



Annual Report 2019



the
Lowitja
Institute

Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander Health Research

Who we are



The Lowitja Institute is Australia's national institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. 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 translation, and by supporting a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

Established in January 2010, the Lowitja Institute operates on key principles of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander control of the research agenda, a broader understanding of health that incorporates wellbeing, and the need for the work to have a clear and positive impact.

The Lowitja Institute hosts the Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC funded by the Cooperative Research Centres Programme of the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science.

The Lowitja Institute is a company limited by guarantee with the following membership:

Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association • Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies • Central Australian Aboriginal Congress • Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives • Danila Dilba Health Service • Flinders University • Healing Foundation • Indigenous Allied Health Australia • Menzies School of Health Research • National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Association • QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute • The University of Melbourne

Our Patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG



Photo on the cover:
Our special thanks to Natalie Leysley from Upai Purri Torres Strait Islander dance group, for her kind permission to use her image on the cover of this report. Upai Purri performed at the Welcoming Ceremony, The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019, Darwin. James Henry Photography.

Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue was born in 1932 at Indulkana, in north-west corner South Australia, to a Pitjantjatjara mother and an Irish father. At the age of two, she and two of her sisters were taken away from their mother on behalf of South Australia's Aboriginal Protection Board.

Through a chance meeting, she was reunited with her mother, Lily, in the mid-1960s.

In 1954, Dr O'Donoghue became the first Aboriginal trainee nurse at the Royal Adelaide Hospital where she became charge sister. Following a period in India in the mid-1960s, she returned to Australia and resumed what became a distinguished career of advocacy and achievement for the rights of Australia's First Peoples. Among her many awards, she was the first Aboriginal woman to be awarded an Order of Australia (AO) in 1976, was made a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 1999, a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1983, and Australian of the Year in 1984, during which time she became the first Aboriginal person to address the United Nations General Assembly. She was named a National Living Treasure in 1998.

Dr O'Donoghue holds a number of honorary fellowships and doctorates and a professorial fellowship. She was the inaugural Chair of the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (1996–2003). In 2010, she gifted her name to the Lowitja Institute.

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this annual report may contain the names and images of persons who have passed away.

Chairperson's Message



This annual report covers a pivotal period in the life of the Lowitja Institute.

Since 1997, our work has been funded by the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Programme of the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science. After four iterations of the CRC, that funding ceased on 30 June 2019.

The Lowitja Institute, which was established in 2010 and has hosted the CRC, now goes into the future to continue to fulfil our Patron's vision of a strong and sustainable organisation.

Earlier this year, we welcomed the announcement of funding for the Lowitja Institute in the Federal Budget, and we thank the government and the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP for his ongoing support.

A key task of the Board has been to develop the strategic plan for the Lowitja Institute to 2023, which will prioritise our investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community driven best practice health research. We will mobilise research knowledge for effective translation; we will enhance the capability of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research workforce; we will focus on promoting our role and impact; and we will create a strong and sustainable future for the organisation.

The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019 held in Darwin on 18, 19 and 20 June 2019 was a particular highlight in the year, for us an organisation and for me personally. The location was chosen to honour the productive and transformative work of 22 years of CRCs, first established that city in 1997 (the CRC for Aboriginal and Tropical Health).

The event brought to mind the early calls by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over many decades for real change in health status and health delivery for their communities. Paramount to that was the need for a new research paradigm where the work is done by and with — not on — our communities. The Lowitja has built on the legacy of each subsequent CRC and its own work, gathering supporters, partners and a wider network

of researchers committed to its mission, values and methodologies. We are very proud of that achievement and the benefits we are able to deliver to our families and communities.

Our aspiration for the 2019 conference was to create a place where respectful, provocative conversations took place about what concerns us today — First Peoples from across the globe — and what our visions and ambitions are for future generations.

These conversations explored new ways of thinking, speaking and being in the world, serve who we are, promote new ideas, and take a planetary approach. We took the opportunity for deep thought, to learn from each other, and to plan for future action locally, nationally and globally, highlighting the role of First Nations people in leading change, and showcasing Indigenous solutions.

With that in mind, the conference prepared a Statement to send out to the world. The Statement will help us all, collectively, individually and as organisations and communities, to advocate for change.

That advocacy for change contained in the Statement signals the road ahead for the Lowitja Institute and I look forward to the challenge, confident we will continue to demonstrate what can be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledges, priorities and leadership are at the centre of the work to improve the health and wellbeing of our peoples.

In that challenge the Board of Directors and I are, and will be, most ably supported by our new Chief Executive Officer Ms Janine Mohamed, whom it was our pleasure to welcome in March 2019. At the same time, much of what has been achieved has been thanks to our immediate past CEO Mr Romlie Mokak, to whom we express our deep gratitude for his service and commitment to the Lowitja Institute.



Pat Anderson AO
Chairperson
The Lowitja Institute

Chief Executive Officer's Report



We are a small organisation but we punch well above our weight, as demonstrated by our collective achievements across the fields outlined in this report, including community engagement, workforce development, research and knowledge translation.

Our collective impact was also proudly on display at our second International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference, held on the lands of the Larrakia Nation in Darwin in June.

This conference was a highlight of the Lowitja Institute's year, profiling the amazing work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in communities, research organisations, health services and other settings.

#LowitjaConf2019 was also an opportunity to reflect on our shared journey, to strengthen connections and to develop new ones. The conference's incredible reach via Twitter reflects the commitment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers to achieving meaningful change for our communities and to leading public and policy dialogue about our affairs. Many people who I spoke with highlighted with praise the cultural integrity of the conference, which we are extremely proud to be able to create for our attendees

The conference also provided an opportunity to reflect on our shared journey with the Cooperative Research Centre, and to acknowledge an important history of partnership and transition in the Institute's development.

I was deeply honoured to attend the conference as the Institute's new CEO, acknowledging the legacy of my esteemed predecessor Romlie Mokak, who did so much to raise the profile of the Institute, ensure its solid foundation and future. He will always be an important and respected part of the fabric of the Lowitja Institute's achievements.

I am excited to have the opportunity to help build on the Lowitja legacy, and to be leading this national treasure of an organisation in implementing our new strategic directions for the next three years.

I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the Institute's staff, who have been amazing through this transition period. We have maintained our activities without skipping a beat; we have sailed the ship while we are building it.

I am pleased to see that our relationships are growing strongly, which we can see through the impressive social media engagement and the invitations that the Institute is receiving. I am also delighted to see our increased focus on knowledge translation.

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the board, and pay my respects to the directors, who are all highly regarded individually and collectively. I look forward to assisting them in achieving their grand vision for the Lowitja Institute.

As part of this vision, we are seeking to increase our global impact, while remaining dedicated to building and supporting the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and health workforce and community organisations.

A beautiful symbiotic relationship has developed, whereby the researchers whose careers have been supported and developed through Lowitja Institute activities are now investing back in our development.

I look forward to these foundational relationships continuing to grow from strength to strength, and to seeing the positive outcomes and impact that flow to our communities and to current and future generations continuing to value the work of the Lowitja Institute.



Janine Mohamed
Chief Executive Officer
The Lowitja Institute

The Year's Highlights



Completed the work of the
Lowitja Institute CRC, including

41 new
research
projects



investigating **what makes families and Elders strong**; the cultural determinants of health; **healing trauma**; preventing suicide; disability in our communities; growing workforce; **better health care**; better science for our peoples.

15 higher degree
scholarships

12 PhDs and
3 Masters programs



7 reports

+ various policy briefs
and **summary reports** published

Reports and other
resources downloaded

from our website

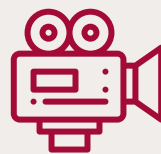
32,180 times



Contributed to
national policy via
our membership
of the **Coalition of
the Peaks**, the **National
Health Leadership Forum**,
Close the Gap Campaign,
**Implementation Plan Advisory
Group**, the **MRFF Indigenous
Health Research Fund**, and the
Health Genomics Advisory Group



Contributed to the
**Partnership for
Justice in Health**
of which we are
a partner



17 new video
resources

viewed 12,700 times

A new website

Traffic to the website
grew more than

from **93,000** to **226,378**
unique visitors



THINKING SPEAKING BEING

FIRST NATIONS SOLUTIONS
FOR GLOBAL CHANGE

The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019:



800 delegates



All **100% First Nations**
presentation authors or
co-authors



95 million Twitter
impressions



Conference video to
320,000 community
households via iCTV



34 bursaries for
Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander researchers
and community health
workers



27 sponsor organisations



6 research awards were
announced

Engaged with
our partners and
media outlets.

446 mentions
in the **national media**
and **19** in **international**
outlets.



Twitter following grew from
9,000 in 2018 to **11,000** 2019



Knowledge translation

forum held in Melbourne.

The discussion **trended**
Australia-wide achieving

1.75 million Twitter
impressions for **#KTthatworks**



5 enthusiastic **interns** made a much
valued contribution to the Institute

The Lowitja Institute CRC
hosted **2 Participants**
Forums in November
2018 and June 2019



Research and Knowledge Translation



The Lowitja Institute strives to achieve the best outcomes for Australia's First Peoples. Ensuring that our activities effectively address inequities in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is central to this effort. To this end, the Institute identifies priorities, and develops research and knowledge translation processes to ensure that maximum value is created through its collaborative partnerships. These collaborations include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, participant organisations, and other research and policy partners.

The research activities of the Lowitja Institute are identified and funded under the umbrella of the Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC (Lowitja Institute CRC). The work is conducted by our partner or Participant organisations (see page 49) and 67 per cent of our projects are led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers.

To guide this effort the Lowitja Institute has identified five key principles that underpin our approach to research:

- 1 Beneficence – to act for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the conduct of our research
- 2 Leadership by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- 3 Engagement of research end users (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities, policymakers, other potential research users)
- 4 Development of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research workforce, and
- 5 Measurement of impact in improving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health.

Research governance

The Lowitja Institute is keen to ensure that the outcomes and learnings from all former associated CRCs and the Lowitja Institute CRC¹ continue to be translated into health policy and practice and thereby contribute to health and wellbeing research impact and improved outcomes.

To support this process from 2018 to the end of the Lowitja Institute CRC in June 2019, the Lowitja Institute established the CRC Research Advisory Committee to provide expert advice and support to the Institute on:

- internally implemented quality assurance projects such as the Lowitja Institute Alumni project;
- translation of Lowitja CRC and former CRC knowledge products such as publications;
- drafting and development of the Scientific Program for the Lowitja Institute Conference in 2019;
- continuous quality improvement of Lowitja Institute Research and Knowledge Translation systems and processes;
- Lowitja Institute CRC exit requirements; and
- other issues and concerns as advised by the Lowitja Institute Chief Executive Officer.

The Committee met for the first time in July 2018, and again in October 2018, in Melbourne identified the following key tasks:

- focus on opportunities to effectively translate outcomes from former CRCs and the Lowitja Institute CRC to achieve outcomes and impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing;
- develop policy and support mechanism to ensure the completion of all Lowitja Institute CRC projects within the stated timeframes and that CRC reporting requirements met; and
- support the assessment of abstracts received by the Lowitja Institute Conference.



The Research Advisory Committee at the July 2018 meeting

1. You can find out more about the CRC history of the Lowitja Institute from our website at: <https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/about-us/our-history>.

Research highlights

This year, the Institute's focus was on completing the research projects established during the Lowitja Institute CRC. Knowledge Translation financial support was offered for projects to continue the work of dissemination and ensuring adoption of the evidence identified in the projects (see page 24 for more information on our approach to knowledge translation).

The projects funded by the Lowitja Institute CRC are listed below. More information, project outputs and resources are available from the Lowitja Institute website: www.lowitja.org.au.

