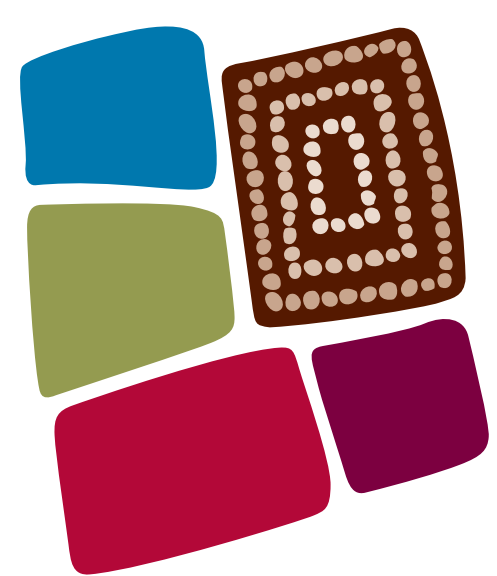


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Health at the Lowitja Institute



the
Lowitja
INSTITUTE

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

*Incorporating the Cooperative Research Centre
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*

The Lowitja Institute, Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research, is an innovative research body that supports collaborations between Aboriginal community controlled health organisations, academic institutions and government agencies to facilitate evidence-based research, leadership, capacity building, and knowledge exchange in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The Institute hosts the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health (CRCATSIH). CRCATSIH's research program areas are: Healthy Start, Healthy Life; Healthy Communities and Settings; and Enabling Policy and Systems. Among other work, Healthy Start, Healthy Life focuses on the development of techniques, tools, resources, and effective implementation to strengthen primary health care delivery, and initiatives around women's health and capacity.

www.lowitja.org.au

Knowledge exchange

National roundtables, such as the Child and Maternal National Roundtable (March 2012), and the Tobacco and Pregnancy Roundtable (June 2013) are one-day events that bring together researchers, end users of research (community, government health services and policy-making agencies), and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organisations with the purpose of developing research priorities that will achieve the best possible outcomes.

During these roundtables, presentations from experienced practitioners and researchers outline key topics and establish broad agreement about what is already known in the field. Presentations are followed by group discussions in order to achieve a shared understanding across the different sectors and to identify gaps in knowledge. Priorities and research questions are then established, aiming to progress to full research projects. The Baby Basket evaluation project (above right) is an outcome of the Child and Maternal roundtable.

Leadership



Associate Professor Gail Garvey

Leader at the Institute, as well as the Leader of the Division of Epidemiology and Health Systems at the Menzies School of Health Research. Gail has worked for more than 25 years in the Indigenous education and health sectors. In 2010 and 2012, the Lowitja Institute hosted national workshops to support the establishment of a Centre of Research Excellence in Discovering Indigenous Strategies to Improve Cancer Outcomes via Engagement, Research Translation and Training (DISCOVER-TT), which is led by Associate Professor Garvey.

The Lowitja Institute supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership at all levels of the organisation. Associate Professor Gail Garvey, a Kamilaroi woman from New South Wales, is a Program

Education



Ms Lisa Whop

As part of our capacity building and investment in supporting Indigenous students, the Lowitja Institute supported Ms Lisa Whop, a Torres Strait Islander woman, when she undertook a cadetship program at the Queensland Institute of Medical Research. This led to Lisa's interest in epidemiology and public health; she currently holds a scholarship from Sidney Myer Health and the Institute to undertake a PhD on cervical cancer. Lisa's project aims to assess, for the first time, the effectiveness of cervical cancer prevention programs, and report incidence and survival for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women using a data linkage approach.

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An example of working with community and stakeholders

Learning from Central Australian Aboriginal women's experiences: Reflections on participation in the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) Family Partnership Program (FPP) in Alice Springs

The aim of this current project is to identify and document the effects, benefits and/or disadvantages of participating in the FPP from the perspective of Aboriginal women clients and FPP staff. The information gathered will add to the knowledge and evidence base of what Aboriginal women consider is an effective program, it will improve the capacity of the FPP, and will, ultimately, improve the health outcomes for Aboriginal women and their children.

Research

Evaluation of the Baby Basket program developed by the Apunipima Cape York Health Council to engage Aboriginal women in antenatal care

The program was identified through a Lowitja Institute national roundtable process as a promising program with the potential for benefitting other communities across Australia. A formal evaluation of the Baby Basket program is currently in development and will be led by James Cook University.



Contents for one of the Apunipima Cape York Health Council baby baskets

Reproducing history: Aboriginal women in a remote community in the Northern Territory

The Lowitja Institute is building research capacity in Aboriginal women's health through their support of Sarah Ireland's doctoral project at Menzies School of Health Research. Working with the permission of, and in partnership with Aboriginal women, Sarah's research is exploring the social, cultural and historical factors underlying women's reproductive and sexual health in one remote community in the Northern Territory. The research findings may be used to better inform the development of health policy and promote the delivery of culturally appropriate services for remote Aboriginal women.



Doctoral research Sarah Ireland with colleague Concepta Wullili Narjic, who is a traditional midwife and cultural mentor, and Concepta's niece

FOR MORE INFORMATION
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