

# DECOLONISING AND COMMUNITY-LED APPROACHES TO INDIGENOUS SEXUAL HEALTH RESEARCH

Rosenberg S<sup>1,2,3</sup>, Lobo R<sup>1,2</sup>, Hallett J<sup>1,2</sup>, Roberts M<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Applied Research and Evaluation Network (SIREN), School of Public Health, Curtin University

<sup>2</sup>Collaboration for Evidence, Research, and Impact in Public Health (CERIPH), School of Public Health, Curtin University

<sup>3</sup>Department of Sexology, School of Public Health, Curtin University

## BACKGROUND

Indigenous health research has produced a number of frameworks that identify a need to reorient current research approaches with Indigenous communities. This includes the development and implementation of flexible, responsive, and community-oriented approaches to research, that is co-produced by both the researchers and the participating communities, to ensure accessibility, participation and engagement. It also acknowledges that Indigenous people and their communities should benefit from, and can access all information collected from the research undertaken.

## METHODS

A review of evidence from Australia, Aotearoa/New Zealand and Canada was initiated as part of the WA Department of Health's *Aboriginal Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Strategy 2019-2023*. This was conducted using PubMed, Scopus and ProQuest for peer-reviewed literature, alongside Google and Google Scholar for grey literature, which yielded 600 relevant sources. This review was significantly aided by an advisory group consisting of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal service providers and stakeholders.

## RESULTS

Decolonising and community-led approaches are an effective tool for conducting research and working with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This includes:

- Using traditional languages in research and dissemination of findings
- Educating non-Indigenous researchers on Indigenous ways of knowing
- Facilitating yarning for community consultation
- Engaging Indigenous Elders, community members, and professionals
- Addressing the impact of colonisation on intergenerational trauma, and on sexual and broader health
- Incorporating long-term community involvement to document and respond to changes in attitudes and issues
- Distributing data in line with the needs and desires of the community

## SO WHAT?

Future research would benefit from using immersive, transformative and community-based methods, with a strong focus on community involvement and empowerment.

Reorienting sexual health research with Indigenous communities towards decolonising and community-led frameworks increases the potential for better data collection and significant improvements in sexual health outcomes for Indigenous communities.

These approaches allow for better relationships with communities, and can produce research outcomes which directly benefit the community. Developing these deeper community relationships improve trust, and enhance the collaborative aspect of any community-based research.

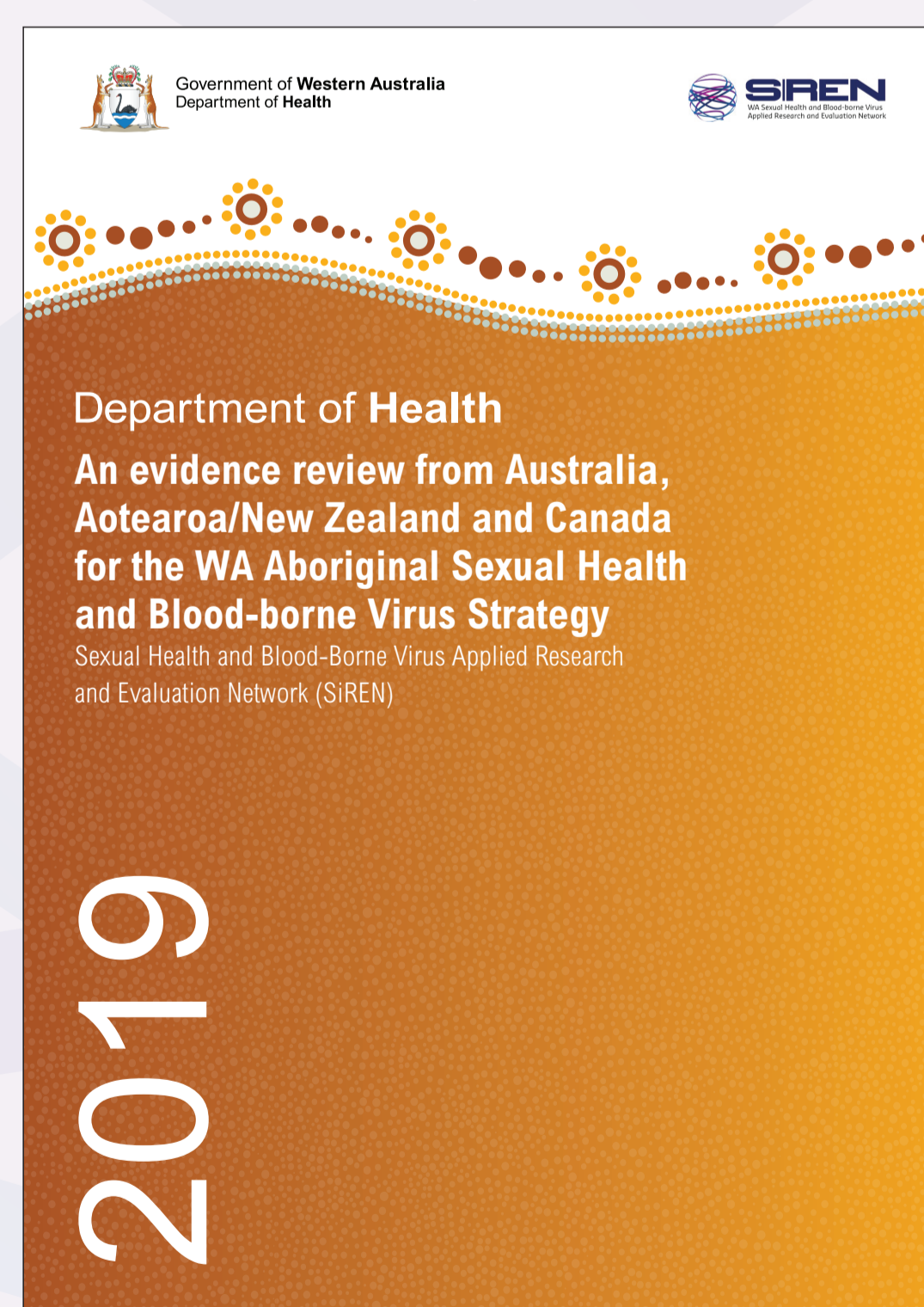
The involvement of Indigenous Elders and community members facilitates the collection of deeper, richer data that ensures cultural safety and provides voice for community.

## MORE INFO

Supporting documentation for the evidence review includes a series of checklists for clinicians, public health practitioners and researchers.

Contact the SiREN team for more information: [siren@curtin.edu.au](mailto:siren@curtin.edu.au)

The full report can be found on the SiREN website: <https://siren.org.au/evidence-review-for-the-wa-aboriginal-shbbv-strategy/>



This research is supported by funding from the Western Australian Department of Health Sexual Health and Blood-borne Virus Program.