Program 1

Community capability and the social determinants of health

This program developed knowledge, tools and resources that will increase the capacity of communities and other end-users (policymakers and services) to implement cultural, empowerment and identity-based programs, approaches and methodologies to improve the social determinants of health.

Research activity

Evaluation of a successful Anaemia Prevention Program in a remote Aboriginal community in NT

Growing up children in two worlds: Building Yolŋu skills, knowledge and priorities into early childhood assessment and support

This project won the Lowitja Institute Tarrn doon nonin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Project Ethics Award (see page 20)

Empowering Indigenous individuals, families and communities to create supportive environments for children to thrive – Family Wellbeing

Mayi – Kuwayu: Longitudinal study of cultural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing (Stage 1).

Exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity of young people in flexi schooling contexts

Scaling up Mayi Kuwayu – The National Study of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing

The role cultural connectedness plays in pathways to resilience experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents

Key factors associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander suicide in SA

Service integration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early childhood

The narrative framing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing: A review

Reframing discourse and changing the narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing: An analysis

Identifying the core elements of the cultural determinants of health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Reclaiming strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities through a gender equity lens

Developing a physical activity program for Aboriginal families with Machado Joseph Disease

Sharing the wisdom of our Elders: Understanding and promoting healthy ageing with older Aboriginal Australians

Listening to Country: Exploring the value of acoustic ecology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison

Ngadhuri-nya (To care for): Intergenerational and educational influences on social, mental and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

Health literacy among young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males in the Northern Territory: Understanding the intersections with gender and cultural identity

Roles and Ritual: The Inala Wangarra Rites of Passage Ball Case Study

Valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young Men – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young men’s strength and resilience in the face of adversity in life (including intergenerational trauma)

Tell My Story: Hearing from the Dads in the Indigenous Birthing in an Urban Setting (IBUS) Study

Strong Dads Strong Futures

Is the National Disability Insurance Scheme meeting the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people? Evaluating the roll-out in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Yarning together: Developing a culturally secure rehabilitation approach for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people after brain injury

Wellbeing through cultural participation: An affirmative strategy for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability

Program 2

Needs and opportunities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce

This program developed knowledge, tools and resources that will enable end-users (policymakers, health services and communities) –

- to enhance the capability of the health workforce to be effective in the delivery of all aspects of health care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
- to provide culturally competent and safe working environments that facilitate entry and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the health and health research workforce; and
- to build and strengthen the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research workforce.

Research activity

Research training towards an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research workforce: Review and analysis

Health system competence for culturally safe care: Building a collaboration to develop a national intervention study

Career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals (AMSANT)

Career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health professionals (UNSW)

Moving beyond the front line: A 20-year retrospective cohort study of career trajectories from the Indigenous Health Program at The University of Queensland

Working well: Tailoring a workforce development model to deliver sustained improvements in community controlled healthcare (Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service, Yarrabah, QLD)

Aremele Arratye Mpwaretyeke – Doing it Right: Research knowledge generation and translation in Central Australia

Understanding stress and staying strong in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and human services workforce

Program 3

Health policy and systems

This program developed knowledge, tools and resources that enable end-users (policymakers, services and communities) –

- to reform health and social policy and program implementation; and
- to enhance the capability of health care and other services so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can access timely, high quality, culturally competent care.

Research activity

Models and quality of genetic health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Development of framework for evaluation of policies, programs and services that aim to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing

Meriba buay – ngalpan wakaythoemamay (We come together to think): Evaluating a Community of Practice for Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing

First response: Integrating trauma-informed care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing violence within primary healthcare

Healing the past by nurturing the future: Strengthening foundations for supporting Indigenous parents who have experienced complex childhood trauma

Engaging Australia's First Peoples in the development of ethics and protocols for a family-based microbiome study and social health history project

Catching Some AIR – Asserting Indigenous information rights in renal disease

Discourse, Data and Deficit: Deconstructing the 'Indigenous Health' paradigm and its effects on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples



Online resources for researchers

A new website for the Lowitja Institute was launched in March 2019, creating easier pathways for access to research project information and resources. The website contains a large number of downloadable resources available at www.lowitja.org.au/resources.



Ethical research, where the definition of ethics is identified by and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, is a key research principle of the Lowitja Institute. EthicsHub supports people and organisations working in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research to access processes and resources that ensure that work done in this space is safe and culturally appropriate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and communities.

This resource is available at www.lowitja.org.au/ethics but is currently under review and update.



Lit.search is an online search tool that facilitates searches in PubMed for literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. Lit.search users can choose to look at all literature or one of 27 predetermined topics, and can refine each choice with keywords, publications dates, and a full text or citation option. PubMed is a global database that with more than 24 million citations for biomedical literature from MEDLINE, life science journals, and online books. Lit.search is available at www.lowitja.org.au/litsearch.



A number of new resources are being developed including the update of the publication *Researching Indigenous Health: A practical guide for researchers*, due for launch in early 2020.

Take my voice back and tell the government'

Mid-afternoon, we sit cross-legged under the high, galvanised steel roof of the community basketball court. BT is telling us about his life growing up here in the Laynhapuy Homelands and beyond, and how he became an Aboriginal health worker.

From a young age he wanted to become a health worker. 'It was my will,' he says. He was taught 'by all the Elder people' – women and men who took him on walkabouts through the bush, guiding him in collecting, processing and administering bush medicine. After finishing school, he also trained in health at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, an Aboriginal-controlled higher education institution in the NT. He has worked in three Aboriginal health services in various communities over 25 years.

With his wife, daughters and sons, BT settled in the community where we now sit – a homeland his grandfather established. He saw it as a healthful place to raise children, away from the 'broken people' and 'ganja use' of some more populous places. BT is now passing his knowledge of Yolŋu and ŋäpaki health on to his daughter, hoping she will follow in his footsteps.

We ask him to tell us about Yolŋu ways of health.

'What we normally do is just to walk.' The exercise of hunting and fishing, he says, can help combat diabetes and kidney problems. 'We eat good foods that we find in the river, on the beach.' He adds too, 'We've got medicines under the water, on top of the tree, any site.'

'So when Yolŋu come to see you,' we ask, 'you've got Yolŋu health way, and ŋäpaki health training as well, right? Sometimes do you use both at once?'

'I use them both,' he replies.

He gives the example of a blocked nose, caused by a respiratory infection. To treat the condition, he usually goes to the billabong and cuts *ŋämbarra*, or paperbark, from the *Melaleuca leucadendra* tree. He crushes and boils it, then places it before the patient, allowing them to

place a towel over their head and breathe in the vapour for approximately an hour. If that doesn't work, he explains, he puts Vicks VapoRub in hot water for the patient to inhale.

'Does everybody know some bush medicine?' we ask.

'Yeah. Even now, the school kids do.'

BT describes himself as 'in the middle' between ŋäpaki and Yolŋu health, mediating between the two.

'Is that hard sometimes?' we ask.

'No. It's manymak [fine]. It's easy for me, but hard for my community.' He explains that he can understand what ŋäpaki say, but many Yolŋu people are not fluent in English, and the systems and concepts are foreign. 'The Yolŋu side of health they get.'

We ask BT if there are any messages he would like us to take to the government when we travel home to Canberra.

He is worried about the health budget, he says. 'All the health workers in other homelands or communities or states – like in Alice Springs, Katherine – we work and we get just a little money.' He suggests that ŋäpaki and Yolŋu working together should receive equal pay.

'Take my voice back and then tell the government: we need more budget for homelands health workers.'



Reproduced with permission, H. Bulloch, W. Fogarty & K. Bellchambers 2019, *Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Services: Putting community-driven, strengths-based approaches into practice*, The Lowitja Institute, Melbourne.

Research publications

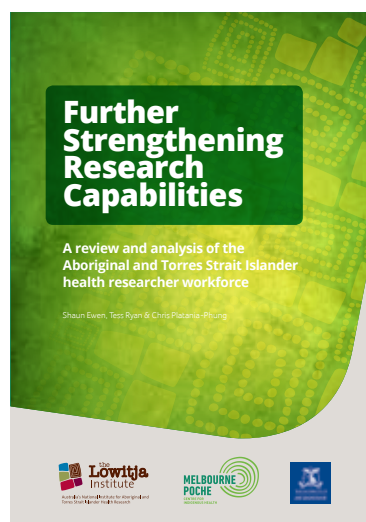


Defining the Indefinable: Descriptors of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures and their links to health and wellbeing

M. Salmon, K. Doery, P. Dance, J. Chapman, R. Gilbert, R. Williams & Ray Lovett



In Australia, limited data establish or define the relationship between health, wellbeing and culture and the mechanisms through which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural determinants impact health and wellbeing. There is increasing attention on the relationship between culture, health and wellbeing in this population. The authors conducted this literature review as preliminary work for the Mayi Kuwayu Study examining the Australian literature, as well as literature from countries that have experienced colonisation events similar to those of Australia—primarily Aotearoa (New Zealand), Canada and the United States.



Further Strengthening Research Capabilities: A review and analysis of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researcher workforce

S. Ewen, T. Ryan & C. Platania-Phung



It is critical to improving the benefit of health research to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers are at the centre of research. This will ensure that research is better aligned with community needs which in turn leads to more effective health policy and action. Building on the successes of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers over the past two decades, the Lowitja Institute saw the need for a review and analysis of progress in expanding and strengthening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researcher workforce. To be best placed for strategic workforce planning, the Institute highlighted the need to identify and understand success factors connected with research training approaches. Researchers at the Melbourne Poche Centre for Indigenous Health were commissioned to conduct the review and analysis.

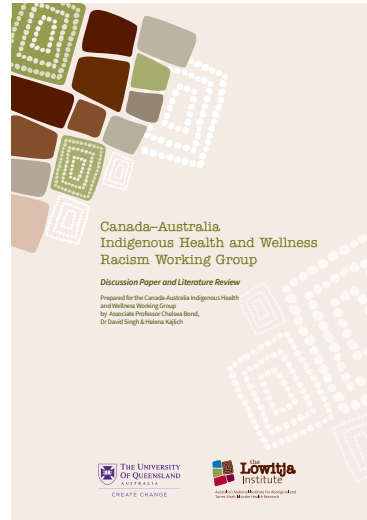
Supplementary materials and a 4-page summary report are also available.



The First Response project: Trauma and culturally informed approaches to primary health care for women who experience violence



Research has shown that trauma-informed services are effective in reducing the burden of violence against women. This is reflected in the Australian policy landscape, including the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–22, which calls upon services to deliver trauma informed care. However, much of the research that guides policy is based upon Western concepts of trauma, which may not consider First Nations peoples’ experiences and perspectives on trauma. To address this, the First Response project explored how the workforce within Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations conceptualise trauma and culturally informed care and how this informs approaches to primary health care for women who are experiencing violence.



Canada–Australia Indigenous Health and Wellness Racism Working Group Discussion Paper and Literature Review

C. Bond, D. Singh & H. Kajlich, and the Working Group



This discussion paper was commissioned by the Canada-Australia Indigenous Health and Wellness Working Group. The aim of the Working Group is to identify priorities related to Indigenous health and wellbeing for bi-national collaboration and action. One of the main priorities identified for collaboration and action is the need to address racism. A sub-group was established to address this priority and to develop this discussion paper.

The aim of the paper, which also functions as a literature review, is to share knowledge and influence bi-national action to address racism experienced by Indigenous peoples of Canada and Australia.



Working Well: Tailoring a workforce development model to deliver sustained improvements in community-controlled health care. The story of Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service

CQU research team & Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service



Acute workforce shortages limit the capacity of Indigenous primary healthcare services (PHC) to deliver quality services to meet Australia's healthcare equity gap. Indigenous PHC services struggle to maintain appropriate staffing levels and mix. Retention and turnover were listed as their top challenges in the national Online Services Reports in 2014–15 (Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council 2017). The 'Working well' project responded to a call of one Indigenous PHC for workforce development: Yarrabah's Gurriny Yealamucka Health Service (Gurriny). It evaluated the state of Gurriny's workforce development in 2018 and suggested ways forward. This policy brief provides a summary of the project and makes recommendations for four key strategies.

