

Perinatal support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma.

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Weaving at Indigenous Health Equity Unit
Event for NAIDOC Week 2022

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Investigators' report and project update

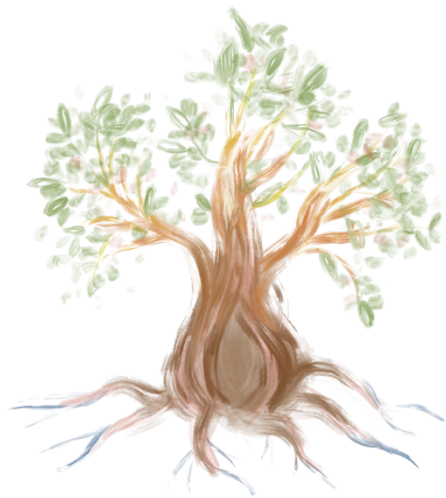
We are pleased to share the thirteenth *Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future* (HPNF) project newsletter which we circulate three times a year.

The past four months have been an incredibly rewarding time for our team, with many achievements across different areas. Highlights include:

- [Prof Cath Chamberlain](#) and chief investigators on the [Replanting the Birthing Trees](#) project have successfully obtained an MRFF grant of \$5 million to 'scale-up' trauma-integrated perinatal care.
- [Dr Kim Jones](#) and members of the team submitted a Cochrane review of *perinatal interventions for parents who are experiencing complex trauma or have experienced maltreatment in their own childhood*.
- New additions to the team – we are delighted to welcome [Ms Andrea Clarke](#), [Ms Emma Stubbs](#) and [Ms Isabella Freijah](#) to the team, and Mr Alan Radford as a PhD student.
- Huge thankyou to the 110 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents who have helped develop the Aboriginal Complex Trauma and Strengths Questionnaire.
- We celebrated the re-signing of the MOU between ONEMDA and VACCHO.
- [Ms Deb Bowman](#), [Dr Renee Fiolet](#) and Prof Cath Chamberlain, successfully conducted parent and service provider discussion groups across three states on the proposed perinatal model for care.

We announced the fourth workshop to be held **9th and 10th August (via zoom)**, to review draft program resources for implementing perinatal awareness, recognition, assessment and support strategies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma.

If you are interested in attending Workshop 4 please register by the 2nd of August 2022 by completing the online registration form here: [Workshop 4 registration](#).



Replanting the Birthing Trees MRFF grant success!

Congratulations to Professor Cath Chamberlain, Professor Rhonda Marriott, [Professor Marcia Langton](#) and a large team of 47 investigators and 17 partner organisations, who have received a MRFF grant for **Replanting the Birthing Trees to Support First Nations Parents and Babies**. This First Nations-led project, which will be governed by the community-controlled peak body representatives, **aims to transform intergenerational cycles of trauma to support parents in achieving their hopes and dreams for a happy, safe and healthy family**. This project complements other projects that were funded to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents during the perinatal period. Collectively, these projects will have a profound impact on services supporting the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies and parents.

Parent and Service Provider Discussion Group Update

Deb Bowman, Dr Renee Fiolet and Professor Cath Chamberlain successfully conducted parent and service provider discussion groups on the proposed perinatal model for care in Adelaide, Victoria and Alice Springs. We would like to offer a huge thanks to our partner organisations; Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC), [Nunkuwarrin Yunti of South Australia](#), [Women and Childrens Health Network](#), [The Royal Women's Hospital](#), [The Bouverie Centre](#) and VACCA for their support, and Emma Stubbs (Senior Research Assistant at CAAC) for her efforts in helping plan the discussion groups.

The discussion groups involved over 20 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and men, as well as another 20 service providers working in the perinatal space. The data from the discussion groups - in the form of worksheets, transcriptions and researcher notes - are currently being analysed and will be discussed at workshop four in August and published later in the year.



Prof Cath Chamberlain and Deb Bowman preparing for discussion groups



Ms Andrea Clarke

Welcome Andrea

Andrea Clarke is a proud Arabunna & Irrwanyere woman from Alice Springs, NT. She is currently studying her PhD with the Melbourne Graduate School of Education at the University of Melbourne. Her research priority is diversity and the resulting educational impacts on equity. Andrea has worked across government, Aboriginal community-controlled health, non-government and educational sectors for the past 25 years and has a background in Education and Teaching. Andrea also is a volunteer committee member at the Royal Children's Hospital. Andrea will lead the development of an integrated program of teaching that draws on our respective research and policy/program agenda to improve Indigenous health and health equity.

