

Establishing a National Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers

A team of 91 researchers, led by four experienced First Nations Australian leaders have come together to establish the National Network for First Nations Researchers.

This represents the largest cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers (97 percent) ever assembled with a single goal of growing the next generation of research leaders. This initiative is a critical part of the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) framework for improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health through research.

The following researchers will lead this innovative project:

- Dr Pat Anderson AO - The Lowitja Institute
- Professor Sandra Eades – Curtin University
- Professor Gail Garvey - Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies)
- Professor Alex Brown - The South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)

Dr Pat Anderson AO, Chairperson of the Lowitja Institute, said: "The National Network's vision is embedded in the principles of self-determination with activities led by First Nations Peoples for First Nations. It will build on the extensive legacy and ground-breaking work led by the Lowitja Institute over the last 23 years.

Our lead investigators will spearhead the establishment of strong and dynamic governance structures that will ensure an inclusive, transparent, equitable and collaborative approach to achieve our commitment to building Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander national research network," Dr Anderson said.

Professor Sandra Eades, Dean of Medicine at Curtin University, said: "Our collective vision is to establish a culturally secure, inclusive and sustainable network of First Nations researchers across Australia and sovereign Indigenous Nations, that builds unique skills at the interface of culture, science and health research and translates to improvements in the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

Professor Gail Garvey, Senior Principal Research Fellow at Menzies, said: "The Network collaboration aims to bring together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research groups and their support networks to create an inclusive structure that builds the capacity and capability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers. Working together to establish this Network will have a real and measurable impact."

Professor Alex Brown, Theme Leader Aboriginal Health Equity at SAHMRI, said: "The National Network will ensure culturally safe environments for research discovery and translation that will benchmark new research process standards and transform Australian research culture. Connecting expertise, a Network hallmark, will enable researcher collaboration across institutions, and create career pathways, to recruit, retain and extend expertise. The Network will excel in methodological training and development that will grow researcher capability and capacity to address the needs of urban, regional and remote communities."

The National Network has four focus areas:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership and Governance
2. Career Pathways
3. Connecting Expertise
4. Methodological Training and Development

Some of the research and career opportunities include:

- 30 Start-up Scholarships for Higher Degree Research students per year
- Five Fellowships per year
- 135 completed traineeships by school leavers
- 150 Community Based Researchers
- Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led Category One grants

The NHMRC is providing \$10 million to the National First Nations Research Network to establish a sustainable Network during the next five years.

Click on this link for more information on Network funding: [National Network for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers | NHMRC.](#)

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Media contacts:

Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies School of Health Research is one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and global and tropical health. Menzies has a history of over 35 years of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, joining with partners across the Asia-Pacific as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across northern and central Australia. Menzies collaborates to create new knowledge, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.

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The Lowitja Institute

The Lowitja Institute is Australia's community controlled national institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, named in honour of its Patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG. It is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation working for the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples through high impact quality research, knowledge exchange, and by supporting a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

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Curtin University

In 2008, Curtin University was the first Australian teaching and research institution to develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan and is committed to delivering research and educational opportunities and creating an environment which values and celebrates

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' knowledge, culture and heritage. This ongoing focus has helped us think more strategically about how the entire Curtin community – not just particular groups or areas – can advance reconciliation and support the training of next generation Aboriginal health practitioners and research leaders. Curtin works to link Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers at universities across Australia and draw on the strengths of those institutions to support and develop Aboriginal research leadership in partnership with the National Network.

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The South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI)

SAHMRI is South Australia's flagship independent health and medical research institute. It's Aboriginal Health Equity Theme, also known as Wardliparingga, is Australia's largest dedicated Indigenous health research unit with around half of its members identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. The Theme's mission is to reduce the inequity in health and wellbeing among Australia's First Peoples while actively developing the next generation of Indigenous research leaders.

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