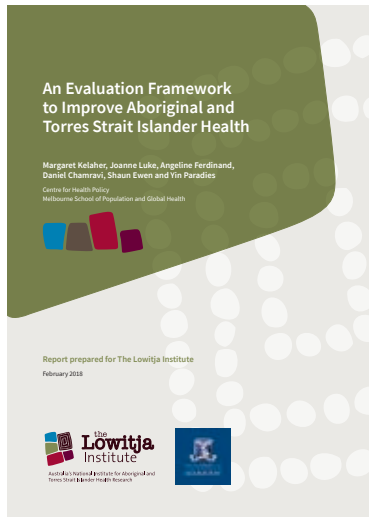


Health Benefits of Going On-Country

G. David, R. Wilson, J. Yantarrnga, W. von Hippel, C. Shannon & J. Willis



Going On-Country is expected to have many benefits for the physical, social, emotional and cultural wellbeing of Aboriginal people living in remote areas. Whilst there is evidence that 'Caring for Country' programs can improve Aboriginal health, there has been little consideration for the potential benefits of self-initiated activities when On-Country. This research was therefore aimed at finding out if self-initiated On-Country activities are an important source of health benefit for the Anindilyakwa people of Groote Eylandt. Whilst there are several barriers to going On-Country, the study suggests it is an important source for improving health. In particular, the evidence shows that collecting traditional foods is a culturally inclusive activity that is self-initiated and commonly performed On-Country, which in turn can have several health benefits.



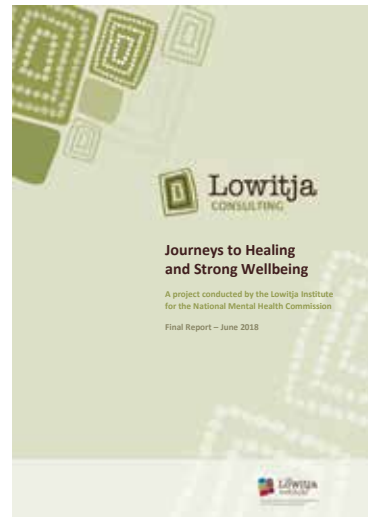
An Evaluation Framework to Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health USERS GUIDE

M. Kelaher, J. Luke, A. Ferdinand, D. Chamravi, S. Ewen & Y. Paradies 2018



Evaluation has the potential to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through improved policy and programs. Evaluation also provides opportunities to harness and develop community expertise. However, communities, evaluators and government are concerned that evaluations of programs addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing do not always deliver these benefits. This Users Guide, sets out a framework for the evaluation of policies, programs and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia.

The full report and a policy brief are also available.



Journeys to Healing and Strong Wellbeing Final Report

Lowitja Consulting



The Lowitja Institute was commissioned by the National Mental Health Commission to conduct research in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mental health. The overall purpose of the project was to identify areas of focus and action that support good mental health among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on their own terms. The work highlights the need for healing at the individual and community level. Having well-resourced and culturally safe mental health services, and healing measures – the ‘best of both worlds’ approach – are vital pathways to healing. Healing as a nation is a political process that will require commitment, listening and leadership on the part of our elected representatives.

The resources listed above were published by Lowitja Publishing. Journal articles and other resources produced by research projects funded by the Lowitja Institute CRC are available from our website:

www.lowitja.org.au/resources





Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future

Becoming a parent is exciting but it can be hard. It can be particularly challenging for parents who have experienced maltreatment or 'hurt' in their own childhood, which can have long-lasting effects on physical, social and emotional wellbeing (complex trauma). These long-lasting relational effects can impede parents' capacity to nurture and care for their children, leading to 'intergenerational cycles' of trauma. The scale and wide-reaching impacts of child maltreatment are being recognised as a global health priority, affecting up to 50 per cent of all children worldwide. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are particularly affected, influenced by the legacy of colonisation, including violent oppression, government policies of removing children and disrupting vital family and community networks, and ongoing discrimination that fails to recognise the impacts of intergenerational trauma. Child maltreatment and complex trauma are not part of Aboriginal culture. Aboriginal cultural practices have promoted caring, nurturing and connectedness of Aboriginal children, families and communities for millennia.

The perinatal period (pregnancy to two years after birth) is a critical period for parents experiencing complex trauma. Feelings of trauma-related distress may be 'triggered' during the transition to becoming a parent; due to the intimate and sometimes intrusive nature of pregnancy, birth and breastfeeding; and the demands of a new baby which may remind parents of their own childhood. Parents who experienced the original trauma during early childhood may not understand that they are experiencing trauma and may not consciously link these previous experiences to their current feelings. This can create challenges for caring for a new baby. On the flip side, growing research shows that becoming a parent is a unique life-time opportunity to heal from this childhood hurt. It is often a time of hope for a 'fresh start' and babies are born with natural instincts to help parents love and care for them. It is often one of the first opportunities since childhood to offer support, through frequent scheduled contacts with health services. A

strengths-based focus can transform the 'cycle of trauma' into a 'cycle of nurturing and love', and it is these positive reinforcing elements that promote healing – literally, 'Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future'.

So, what can parents do? National Trauma Guidelines outline key principles, but there are no 'one size fits all' solutions. Many parents with complex trauma are finding things that work for them, and these are good to consider. These include, understanding trauma and the being conscious of the effects, taking care of yourself and your child, seeking support and help when needed. The aim of the Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future project is to bring together existing evidence and work with Aboriginal communities to co-design perinatal awareness, recognition, assessment and support strategies for Aboriginal parents experiencing complex trauma.

Based on recommendations by Professor Judy Atkinson to develop information that 'speaks to Aboriginal people' about complex trauma, the Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future team developed a video resource, funded by the Lowitja Institute, available on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/bIClgcOhXZo>)

This is but a component of the team's work and the resources they produce, all available at <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/jlc/research/healing-the-past>. The Project is funded by the NHMRC and The Lowitja Institute.



Artwork by Shawana Andrews

The Lowitja Institute research awards

The Lowitja Institute celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership throughout our work and recognises outstanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers with several awards. These were announced and celebrated during the 2019 conference held in Darwin (please see page 30 for more information about this event).



Pat Anderson AO at the conference gala dinner announcing award winners

The Lowitja Institute Research Leadership Award is a partnership between the Cranlana Programme and the Lowitja Institute to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research leadership and excellence. The 2018–19 winner was **Associate Professor Catherine Chamberlain** (Trawlwoolway, Tasmania), NHMRC Career Development Fellow at the Judith Lumley Centre and La Trobe University. Cath's research aims to improve Indigenous health equity by developing strengths-based family-focused strategies in pregnancy, birth and early childhood. Her research is both internationally leading and locally applied – informing health service policy and practices for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.



Ms Vanessa Pigrum (CEO, Cranlana) and Assoc. Prof. Catherine Chamberlain (winner of the Research Leadership Award)



The winners of the The Tarrn doon nonin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Project Ethics Award for their project: Nyuthanmarram djamarrkujiny' mǎrrma'kurr romgurr: Growing up children in two worlds

The Lowitja Institute Tarrn Doon Nonin Ethics Project Award recognises ethical practice in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, giving rise to “tarrn doon nonin” which means ‘trust’ in the Woiwurrung language of central Victoria. The winner of this award was the **Nyuthanmarram djamarrkujiny' mǎrrma'kurr romgurr: Growing up children in two worlds project**. As a direct response to concerns expressed by senior community members the project provides the opportunity for Yolŋu to influence the ways in which the development of their children is assessed and supported. Key features of Yolŋu child development and child rearing that people working in the field need to understand to ensure culturally responsive policies and services will guide the development of a web-based educational resource for staff working with Yolŋu communities.



Dr Kalinda Griffith (winner of the Emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researcher Award), Ms Pat Anderson and Ms Tanya Brunt (RAHC National Manager)

The Lowitja Institute Emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researcher Award recognises emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers who have made a significant contribution to their academic and was awarded to **Dr Kalinda Griffith** (Yawuru) from Centre for Big Data Research University of New South Wales. Kalinda is a Scientia Fellow at the Centre for Big Data Research, UNSW. Kalinda's work addresses complex health disparities through using existing population level data. Her research currently addresses issues of quality and the use of Indigenous data with a focus on data governance, measurement and cancer care and outcomes.



Pat Anderson and Dr Michelle Bovill (winner of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student award) sponsored by the Walter and Eliza Health Institute

The Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Award recognises excellence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers undertaking either Masters or PhD study and was awarded to **Dr Michelle Bovill** from the University of Newcastle. Michelle is a proud Wiradjuri woman who completed a PhD exploring ‘Culturally responsive approaches for the empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in smoking cessation care’ supported by a National Heart Foundation Indigenous Scholarship. Michelle's research utilises Indigenous methodologies within the health research space to privilege the voices and experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

The Lowitja Institute CRC Award recognises a researcher who has made a significant contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research under the CRC. This was awarded to **Dr Elaine L wurrpa Maypilama** from the Charles Darwin University. L wurrpa is a Yol u educator and researcher from Galiwin'ku in the Northern Territory. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from CDU in 2013 and worked as a teacher for 21 years. She has a wide range of research experience related to nutrition, child and maternal health, hearing loss, sign language, chronic disease, intercultural communication, child development and program evaluation. L wurrpa is widely respected for her high level of expertise in developing and conducting culturally responsive and high quality research.



Assoc. Prof. Elaine L wurrpa Maypilama, winner of the The Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CRC Award

The Lowitja Institute Lifetime Achievement Award is given to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as nominated by the Lowitja Institute Board of Directors. The Lifetime Award was awarded to **Professor Yvonne Cadet-James** from James Cook University. Yvonne is a Gugu Badhun woman from North Queensland. She has an extensive background in health spanning some 40 years as a registered nurse and midwife, academic and researcher.



Professor Yvonne Cadet-James, winner of the Lowitja Institute Lifetime Achievement Award

She has been involved in national reform regarding improving research health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.

Her research expertise includes empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to identify their own issues and practical solutions to those issues.

Catching Some Air- Asserting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Information Rights in Renal Disease

The Catching Some AIR project (Asserting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Information Rights in Renal Disease) was funded by the Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC during 2017–2019, under the priority research theme of First Nations Data Sovereignty.

Two major binational kidney health agencies, were seeking input by patients and carers in the creation of inaugural kidney health guidelines intended to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

1. The KHA-CARI Guideline for the Management of Chronic Kidney Disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Māori.
2. An Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance Framework for an established kidney disease clinical quality registry called the Australia and New Zealand Dialysis and Transplant Registry (ANZDATA).

With endorsement by ANZDATA and KHA-CARI Guidelines, the Catching Some AIR project team undertook consultation meetings with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living with kidney disease, either as health care users or carers or family support persons in Darwin, Thursday Island and Alice Springs. The Indigenous-led project hosted consultation events aided by professional facilitators, local community engagement leaders, and supported by a pre-consultation pack and mixed-media meeting program material. The team documented the consultations and recommendations in individual written site reports and video reports, which were approved by the community before public dissemination.

A Catching Some AIR Final Report Symposium was hosted in Darwin on 17th June 2019, which celebrated the project's conclusions, and re-capped the project aims, activities, and project outcomes. The Symposium brought together Catching Some Air project participants at all three

sites with multi-site video conferencing. Leaders from ANZDATA and KHA-CARI Guidelines were present at the Symposium and heard first-hand the endorsed recommendations for best practice guidelines for kidney health from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and:

- KHA-CARI Guidelines agreed to incorporate the project's research evidence in their guidelines technical writing process, which will join the growing evidence base from consultations underway in other parts of Australia, led by Kidney Health Australia.
- ANZDATA endorsed Catching Some AIR's recommendation, to transition into an implementation stage of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Governance Framework.