Self-Care Tip

Vicarious Trauma and Moral Injury



Just a reminder to all of you Deadly mob caring for others that you need to care for yourself too! We can experience vicarious or secondary trauma when we are supporting families experiencing trauma, and we can experience moral injury working within institutions and colonial systems that go against our personal and cultural values. The Blue Knot Foundation (our valued partners) offer [training](#) which **explores the nature, dynamics and risks of vicarious trauma and supports you to stay healthy and safe in your work**. This training, informed by current research, will provide you with the knowledge, skills and tools to better recognise the early signs of various stress outcomes.

You can also join our Supporting Aboriginal Families to Stay Together from the Start (SAFeST Start) advocacy group if you would like to connect with like-minded perinatal professionals committed to safer systems ([email hpnf-project@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:hpnf-project@unimelb.edu.au)).



Ms Emma Stubbs

Welcome Emma

Emma Stubbs is a Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, Arabana and Adnyamathanha woman working and living on Arrernte Country in Alice Springs with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress. Emma has more than ten years' experience working in community services, case management, advocacy, administration and community development roles. She has experience working in a trauma informed way, with organisations that work Malparara Way (side by side) in making things better for Anangu (Aboriginal) people. Emma is new to working in research, but believes that all Aboriginal people are researchers by nature, as we follow a 60,000 year-old framework for sharing Tjukurpa (stories) and knowledge. Emma has joined our team as a senior research assistant.

Welcome Isabella

Isabella Freijah is a non-indigenous researcher living on Wurundjeri Country of the Kulin Nation. Isabella is a Research Assistant with experience in post-traumatic mental health research, specialising in evidence synthesis methodologies. She has a passion for applied research that is translatable and meaningful to real world situations and communities, and aspires to work at the intersection of research, policy, and practice. She completed her Bachelor of Arts at the University of Melbourne, and Honours in Psychology at Australian Catholic University, and will undertake a joint Master of Public Health at the University of Sheffield and Maastricht University from September 2022. Isabella has joined our team as a research assistant.



Ms Isabella Freijah

Welcome Alan

Alan has over 20 years' experience as a Senior Business Consultant with a specialised focus on supporting the development of Aboriginal community organisations within Tasmania and throughout Western Australia. Being a proud Northern Tasmanian Aboriginal (Pakana Palawa) man, Alan has worked and assisted his community through the delivery and design of specialised employment and business development and cultural awareness programs. He is also an emerging Aboriginal Artist. He has a Masters of Business Administration, a Graduate Diploma of Business, Diploma's in Leadership, Management, Human Resources, Business and Employment Services. Alan's driver is to see his community succeed and to assist them to realise their dreams and aspirations, for there is no truer picture of success than communities achieving their goals and planning for the future of their children's, children.



Mr Alan Radford



Reconciliation Week 2022

We celebrated National Reconciliation week at the school morning tea on Thursday the 2nd of June. The theme for National Reconciliation Week 2022 is *Be Brave. Make Change.* This invites all Australians to Be Brave and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation. During morning tea there were some informal speeches emphasizing the importance of building on the relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the wider Australian community.

In the Eye of the Storm: Community-led Indigenous-informed responses during a natural disaster

A/Prof Caroline Atkinson has been applying her extensive expertise into helping her community better manage feelings of trauma-related distress, a natural response to the devastating floods that inundated Lismore.

Within a week, A/Prof Atkinson rallied a 'community of care and practice' to establish a safe, dry space within the Lismore CBD to set up the *Northern Rivers Community Healing Hub* with a [Facebook page](#) and [webpage](#) to receive offers of support and direct people needing support. The Northern Rivers community healing hub is a self-organising network of Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and professionals. Together they are creating a community healing space to support recovery that is grounded in the trauma-informed, grounding and regulating practices of First Nations peoples. A/Prof Atkinson's expertise and learning during this disaster will be a really important contribution for helping improve community responses in future.



Associate Professor Caroline Atkinson presented at the IHEU NAIDOC Week 2022 Event on the Healing Hub in Lismore

Making Sense of Our Stories



Sometimes all we need is a cuppa, a bite to eat and a yarn





Below are links to media coverage about the *Northern Rivers Community Healing Hub*.

SBS News: [The Indigenous trauma specialists working to ease a growing mental health crisis in flood-affected NSW](#)

Podcast: [Ancient wisdom heals mental health trauma after flooding](#)

SBS on Demand: [Small business Secrets NAIDOC Special – Indigenous Ingenuity](#)

Congratulations Deb Bowman

A big congratulations to our very own Deb Bowman who has been awarded the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander & Maori and Pacific Peoples Conference Scholarship for the Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care Conference. Deb is leading a workshop during the conference titled: *Culturally safe ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in focus groups on sensitive discussions*.

Well done Deb!



