campus and really appreciate her support to develop strong and enduring relationships with Elders, other key leaders and community members in the South West of

Western Australia. Our co-researcher on this project is Associate Professor Stuart Medley who is an authority of using visual methods to gather meaningful data.

National Consultation Review

With the support of our key funding partners in the Australian Department of Health, I am delighted to announce that in 2021 we are undertaking a nationwide consultation to review our cultural governance practices to ensure that we remain at the forefront of best practice in this important area of activity.

As a data driven organisation that designs and releases knowledge products and resources to support the health sector

workforce we must continue to develop our understanding of data sovereignty/ governance and how they inform the way we use data and statistics and how we co-design our knowledge products. This project is being led by Dr Uncle Mick Adams, our Senior Aboriginal Research Fellow and Michelle Elwell, Research Coordinator at the HealthInfoNet. The project is off to a great start with a workshop meeting at our Mount Lawley campus. Uncle Mick and Michelle welcome your contribution so please feel free to contact them or participate in one of the workshops they will be organising in the coming weeks.

Uncle Mick Adams: m.adams@ecu.edu.au
Michelle Elwell: m.elwell@ecu.edu.au

Conference and events

Despite travel limitations we were able to promote our work at the following:

- The Australian & New Zealand Addiction Conference, 7 December 2020 (online presentation)
- Cancer Council WA PaSce hybrid event 19 January 2021, Perth (in person/online presentation)
- Environmental Health Australia WA Conference 25-26 February 2021, Perth (presented in person and exhibited)
- Aboriginal Health Council of WA state sector Conference 24- 25 March 2021, Perth (exhibited and provided delegate satchels)
- ECU School of Nursing 25 March 2021, Perth (in person presentation)
- Rural Health West Conference 24-25 March 2021, Perth (exhibited)
- National Indigenous Drug and Alcohol Conference 25-26 March 2021, Adelaide (online presentation)



Vilma Fitzgerald presenting at the Environmental Health Australia WA Conference 25-26 February 2021, Perth



Darren Deves at the Aboriginal Health Council of WA state sector conference 24- 25 March 2021, Perth



Admin Casual staff member Carla Gibbney at the Aboriginal Health Council of WA state sector conference 24- 25 March 2021, Perth



Tam Swann with some of the ECU School of Nursing staff and students who attended her presentation on 25 March 2021, Perth



Anomie and Tam Swann (centre) presented at Cancer Council WA PaSce hybrid event 19 January 2021, Perth



Conference delegate Azizah Roe visits our stand Rural Health West Conference 24-25 March 2021, Perth



Avinna Trzesinski presenting at the Australian & New Zealand Addiction Conference, 7 December 2020 (online presentation)

Staff update

We welcomed three new staff. A part time Social Media Content Creator Joey Chua, a fulltime Research Officer, Hannah Tarrant and a casual Admin Assistant, Carla Gibbney.

I also want to note a special anniversary milestone at the HealthInfoNet. Jane Burns, our Research Team Leader has made a valued 20 year contribution to the HealthInfoNet.

Jane said of her work

"I have been privileged to have worked for the HealthInfoNet for 20 years. My journey began when I worked with Professor Neil Thomson (Founding Director of the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet), on the book The Health of Indigenous Australians in 2001 and following this he offered me a position with the team. Since then, I have worked with many amazing people and had lots of opportunities to learn and grow along the way. I enjoy sharing my knowledge and experience with other team members to hopefully assist them. I have been fortunate to meet many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and will always be interested in their culture and history. I hope that in my work, I have contributed to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people."

I am in awe of Jane's career of service and dedication to our work and to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities throughout Australia over this sustained period. We are very proud to have Jane on our team.



Social Media Content Creator Joey Chua, a fulltime Research Officer, Hannah Tarrant and a casual Admin Assistant, Carla Gibbney (front centre).



Jane Burns celebrates her 20th anniversary working with the HealthInfoNet.