Key Strategic Outcomes of this project were leveraged through a successful partnership with the Top End Renal Patient Advisory and Advocacy Committee (RAAC), and our methodology which enabled community voices to directly influence national kidney health policy:

- We documented, reported and delivered community and patient endorsed-recommendations for Guidelines for best Practice renal clinical care, and renal health data
- We wrote and delivered a Catching Some AIR targeted policy brief, which identified health action needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in December 2018. This was accepted by the Federal Department of Health in May 2019 as a parallel document for the National Strategic Action Plan for Kidney Disease.

More information about the project is available at: <https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/research/research-categories/health-policy-and-systems/monitoring-and-evaluation/projects/catching-some-air>



Viewing a video resource in Thursday Island



Achieving consensus in Alice Springs



Consultation in Darwin with consultation material on table

Policy, Programs and Impact



Translating research into practice

Knowledge translation

We define knowledge translation (KT) as a series of interactions that connect research evidence to changes in policy and practice. These interactions occur from the initial project idea formulation, through to implementation and project findings. Through the KT process, the Institute connects research and knowledge to changes in policy and practice, in alignment with our research principles (please see page 6).

Led by the Director of Research & KT, Dr Sanchia Shibasaki, during 2018–19, the Lowitja Institute further refined its approach to KT, theoretically and practically, in preparation for the research work that will be commissioned by the Lowitja Institute from 1 July 2019.

Commissioning of knowledge translation for research projects



The Lowitja Institute CRC has been the only organisation in Australia that provides funding for KT in addition to research funding. The breakdown of KT investment is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Total Lowitja Institute CRC KT investment for commissioned research projects from 2015 to 2019

Year Funded	Number of projects	Total
2015	7	\$113,150
2016	7	\$120,151
2017	27	\$311,960
2018		\$277,831
2019		\$371,504
Total	41	\$1,194,596

The Lowitja Institute CRC's approach to commissioning KT involved the completion of a KT application by research project teams, followed by an iterative process of refining the KT plan until project team and the Institute agree that the strategy is likely to be impactful through the utilisation of evidence-informed and co-designed outputs.

Figure 1: Steps that Lowitja Institute Knowledge Translation Plans cover



Organisational KT for impact

In addition to commissioning KT for research projects, the Lowitja Institute CRC also undertakes a series of activities such as KT forums and webinars.

KT Forum

The Lowitja Institute holds regular KT forums to highlight the work of the Institute and to influence future strategic decisions in policy development, service delivery and evaluation.

In April 2019, the Lowitja Institute CRC hosted a KT Forum in Melbourne, presenting three of our funded research projects exhibiting more

innovative approaches to KT, seeking to influence researchers and KT specialists to think beyond the traditional strategies in effectively translating knowledge for community.² The following project teams presented:

- *Tell My Story: Hearing from the Dads in the Indigenous Birthing in an Urban Setting (IBUS) Study* – Mr Ike Fisher (IUIH) & Dr Yvette Roe (Mater Research, University of Queensland)
- *Meriba buay – ngalpan wakaythoemamay (We come together to share our thinking): Evaluating a community of practice for Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing* – Dr Sanchia Shibasaki (S4SC), Associate Professor Felecia Watkin Lui & Ms Lynda Ah Mat (James Cook University)
- *Listening to Country: Exploring the value of acoustic ecology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison* – Dr Vicki Saunders & Dr Bianca Beetson, (Griffith University).

2. Information about the research featured in the forum, and video presentations, are available at: <https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/news-and-events/past-lowitja-institute-events/how-do-you-do-knowledge-translation-kt-that-works>



KT that works

On Tuesday 2 April 2019 we met at the Melbourne Museum for a KT forum showcasing Lowitja Institute funded Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander research projects that have implemented innovative KT strategies to achieve impact.



An engaged crowd at the KT forum



Ike Fisher & Yvette Roe



KT that works! Alex Zurawski, Sanchia Shibasaki, Felecia Watkin Lui, Linda Ah Matt, xxxxx



Sanchia Shibasaki, & Felecia Watkin Lui



Bianca Beetson & Vicki Saunders

Coffee and KT Webinars

The Coffee and KT Webinars aim to facilitate the sharing of Lowitja Institute CRC funded research outcomes, support collaborative discussion, and generate ideas for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing. In November 2018, we piloted this knowledge sharing webinar series, focusing on a Lowitja Institute CRC-funded project, *Training towards an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Workforce: Review and Analysis*.

Building on the success of the pilot, in March 2019 we held our second, but first outward-facing webinar, which brought together two Lowitja CRC-funded projects to synthesise findings with the aim to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and families through challenging stereotypes and improving the provision of care services.³ In this instance we had an audience of 21 from a range of government departments, NGOs and research institutes. The following two projects presented:

- Reclaiming strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities through a gender equity lens; A/Prof Alice Rumbold (University of Adelaide) Miss Courtney Hammond (University of Adelaide)
- *First Response: Integrating trauma-informed care within primary healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women experiencing violence*: Dr Patricia Cullen (The George Institute for Global Health & School of Public Health and Community Medicine, UNSW), Dr Tamara Mackean (The George Institute for Global Health, UNSW & Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity, Flinders University) & Dr Marlene Longbottom (Australian Health Services Research Institute, University of Wollongong).



On 25 October 2018 we held our first *Coffee & KT* webinar. With presenters Dr Tess Ryan and Dr Chris Platania-Phung from the University of Melbourne the topic was “Further strengthening research capabilities: The significance of peers and commitment overlaps to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers”. The pilot webinar was well attended by Lowitja Institute funded project team members from around Australia.



2019-03-07 Coffee and KT

3. Information about the research featured in the webinar is available at: <https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/news-and-events/past-lowitja-institute-events/coffee-and-kt-challenging-the-status-quo-research-to-support-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-women-and-families>

Submissions

- In August 2018, The Lowitja Institute presented a submission to the Medical Research Future Fund consultation to inform the second Australian Medical Research and Innovation Priorities 2018–2020.
- The Lowitja Institute also submitted its recommendations addressing to the Productivity Commission on the Indigenous Evaluation Strategy Issues Paper (August 2019).

Seminars and workshops

- The Research and Knowledge Translation team held an internal Research Communication workshop in March 2019. The purpose of this workshop was to enhance the Lowitja Institute staff's research oral and written communication skills. The workshop was conducted by Dr Shane Huntington from the University of Melbourne.
- Research Project Officer, Aishah Jameel, attended two knowledge translation and research impact workshops in Sydney in March 2019. These workshops were hosted by Dr David Phipps from York University and Dr Tamika Heiden from Knowledge Translation Australia. The workshops explored the impact of research, planning pathways to impact and identified impact evidence and indicators.
- Research Project Officer, Emma Somerville, attended the 26th Australian Humour Studies Network Conference at RMIT in February 2019. Emma met with multi-disciplinary humour researchers throughout Australia and internationally to promote the Starlight Children's Foundation Scholarship opportunity and to build network connections and mentoring opportunities for the future scholarship recipient.

Speeches and seminars

- Mr Romlie Mokak, Chief Executive Officer to March 2019
 - First Nations Governance Reform Forum, presentation, 2–4 July 2018
 - PRIDoC, Hawai'i, workshop presentation, 12–17 July 2018
 - Australian Institute of Family Studies Conference, Panellist, 25–27 July 2018
 - National Conference on Indigenous Health Workforce Leadership, Panel Chair, 2 November 2018
 - 9th National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Male Health Convention, Keynote Address, 12 November 2018,
 - Healing Our Spirit Worldwide Gathering, Presentation, 28 November 2018
 - CRE Policy Symposium, Panellist, 29 November 2018
 - Indigenous Allied Health Association Forum, Panellist, 30 November 2018
 - ANZSOG Indigenous Affairs, Panel Facilitator, 20–21 February 2019
- Ms Janine Mohamed, Chief Executive Officer, from March 2019
 - Master of Ceremonies, 15th National Rural Health Conference 24–27 March 2019
 - Australian Pharmacy Council and the ANMAC Colloquium, Keynote Address, 3 May 2019
 - Progress Leadership, Health Equity Panel, Panellist, 5 June 2019
 - Not Racist, But...: Racism and Health, Panellist, The Wheeler Centre, 13 June 2019
- Dr Mark Glazebrook, Director of Business Development, Biomedical Precinct of Victoria presentation about the work of the Lowitja Institute, 13 August 2018
- Ms Leila Smith, Knowledge Translation Manager, Australian Indigenous Doctors Association conference, Keynote Address, 26 September 2018)

Interns

The Lowitja Institute hosted six interns who each contributed to the work of the Lowitja Institute CRC and, in turn, reported benefit from their interaction with the organisation.

The interns contributed in policy submissions, stakeholder engagement plans, ethics applications, literature reviews, and workshop design and reporting, ethical health research review, Closing the Gap refresh discussion paper, and stakeholder engagement strategies.

Aurora interns



Ruby Warber

September–October 2018, assisted with the preparation of the Close the Gap report 2019.



Samual Fisher

January–February 2019, joined the Lowitja Institute to assist with a cultural safety project.



Halima Akanbi

June–July 2019, joined the Institute to assist with the creation of a database for all CRCATH and CRCAH commissioned projects.

Other interns

Two additional interns, **Nathan Lindberg** and **Thao Pham**, assisted the Institute in the preparation of a network model proposal, 'Friends of the Lowitja Institute'.



Measuring the impact

Achieving outcomes that make a difference involves individuals being empowered to understand how knowledge translation (KT) and research impact works.

KT and research impact are relatively new and emerging terms in Western research; however, they represent a way of living that has been adopted by First Nations peoples for thousands of years. This is known as experiential knowledge, where changes in the environment are observed, and knowledge is shared as stories and practiced in real life.

While Western research knowledge systems and First Nations experiential knowledge systems are inherently distinct, the integration of both forms of knowledge is vital to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For these two systems to successfully integrate, we need to adapt Western KT methods to the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander practices, principles and communities.

The Lowitja Institute Knowledge Translation to Research Impact for Empowerment Approach is the first of its kind to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research principles together with KT and research impact. The approach aims to achieve positive health outcomes and wellbeing for Australia's First Peoples by creating impact literate individuals and research culture.

With this in mind, the Institute has been able to secure funds from the CRC Programme to undertake a review of 20 years of CRC investment to:

● ● ● ●

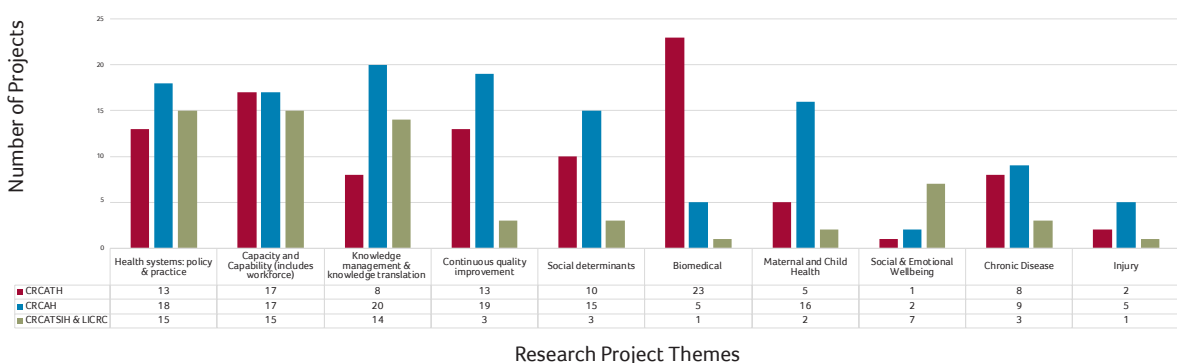
In 2018, the Lowitja Institute received a philanthropic donation from a private foundation that wishes to remain anonymous. The Foundation donated AUD\$100,000 to the Lowitja Institute to contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through research. These funds were invested in a research project that aimed to review 22 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child health projects and assess the research impact of some of these projects.

Following the completion of this project, the Lowitja Institute was able to secure a funding extension of an additional AUD\$100,000 from a philanthropic foundation to conduct a review of research evidence about empowerment programs that address Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child health suicide, fatal assault and neglect in Australia.

- identify Lowitja Institute CRC and former CRC funded research projects focusing on three priority themes
- apply an approach to assess research outcomes and impact over 20-year CRC timeframe
- engage with experts and stakeholders via roundtables to explore preliminary findings
- translate, share and maximise impact of these findings to enhance policy and practice.

This work will be completed by December 2020.

Funded Research Project Themes 1997 to 2017



Forging relationships

The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019

The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019 was held in Darwin on 18, 19 and 20 June 2019. The location was chosen to honour the productive and transformative work of 22 years of CRCs. The first CRC was established in that city in 1997 (the CRC for Aboriginal and Tropical Health) and the last, the Lowitja Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CRC, ceased operations on 30 June 2019.

The Institute's aspiration for the conference was to create a place where respectful, provocative conversations can take place about what concerns First Nations peoples today, and what our vision and ambitions are for future generations.

The conference theme ***Thinking, Speaking, Being: First Nations Solutions for Global Change*** brought together 800 First Nations and non-Indigenous researchers, health and policy professionals, and community representatives.



The conference theme:

- highlighted the importance of language in enabling empowerment, cultural strength, wellbeing, and individual, family, and community identity. It also reflects the international scope of the conference, its focus on solutions, and on benefits for communities on their terms;
- reminded delegates and presenters to consider the global implications of their work, to highlight the role of First Nations people in leading change, and to showcase Indigenous solutions;
- encouraged ways of thinking and knowing in research, and ways of interacting and sharing knowledge including the role of language.



A total of 143 presentations were programmed around six topics approached from the perspectives of Thinking (Day1), Speaking (Day 2), and Being (Day 3):

- Sovereignty of our wellbeing
- Resistance, justice and community development
- Living a good life
- Technology and data
- Environment, Country, belonging
- Intergenerational investment.

Led by Romlie Mokak, Pat Anderson, June Oscar, Janine Mohamed and Professor Kerry Arabena, three committees (Organising, Scientific and Cultural) guided the work of the logistics team. All committee members are listed in the conference website: <https://www.conference2019.lowitja.org.au>

One hundred per cent of presentations were either authored or co-authored by First Nations presenters.

Thirty-four bursaries were granted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and community health workers to attend the conference; 25 of which were sponsored by the Australian Government Department of Health.

Delegates published a Conference Statement with 12 key points to guide action. The Statement is being distributed in digital and printed formats through our networks, including eBulletin, social media, and conferences.

Twenty-seven sponsors supported the conference, including the Australian Government Department of Health as Conference Partner. All sponsors are listed in the conference website: <https://www.conference2019.lowitja.org.au>

The Croakey conference reporting team has published their comprehensive 215 page report of the conference, which is available from their website: https://croakey.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/LowitjaConf2019_Report.pdf. The Lowitja Institute conference report is under preparation.

Outputs and resources from the Conference

Four short videos were produced and published during the conference. These were summaries of the Welcoming Ceremony, Thinking (Day 1), Speaking (Day 2), and Being (Day 3). These are available on our YouTube channel.

We also produced a video of the address by the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, which was distributed to the Minister's media office, and through social media, on the day of the address (19 June 2019). The video is available on our YouTube channel.

A presentation by the NPY Women's Council during Day 2 – Speaking has already been distributed and submitted to iCTV for distribution to some 350,000 community households.

Individual video files for keynote speakers and panels are also available.

With the assistance of Croakey Conference Reporting and IndigenousX social media engagement on the Twitter platform reached 95 million impressions and 'trended' nationally for most of Day 1.

Nyunmiti Burton and Rene Kulitja from the Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council presenting at the conference





Pat Anderson AO, welcoming delegates on behalf of the Patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG, the Board of Directors & the Institute



Main auditorium, Darwin Convention Centre



The Merindas performing at the Gala dinner



Conference 2019 Gala dinner



Ms June Oscar AO, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, opening the Conference 2019



Rocking the Darwin Convention Centre



Mr Peter Yu, keynote speaker



Concurrent sessions at the Conference 2019



Larrakia Nation



Panel 'Thinking' Day 1, Conference 2019, Tuesday 18 June 2019



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians, addressing Conference 2019 delegates on Day 2, Wednesday 19 June 2019



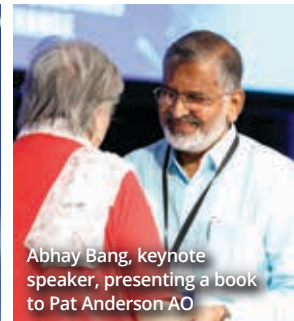
Julia Kim, keynote speaker



Tahu Kukutai, keynote speaker



Bruce Blankenfeld, keynote speaker



Abhay Bang, keynote speaker, presenting a book to Pat Anderson AO



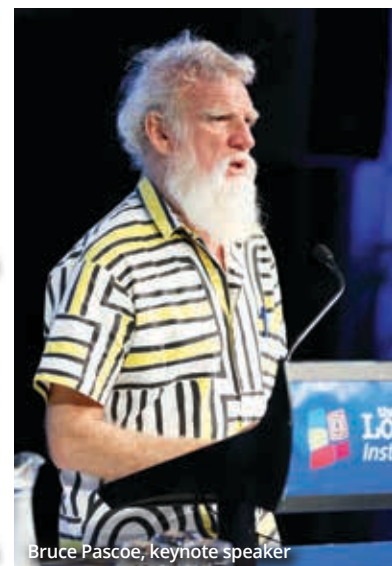
Marketplace at the Conference 2019



Concurrent sessions at the Conference 2019



Concurrent sessions at the Conference 2019



Bruce Pascoe, keynote speaker



The Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019 met in Darwin, Australia, from 18 to 20 June 2019. Based on deliberations under the theme Thinking. Speaking. Being: First Nations Solutions for Global Change, 760 national and international conference delegates make the following statement:

THINKING

1. Nation state governments must reform the way health resources are shared. Community health initiatives and programs that are built on place-based knowledge must be supported and recognised for the leadership and expertise they contain.
2. Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing are norms and should not be marginalised. They are not alternatives; they are not perspectives: they are our lived truth.
3. Our health is connected to our land and our seas. As Indigenous peoples of the world we are the protectors of these sacred lands and waters. It is our responsibility to connect our knowledges for positive change.
4. We have the right to our own institutions where we mentor our emerging thinkers, where we speak our truths, where we celebrate our ways of being.

SPEAKING

5. Colonialism and racism are determinants of ill health. We call for comprehensive truth telling processes, and the acceptance of these truths, to dismantle colonial narratives and systemic racism in health research, policy and service delivery.
6. First Nations knowledges and languages are our assets. We must protect, repatriate and rejuvenate cultural practices relating to health and wellbeing — including medicinal; therapeutic; and nutritional and healing-related knowledges and practices.
7. Data is part of our narrative. First Nations must be empowered with the knowledge and infrastructure to collect, monitor and interpret our own health and wellbeing data.
8. First Nations people living with a disability want their voices heard, and require a space to sit, hear, share, and reflect on issues that affect our wellbeing. We require resources and goodwill to develop structures and networks that will connect the First Nations living with disability community with researchers, services and policy-makers within values and cultures that promote their inclusion.
9. First Nations and dominant languages and literacy are fundamental rights and a foundation of empowerment. Lifting levels of literacy in our first and dominant languages is key to our self-determination and the development of our children.

BEING

10. Our future generations are central to our being. The mass removal of our children through incarceration and institutionalisation is a source of ongoing trauma and must stop.
11. Our collective rights, as described in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, provide a framework for our health and wellbeing. These include the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to good health, and the right to self-determination.
12. First Nations health research funding should go to First Nations organisations and researchers.

20 June 2019

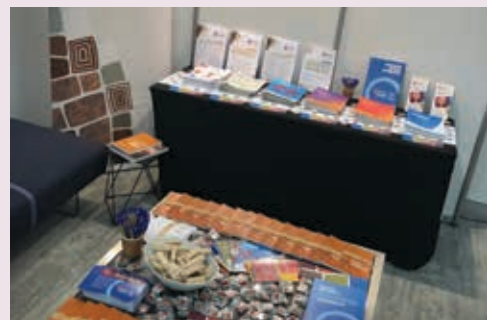


We were proud supporters of the 2018 International Indigenous Allied Health Forum on 30 November in Sydney.



Romlie Mokak joined an international panel discussing leading allied health research. Image courtesy IAHA.

We also sponsored a number of partner organisation conferences.



The NACCHO Conference was held in Brisbane on 31 October – 1 November and we were pleased to take part. Photos show Romlie Mokak being interviewed by the intrepid Mayi Kuwayu communications team and Mary Guthrie with the Hon Ken Wyatt who visited the conference and stopped by our booth.

Literacy for Life Foundation

The Lowitja Institute is a founding partner of Literacy for Life Foundation, an Aboriginal-led initiative aiming to lift adult literacy in Indigenous communities. An estimated 40 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults have minimal English literacy, a figure that rises to as high as 70 per cent in many remote areas. So long as these adult illiteracy rates exist, meaningful progress towards many *Closing the Gap* targets will be impossible.

The Foundation uses an innovative, evidence-based, campaign approach that has been implemented in 30 countries around the world and is now delivering results in Australia.

We continue to support this initiative, including a pro bono sponsorship and exhibitor space in the June 2019 conference.

Centre of Excellence Collaborations

The Lowitja Institute has partnered with two successful National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Centre of Research Excellence applications, aligning well with two of our programs: Social Determinants of Health, and Policy, and Systems Research.

- Centre of Research Excellence on Social Determinants of Health Equity: Policy research on the social determinants of health equity
- Centre of Research Excellence for Integrated Quality Improvement (CRE-IQI).

The Canada – Australia Indigenous Health and Wellness Working Group

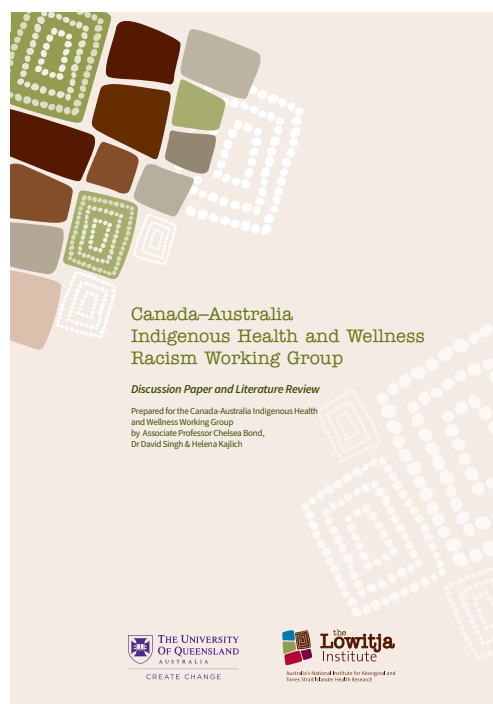
The Canada-Australia Indigenous Health and Wellness Working Group (the Working Group) was established to progress initiatives from the Canada–Australia Roundtable on Indigenous Health and Wellness held in Canberra in December 2016. Former Lowitja Institute CRC CEP, Mr Romlie Mokak, and Former High Commissioner of Canada, His Excellency Mr Paul Maddison, were acting co-Chairs, ensuring membership encompassed government, academic, community and public service perspectives. The Lowitja Institute provided secretariat for the collaboration.

The aim of the Working Group was to identify priorities related to Indigenous health and wellbeing for bi-national collaboration and action. The main priorities identified for collaboration and action were the need to genuinely address racism and to provide a platform for the voices of Indigenous youth, with two sub-groups established to focus on each of these priorities.

The primary focus of the racism sub-group was to develop a discussion paper to assist in the sharing of knowledge and strengthening of impact and to engage with diverse urban, rural and remote Indigenous communities in both countries. The paper aims to influence bi-national action to address racism, as experienced by First Peoples of Canada and Australia and is on track for publication in August 2019.

The sub-group established to consider the voices of Indigenous youth will progress young people’s priorities through an intersectional understanding of identity and experience. The aim is to represent a range of Indigenous youth perspectives, through the recruitment of youth from a diversity of locations, professional experiences, abilities and sexual and gender identities.

The Working Group published a Discussion Paper and literature review on the impact of racism on health and wellbeing (please see page 15)





The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Justice Partnership

The Justice in Health Partnership is a partnership of health and legal organisations and researchers to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health outcomes through addressing racism at individual, institutional and systemic levels. The Lowitja Institute is a founding member of the Partnership (formed in April 2017). In the last year we have led the Commissioning of a discussion paper for dissemination among key stakeholders to inform the Partnership's planning. A Strategy workshop was held at the Lowitja Institute in 2019 to shape the future direction of the Partnership's work.

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

The Lowitja Institute continues to be a member of the Australian Indigenous **HealthInfoNet** Advisory Group and attends the Group's annual general meeting. The collaboration between the Institute and the HealthInfoNet is also close in marketing and communications as we cross-promote outputs and resources on the eBulletin and on social media.

Cranlana Programme

The Lowitja Institute CRC and the Cranlana Programme collaborated in the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Leadership and Excellence Award. The Award is a fully funded position in the **Cranlana Programme's Executive Colloquium**, which is a unique development course for senior leaders from across the public, private and community sectors. The award recognises senior, established Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers who have made a significant contribution to their academic field. The 2018–19 winner was Associate Professor Catherine Chamberlain, NHMRC Career Development Fellow at the Judith Lumley Centre and La Trobe University. In addition to her leadership in a number of fields, the Lowitja Institute CRC funded Associate Professor Chamberlain's project on supporting Indigenous parents who have experienced complex childhood trauma: <https://www.lowitja.org.au/page/research/research-categories/family-and-community-health/families/projects/parents-childhood-trauma>





Extending hospitality

Among our many guests during the year, in October 2018, we had the pleasure of hosting Dr Julia Kim, Program Director at the Gross National Happiness Centre (GNH) Bhutan. Over lunch we shared our work, learned about the GNH 9 domains framework, and discussed the need for a new narrative of wellbeing. Julia was one of the conference 2019 keynote speakers.

We also welcomed Dr Carrie Bourassa who is the Scientific Director of the Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. She was a keynote speaker at the research translation symposium we co-hosted with the NHMRC in 2017.



1: In early October 2018, we had the pleasure of hosting Dr Julia Kim, Program Director at the Gross National Happiness Centre (GNH) Bhutan. Julia was one of the conference 2019 keynote speakers.

2&3: Dr Carrie Bourassa is the Scientific Director of the Institute of Indigenous Peoples' Health at the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. She was a keynote speaker at the research translation symposium we co-hosted with the NHMRC last year, and we were pleased to host her in our Melbourne office on 10 October 2018.

Supporting the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers

Lowitja Institute CRC Scholarship Program

The Lowitja Institute CRC is committed to developing a strong base of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers. The Program provides financial support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students that were enrolled in Lowitja Institute CRC partner organisations. The aim of the Program was to develop and enhance their knowledge, skills, and expertise in health research and/or research; 15 scholarships were awarded from 2014 to 2019. Of this group, 12 students were enrolled in PhD studies and 2 withdrew (2016, 2018). Current and completed scholarship holders are listed below.

Name	Project Title	Institute
Margaret Harvey PHD	Researching my island home – Navigating through the intersection of research and culture in the creation of live performance	AIATSIS
Emily Munro-Harrison PHD	Urban Invisibility: Identities of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in urban Victoria	The University of Melbourne
Alister Thorpe PHD	Engage–Exchange–Change: Strengthening Indigenous health research engagement, action, translation and impact	The University of Melbourne
Vicki Couzens PHD Completed	Koorramook Yakeeneeyt (Possum Dreaming): Cloaks, cultural traditions and wellbeing in Aboriginal communities	AIATSIS
Mathew West PHD	Development of a targeted foot complications screening and intervention program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	La Trobe University
Suzanne Ingram PHD	Communication needs of Indigenous people whose first language is English for culturally competent chronic disease health care	The George Institute for Global Health
Tara Lewis PHD	Culturally responsive methodology for the communication assessment of Australian Aboriginal children	The University of Queensland
Robert Monaghan PHD Completed	The role of management in improving sexual health service delivery in Aboriginal community-controlled health services	UNSW

Name	Project Title	Institute
Stewart Sutherland PHD Completed	A Transnational Study: The effects of reconciliation on social and emotional wellbeing of people affected by past policies and practices of forced removal	AIATSIS
Maree Meredith PHD Completed	Health promotion benefits of art centres in Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands	Flinders University
Julieann Coombes PHD Completed	What's next for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children after a burn injury? What are the barriers to appropriate care?	The George Institute for Global Health
Lisa Whop PHD Completed	Using linked data to investigate the effectiveness of cervical screening of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Queensland	Menzies School of Health research
Scott Avery PHD Completed	A critical analysis of disability in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities	UNSW

Co-funded scholarships

The Lowitja Institute CRC also partnered with the following CRC Participant organisations to offer 11 co-funded scholarships to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (eight PhD and 3 for Masters courses):

- Queensland University of Technology,
- La Trobe University,
- Edith Cowan University (The Neil Thomson Scholarship),
- The George Institute of Global Health,
- The University of Melbourne,
- Griffith University,
- University of Queensland,
- Australian National University, and
- Menzies School of Health Research.

PhD partnership with the Starlight Foundation

The Lowitja Institute partnered with the Starlight Children's Foundation Scholarship to provide a scholarship opportunity that focussed on the health and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people by exploring concepts such as the use of humour, wellbeing, laughter, play and imagination. In addition to financial support, this post-graduate scholarship also offered Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates mentoring support, networking opportunities and financial support for travel and conferences. The successful candidate of the Starlight Children's Foundation Scholarship was Dr Vinnitta Mosby, who is expected to commence her project in July 2020 that explores play in pre-school aged children and the social and emotional benefits associated with positive peer interactions.



Lowitja Institute CRC Alumni

The Lowitja Institute Alumni (the Alumni) includes individuals who received a scholarship from the Lowitja Institute CRC or former CRCs from 1997 to 2019. The Alumni were the focus of the Lowitja Institute CRC Alumni Project. This project aimed to:

- Describe the outcomes and impact associated with CRC scholarship investment from 1999 to 2017 in building Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research and workforce capacity; and
- Review the processes associated with supporting CRC scholarship alumni.

The project involved a review of organisational documents, an online survey and a workshop. The key findings from the Lowitja Institute CRC project were:

- Over 20 years, CRC scholarships were awarded for 54 PhDs, 31 Masters, 15 other tertiary courses, 9 co-funded PhDs and 2 Co-funded Masters.
- 97% of surveyed Alumni felt they benefited from the scholarship and it provided further opportunities for them
- Most Alumni surveyed are still connected to the Lowitja Institute, mostly as Researchers

- Most surveyed Alumni identified as working in the Academia or research sector
- Workshop participants (20 participants) supported and found merit in the establishing of a Lowitja Institute Alumni
- Workshop participants found their scholarship valuable in helping them pursue further education; kickstart careers; and provide opportunity to come together as a community, to share knowledge and to mentor each other and other students
- Workshop participants recommended the Alumni Network focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research and should focus on:
 - Provide training courses and education opportunities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research
 - Provide a mentoring program in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research
 - Provide 'expert' advice and support to advocacy, research workforce development, partnerships and links, and methodological development

In addition to the workshop, the Lowitja Institute also hosted an Alumni luncheon at the Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing conference in June 2019. 15 Alumni attended the luncheon.



Alumni workshop 1 April 2019

Contributing to national policy

○ The Lowitja Institute has been a member of the Coalition of Peak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peak Bodies, which entered the historic Partnership Agreement on Closing the Gap in late 2018. Through this Coalition, the Institute has an ongoing role in negotiations to establish a refreshed National Indigenous Reform Agreement (Closing the Gap) with the Council of Australian Governments.

○ The Institute is also a member of the National Health Leadership Forum, a key group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health bodies that work cooperatively to provide strategic advice and policy advocacy on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing. This includes meetings with, and advice to, key government officials and parliamentarians.

○ The Close the Gap Campaign aims to close the health and life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians within a generation. The Lowitja Institute is part of a cohort of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous health bodies that make up the Campaign Steering Committee. In 2019, the Institute developed the Campaign's annual report, breaking from the traditional 'shadow report' to one that illustrated success from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspective.

○ The Implementation Plan Advisory Group is a joint government (Australian Government Department of Health) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group established to guide the Implementation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Plan. The Lowitja Institute holds a seat as an expert advisor on research. Priority work over 2018–2019 has been the development of the Implementation Plan Report and development of a second iteration of the Implementation Plan.

○ The Lowitja Institute CEO was appointed by the Minister for Health to the Expert Advisory Group overseeing the \$160 million allocation to the Indigenous Health Research Fund.

○ The Institute has been part of the growing policy arena of Health Justice Partnerships, an emerging social determinant approach to health service and system change. This has involved our continued involvement in a Health Justice partnership with key thinkers and peak bodies involved in combatting racism in the health system, we have also participated in key conference and forums including the Health Justice 2019 and the inaugural Indigenous Health Justice Conference hosted by the Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) and the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT).

○ Dr Shayne Bellingham, an Aboriginal geneticist and Senior Research Officer at the Lowitja Institute, is a member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group – Health Genomics. The group, established by the Commonwealth Department of Health in 2019, provides advice on specific health genomics issues impacting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including gaps and barriers to accessing genomic technologies, best practice engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and advice to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are able to access the benefits of clinical applications of genomics.



2019 Close the Gap Report Launch

On Thursday 21 March we joined the Close the Gap (CTG) Campaign in Sydney to launch the **2019 Close the Gap Report “Our Choices, Our Voices”**. The launch, hosted by **Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation**, brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait leaders and organisations to showcase First Nations solutions and success stories, and to highlight urgent priority themes for addressing the health gap.

We're proud to have worked with the **Close the Gap Campaign** on the 2019 report and we thank the people and organisations who contributed their time and stories.



**Our Choices
Our Voices**

A report prepared by the Lowitja Institute for the Close the Gap Steering Committee | March 2019

CLOSE THE GAP



Lowitja Institute's Day Out

On Thursday, 14 February 2019, Lowitja Institute staff had the very great pleasure of visiting the Narana Cultural Centre on Wuthaurong Country in Victoria (<http://www.narana.com.au>). We learned about the traditional custodians of the land on which the Centre sits, the history of the Centre, and walked through the garden and wildlife sanctuary. There was also some artwork to be done and skills to develop in boomerang throwing. Some staff are OK at this, most others live in hope!



A Strong and Sustainable Organisation

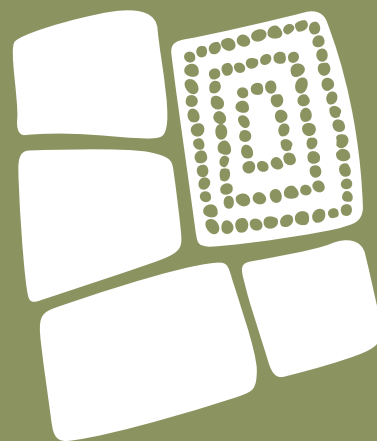


Our Strategic Direction

When Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue agreed to have the Lowitja Institute named after her, she entrusted in us **her spirit and energy, her values and priorities.**

Dr O'Donoghue told us to **be a courageous organisation committed to social justice and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to match words to action, to achieve real tangible and immediate outcomes.**

Also, to be **known throughout Australia** as a strong and sustainable organisation **working fearlessly for change and improvement in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.** Our strategic plan and all the work that follows will honour Dr O'Donoghue's vision.



The Lowitja Institute Strategic Plan 2015–2018



The purpose of the Lowitja Institute is to value the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Our vision is that the Lowitja Institute will be an authoritative and collective voice for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing



Our aspirations

The Lowitja Institute will facilitate research and knowledge exchange that improves the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We will strengthen the Lowitja Institute's ability to influence policies, programs and practices that reflect the Institute's vision while ensuring that we endure into perpetuity.

To facilitate research and knowledge exchange that makes a positive difference to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' health and wellbeing

Through our research, knowledge exchange and advocacy, to impact policies, programs and practice that will improve the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

To be a strong and sustainable organisation.

Board of Directors



Board of Directors with former CEO; L-R: Romlie Mokak, Peter Buckskin, June Oscar AO, Pat Anderson AO, Selwyn Button, Ali Drummond. Absent: Mr Adrian Carson (past Director), Mr Brendon Douglas, Dr Tamara Mackean (past Director), Fiona Stanley AC, Craig Ritchie & Michael Graham

The Lowitja Institute is governed by a skills based and representative Board of Directors.

The Board is chaired by Ms Pat Anderson AO, an Alyawarre woman who is known nationally and internationally as a powerful advocate for the health of Australia's First Peoples. Ms Anderson has extensive experience in Aboriginal health, including community development, advocacy, policy formation and research ethics. In June 2014, Ms Anderson was appointed Officer of the Order of Australia for distinguished service to the Indigenous community as a social justice advocate, particularly through promoting improved health, educational and protection outcomes for children. She was awarded the Human Rights Medal 2016 by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Ms Anderson completed her term as Co-Chair of the Prime Minister's Referendum Council on 30 June 2017. Ms Anderson is also appointed Chair of the Remote Area Health Corporation. During the

reporting period, the national NAIDOC Committee recognised her life-long contribution with the Lifetime Achievement Award and the University of New South Wales Ms Anderson an honorary Law doctorate in recognition of her advocacy of social justice and lasting change for Australia's First Peoples.

During the reporting period, other Institute directors included:

- **Professor Peter Buckskin PSM**, a Narungga man from the Yorke Peninsula and the Dean: Aboriginal Engagement and Strategic Projects at the University of South Australia.
- **Mr Selwyn Button**, a Gungarri man from south-west Queensland and the Assistant Director-General (Indigenous Education), Department of Education, Training and Employment, Queensland.
- **Mr Adrian Carson**, a Cobble Cobble/Wakka Wakka man is the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH) Ltd (resigned 16 November 2018).

- **Mr Brendon Douglas**, the Director of Research and Innovation at Charles Darwin University and an Executive Council member of the International Development Contractors Group.
- **Mr Ali Drummond** is a Meriam and Wuthathi man and Lecturer and Director of Indigenous Health at the Queensland University of Technology.
- **Dr Tamara Mackean**, a descendant of the Waljen Peoples of Western Australia and a Senior Research Fellow Indigenous Health at the Southgate Institute for Health, Society and Equity, Flinders University (term expired 6 December 2018).
- **Ms June Oscar AO**, a Bunuba woman from Fitzroy Crossing is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner.
- **Professor Fiona Stanley AC**, Founding Director and Patron of the Telethon Kids Institute (formerly Telethon Institute for Child Health Research), Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Western Australia and Vice-Chancellor's Fellow at the University of Melbourne. (resigned 14 February 2019).
- **Mr Craig Ritchie**, a Dhunghutti/Biripi man, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (elected 6 December 2018).
- **Mr Michael Graham**, a proud Wiradjuri, Dja Dja Wurrung, and Waywuru man, is the Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (appointed 23 May 2019).

A new Chief Executive Officer

On 1 March 2019, we welcomed our new Chief Executive Officer, **Ms Janine Mohamed**.

Janine is a proud Narrunga Kurna woman from South Australia. Over the past 20 years she has worked in research, nursing, management, workforce and health policy, and project management in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector. Many of these years have been spent in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector at state and national levels. Internationally, Janine has been a delegate at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on two occasions. Janine is the former CEO of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM).



Welcoming our new CEO, Janine Mohamed, 1 March 2019



We farewelled our outgoing CEO, Romlie Mokak, at Charcoal Lane restaurant in Melbourne. He goes on to be the first full-time Indigenous Policy Evaluation Commissioner at the Productivity Commission.



Corporate

As host of the Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CRC, delivery of the CRC projects has been a priority during the reporting period. Forty-one projects have been successfully completed.

In addition, the Institute has secured an extension from the CRC Programme to undertake knowledge translation on 20 years of research outputs and outcomes, thereby creating new products and services. Also, to facilitate CRC impact by supporting the uptake and implementation of these resources into services and programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We have also responded to a high degree of interest in quality policy research by undertaking consulting projects. Under the Lowitja Consulting activity established in the 2017–18 period, the Institute has undertaken research, strategy and policy project with governments, mainstream and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations. In doing this, we are ensuring that our approach and deliverables align with our principles of strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership and workforce, community beneficence, engaging end users and measuring impact.



Two Participant forums were held to discuss the current work, future activities, and issues of governance and funding: on 13 November 2018 in Melbourne and on 17 June 2019 in Darwin. In Darwin, there was an opportunity to share a networking lunch with attending Alumni and Institute staff.



The Lowitja Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC

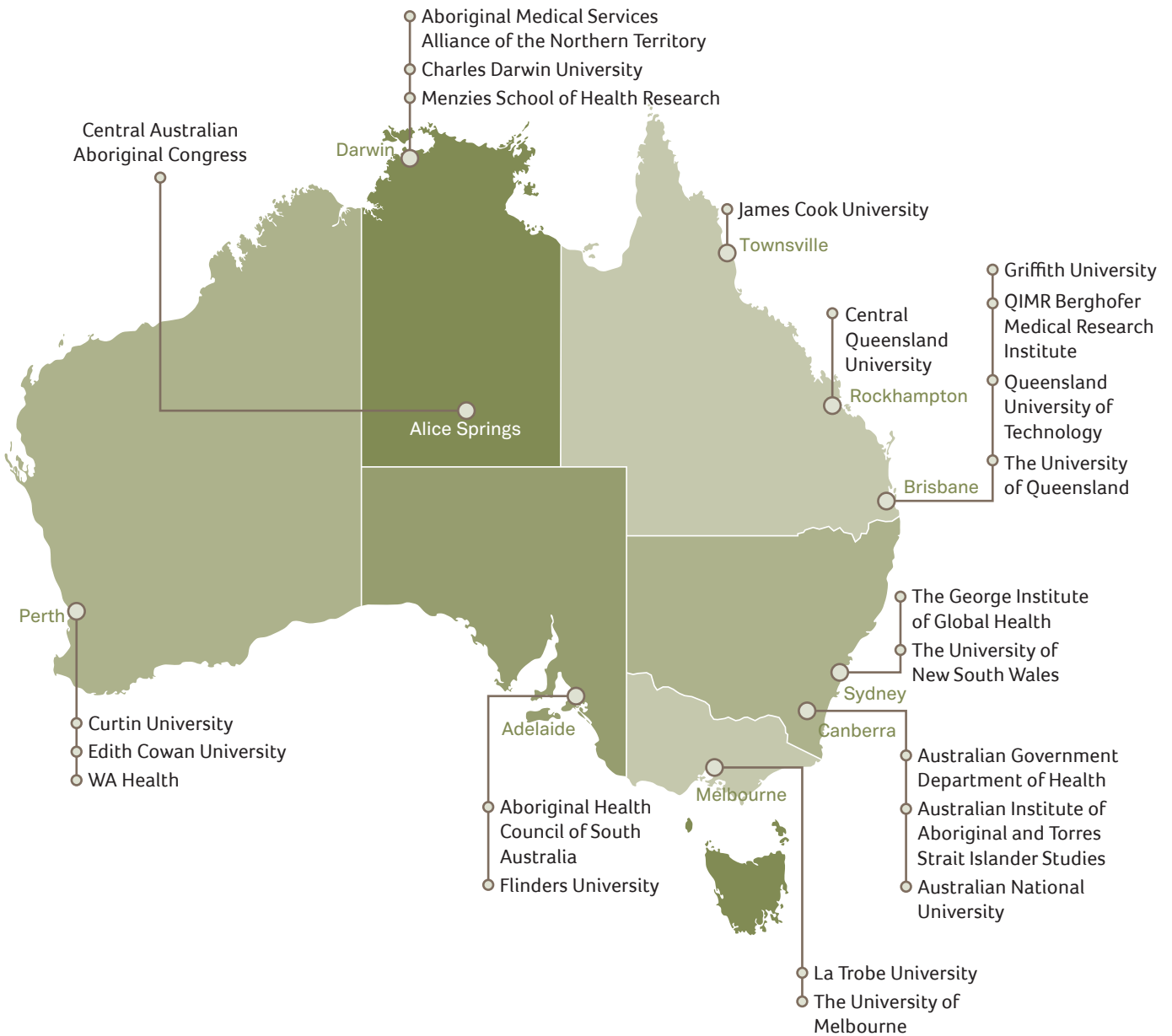
The Lowitja Institute hosted the Lowitja Institute Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health CRC (The Lowitja Institute CRC) until 30 June 2019.

The CRC was funded by the Australian Government Department of Industry, Innovation and Science Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Programme. Its history dates back to 1997 with the establishment of the CRC for Aboriginal and Tropical Health (CRCATH, 1997–2003), which was followed by the CRC for Aboriginal Health (CRAH 2003–09), and the CRC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (CRCATSIH 2010–14).

In acknowledgement of its beginnings in Darwin, the Institute elected to hold its Conference 2019 (please see page 30) in the city, to celebrate more than 20 years of achievement for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Lowitja Institute CRC works with 22 Participants that include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health organisations, State and Australian government departments, and research institutions. This group meets twice a year to discuss current work, future activities and issues of governance and funding; this year we met in Melbourne on 8 November 2016 and 21 June 2017.

The Lowitja Institute CRC Participants



In the fifth year of the Lowitja Institute CRC, there were nine Essential Participants and 13 Other Participants. All participants have been approved by the CRC Programme.



Business
Cooperative Research
Centres Programme

Strong brand and communications



Lowitja Publishing

Publications are an important communications tool for the Institute and for the research teams

we support. This year we published seven new reports, policy briefs and a summary reports (see Appendix 1). A further four are in press for CRC completed projects.

All of our publications are available online at the National Library of Australia and through RMITInformat in Oceania and EBSCO internationally. During the reporting period, material was downloaded from our website more than 32,180 times.

over 32,180+
publication
downloads



Videos

Video content is a great way to reach audiences around the world, and we have been working to produce a range

of videos from our researchers and the Lowitja Institute team. This financial year we added 17 new videos to our public YouTube and Vimeo channels (which were viewed 12,700 times). Although the conference videos generated a great deal of interest, the most popular resource continues to be our organisational video *Good Decision Grow From Great Research*.

over 12,700+
video views



Social media

Twitter continues to be our strongest social media platform and in this reporting period we grew more than

11,000 followers, a growth of 27 percent since the last reporting period. The Lowitja Institute is also expanding in other areas of social media, including growth for our Facebook and LinkedIn profiles.

Harnessing the power of social media (Twitter) and the reporting of Croakey Conference Reporting and IndigenousX, the Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019 hashtag #LowitjaConf2019 reached 95 million impressions, casting a very wide net of awareness of the Institute and its work.

over 11,000+
Twitter
followers



Website

The Lowitja Institute CRC website was last updated in 2012, and since that time there have been significant

changes in accessibility, functionality and design options for websites. Therefore, a new website was developed during the reporting period to enhance accessibility and usability across platforms and hand held devices, and to promote usage of the website as a repository of information about the work of the CRC and as a tool for knowledge translation.

In this reporting period we saw a significant increase in our website traffic, from 93,000 unique visits to the site in the last reporting period, to 226,378 in this reporting period. This is largely due to the use of our GoogleAds grant driving traffic to our website, particularly around the conference. However, we are reviewing the quality of this engagement as this is a usage jump of more than 143 per cent.

over
226,378+
unique web
visits



eBulletin

We published 26 editions of the eBulletin distributed fortnightly to some 4000 subscribers.

over 4,000+ eBulletin subscribers



Speeches and presentations

The communications team also supported the preparation of several speeches and presentations

See page 27



Key media and campaigns

Engaging with our partners, collaborators and media outlets on news and campaigns is vital to communicating with our audiences. The timeline showcases our key media stories and campaigns for this reporting period.

Meltwater media monitoring reports 19 mentions of the Lowitja Institute in international media and 446 in the national media.

International mentions include:

- The Middle East North Africa Financial Network (x 2)
- The Guardian
- British Medical Journal
- BuzzFeed
- Times Higher Education

19 mentions in international media

446 mentions in national media

A key media campaign during the reporting period was the Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference 2019.

Some of the media exposure achieved includes:

- Two interviews during the conference week on Radio National Breakfast with Fran Kelly (Mr Bruce Blankenfeld, Mr Peter Yu)
- One interview during the conference week with Radio National Drive with Patricia Karvelas (Mr Bruce Pascoe)
- Two interviews with ABC Radio Darwin (Mr Peter Yu and Dr Julia Kim)
- ABC News notice about the conference and Mr Peter Yu
- Opinion piece in The Guardian by Mr Ali Drummond
- SBS feature on research award winners announced at the conference 2019.

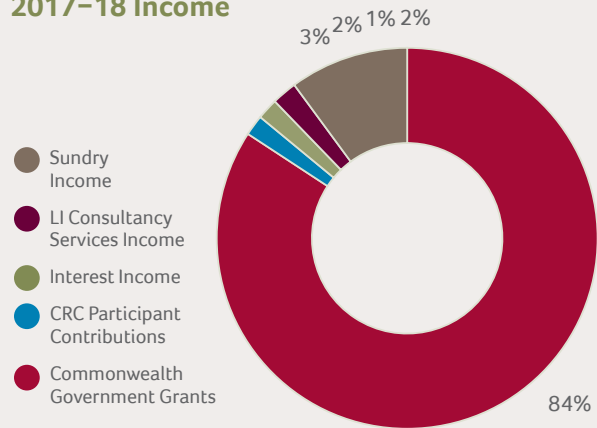
Finance

The Lowitja Institute finished the 2018–19 financial year with a \$1,389,417 surplus.

Income

Totalled \$10.3m with \$8.9m in Commonwealth Government Grants including \$180,000 in cash contributions from the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) Participants; project income of \$218,980 related to Lowitja Institute consultancy service contracts from Research Program for the Partnership for Health Justice, Department of Health, Australasian College for Emergency Medicine and Australian Human Rights Commission; interest income of \$184,584; sundry income of \$1,039,839, including registration and sponsorship income from the Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health & Wellbeing Conference June 2019 and donations.

The Lowitja Institute 2017–18 Income

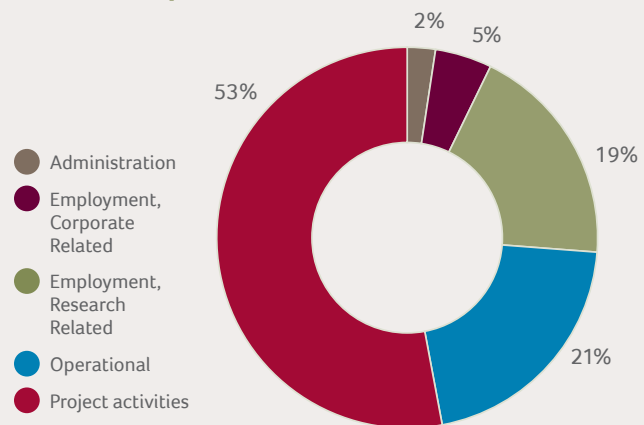


Expenditure

Totalled \$8.9m, with research related activities representing 53 per cent of expenditure and corporate related services 47 per cent. Project activity expenditure was \$4.7m, with the majority of expenditure related to final year completion of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for research projects and activities, it included scholarship payments and expenditure costs of the Lowitja Institute consultancy service activities.

Administration activities cost \$212,847; corporate related employment \$429,440; research related employment \$1.7m, and operational expenditure was \$1.9m, including expenditure costs of the Lowitja Institute International Indigenous Health & Wellbeing Conference June 2019.

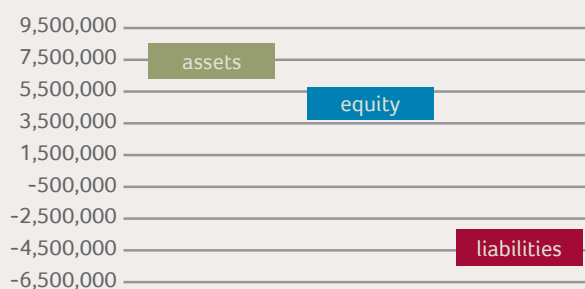
The Lowitja Institute 2018–19 Expenditure



Cash reserves

Increased from \$6.8m to \$7.5m, during the financial year as a result of the new 2019–20 Indigenous Australians' Health Programme (IAPH) grant of \$2.2m from Commonwealth Department of Health received in advance. An increase in research funding expenditure from \$4.3m to \$4.7m from the surplus funds recognised as a liability due to project funds being released for the final year of CRC Programme funding.

The Lowitja Institute Financial Position at 30 June 2019



Debtors

At \$27,314 majority from recouping of publication costs and LI conference sponsorships. A minor increase in fixed assets, due to acquisition of a new car and overall reduction in asset value due to depreciation.

Current liabilities

At \$3.8m including \$2.3m of income in-advance, \$1.4m of accounts payable, majority for accruals of CRC project expenditure invoices that were received beyond June 2019 and employee accruals of \$181,754.



[We] must work fearlessly for change and improvement in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We must be courageous, committed to social justice and equity, match words to action, and achieve tangible and immediate outcomes.

Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue
AC CDE DSG

#NRW2019
Grounded in Truth:
Walk together
with courage

Other Highlights









PHOTO CAPTIONS

- 1 In September 2018 our CEO, Romlie Mokak, participated in a global convening hosted by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Centre in Italy. The meeting discussed the topic "Advancing Wellbeing in an Inequitable World". Photo courtesy Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Rockefeller Foundation.
- 2 NAIDOC 2018, March 6 July 2018, Romlie Mokak and then VACCHO CEO Ian Hamm
- 3 The 9th Biennial Pacific Region Indigenous Doctors Congress (PRIDoC) was held on 12–17 July 2018 in Hawai'i. Romlie Mokak was recognised by the International Steering Committee with the 2018 Kekuni & Paratene Advocacy Award for his past and ongoing work and commitment to Indigenous health.
- 4 Pat Anderson AO: one of the 10 most culturally influential Australians in 2018, as per the Australian Financial Review magazine Power, 5 October 2019. Image taken from the Australian Financial Review.
- 5 On 16 August 2018 our Chairperson, Pat Anderson AO, joined Professor Megan Davis and Professor George Williams for the 2018 Mason Conversation at UNSW. Pat and Professor Davis discussed the deliberative Regional Dialogues and First Nations Constitutional Convention that culminated with the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
- 6 Dr Elaine Lāwurrpa Maypilama presenting at the Lowitja Institute 2019 conference
- 7 Dr Sanchia Shibasaki presenting at the University of Melbourne KT forum
- 8 Celebrating NAIDOC 2018 with our neighbours, Drummond Street Services
- 9 On 13 July 2018, Pat Anderson was announced as the winner of the NAIDOC 2018 Pat Anderson Lifetime Award
- 10 In October 2018, in Brisbane, the UQ Poche Moving Beyond the Frontline conference brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and research leaders to examine critical success factors for enabling Indigenous leadership across the health system. Presentations showcased research across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and research workforce including a number of Lowitja Institute funded projects. L–R: Romlie Mokak, Sandy Campbell, Chelsea Bond, Alex Zurawski & Janya McCalman at #MovingBeyondTheFrontline
- 11 On 23 January 2019 our CEO, Romlie Mokak, joined Indigenous leaders for a meeting of the first Canada and Australia bilateral exchange on Indigenous empowerment, at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) in Redfern. Image courtesy of the NCIE.
- 12 Donate Life Week 2018, hearing from our colleague Dr Shayne Bellingham about life saving organ donation
- 13 In October 2018, in Brisbane, the UQ Poche Moving Beyond the Frontline conference brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and research leaders to examine critical success factors for enabling Indigenous leadership across the health system. Presentations showcased research across the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and research workforce including a number of Lowitja Institute funded projects. L–R: Romlie Mokak, Sandy Campbell, Chelsea Bond, Alex Zurawski & Janya McCalman at #MovingBeyondTheFrontline
- 14 Romlie Mokak at COAG in Alice Springs August 2018
- 15 Professor Leanne Te-Karu and Janine Mohamed, keynote speakers at the Australian Pharmaceutical Council Colloquium in May 2019
- 16 Research Project Officer, Aishah Jameel, attended knowledge translation workshops in Sydney, hosted by Dr David Phipps from York University and Dr Tamika Heiden from Knowledge Translation Australia. Image courtesy of Lynda Ah Mat & Felecia Watkin Lui. L:R Aishah Jameel, Lynda Ah Mat, Felecia Watkin Lui, David Phipps, Tamika Heiden.
- 17 The Research Advisory Committee at the July 2018 meeting
- 18 Staff, Participants and Alumni at Lowitja Conference 2019 Monday, 17 June
- 19 Romlie Mokak with His Excellency Paul Maddison, High Commissioner of Canada, and other delegates at the World Indigenous Suicide Prevention Conference (WISPC18).
- 20 Janine Mohamed welcoming Participants and Alumni at the networking lunch on Monday 17 June 2019, the day prior commencement of Conference 2019
- 21 In November 2018, Lowitja Institute Chairperson Pat Anderson AO was awarded the degree of Doctor of Laws honoris causa by the University of New South Wales (UNSW). Pat was recognised for her eminent service and long-standing dedication to advocacy for Australia's First Peoples and as a visionary leader and a veteran activist for social justice and constitutional reform. Photo courtesy UNSW.
- 22 1 March 2019 Plain language training
- 23 Dr Sanchia Shibasaki (S4SC), Dr Felecia Watkin Lui & Ms Lynda Ah Mat (James Cook University) – Meriba buay – ngalpan wakaythoemamay (We come together to share our thinking): Evaluating a community of practice for Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing
- 24 The fabulous attendees to the IGA short course prior to the Conference 2019 Monday, 17 June

Supporting the Uluru Statement from the Heart

At its March 2018 meeting, the Board of the Lowitja Institute resolved to formally support the Uluru Statement from the Heart:



We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.



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