APPRISE Update

[Dr Leo Kamitsis](#), Dr Kim Jones and the team have completed a detailed workshop report which was sent to all key stakeholders and is available on our [website](#). The team have also been working on four papers for publication. A scoping review (submitted), a description of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents' experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic; exploration of associations between COVID-19 experiences and trauma-related distress; and a culturally responsive trauma-informed public health emergency response framework for First Nations communities. Findings from this study will be presented at the Population Health Congress (21-23 September, 2022).





Weaving with Emily Lovett from Mayapa
Weaving at the Indigenous Health Equity Unit
NAIDOC Week event 2022



From left to right: Dr Alison Elliott, Minister Natalie Hutchins, Clarisse Slater, Prof Stephen Kent, Prof Jeff Young, Prof Cath Chamberlain

Publications

We are proud to share out latest publication. Please see our [website](#) for previous publications.

Community views on 'Can perinatal services safely identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma?'. [Read the full article](#)

Other articles

- Translating evidence into practice: Implementing culturally safe continuity of midwifery care for First Nations women in three maternity services in Victoria, Australia. [Read the full article](#)

Celebrating launch of new Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Family Therapy

Since 2008, the Graduate Certificate in Family Therapy has been delivered in Community to over 12 cohorts in Victoria and Townsville-Cooktown, Far North Queensland. The program has been designed specifically for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander child and family workers who are currently working in Community. Non-Aboriginal child and family workers who work primarily with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families can also apply. This program is delivered within Community and utilises a 'Black and White Approach', where an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal trainer facilitate each class. This forms a solid grounding for a culturally sensitive, respectful and inclusive program. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.

First Nations Health and Healing App

Created and developed by Yorta Yorta woman Dr Mishel McMahon IMIGO improves communication and engagement between First Nations people and Health Professionals leading to better health outcomes. IMIGO is a First Nations mobile app available for everyone. Download app [here](#).



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



Upcoming and past Conference Presentations

[Dr. Elise Davis](#), **Dr Kim Jones**, **Deb Bowman** and **Prof. Cath Chamberlain** will be presenting at the [Best start to life: a national gathering - Utilising the RISE Framework to implement Birthing on Country Services](#) conference in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) from 10-12 October 2022. Best start to life: a national gathering is an initiative of the [Molly Wardaguga Research Centre](#) and the [Central Australian Aboriginal Congress](#). It follows on from the first Birthing on Country meeting, held in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) 10 years ago, where the Australian Maternity Services Interjurisdictional Committee, in collaboration with the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, held the first national workshop to progress Australian Government commitment to Birthing on Country.

Prof. Cath Chamberlain is keynote speaker at the [Maternal Child & Family Health Nurses Australia 2022 Conference](#) 'EVOLUTION: Evidence, Innovation, and Practice' in Canberra 1st– 3rd September 2022 on '*Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents experiencing complex trauma*'.

Prof. Cath Chamberlain is a plenary speaker at the [RANZCP Faculty of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry \(FCAP\) 2022 Conference](#) from 14-17 September at the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins.

Prof. Cath Chamberlain is an invited speaker for the upcoming Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program in Brisbane.

Dr Leo Kamitsis and **Prof. Cath Chamberlain** will be presenting on behalf of the APPRISE team *a culturally-responsive trauma-informed* public health emergency framework for First Nations communities, at the Population Health Congress in Adelaide from 23-25 September.

[Dr Tess Bright](#) and **Prof. Cath Chamberlain** will be presenting on *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents' and caregivers' experiences of COVID-19 pandemic*, findings from the APPRISE grant, at the Population Health Congress in Adelaide from 23-25 September.

Dr Alison Elliott and **Dr Renee Fiolet** are presenting at the fourth biennial [International Childhood Trauma Conference next](#) month on *Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future*: co-designing perinatal awareness, recognition, assessment and support for Aboriginal parents experiencing complex trauma.

Dr Renee Fiolet, **Deb Bowman** and **Emma Stubbs** are presenting a workshop at the [Australasian Association for Academic Primary Care \(AAAPC\) Annual Research Conference](#) on *Culturally safe ways of working with Aboriginal and Torres strait Islanders in focus groups on sensitive discussions*.

Prof Cath Chamberlain presented on [Replanting the Birthing Trees](#) at [The Molly Wardaguga Research Centre Birthing on Country Centre of Research Excellence](#) on 22 April, 2022.

Dr Renee Fiolet presented at the Nursing Network on Violence Against Women International (NNVAWI) 24 International Conference on [Healing from family violence: Indigenous perspectives on drawing strength from culture, country and community](#).

Prof. Cath Chamberlain presented on the theme *Be Brave, Make Change* and reflections on her journey in research for the NHMRC Indigenous Speaker Series for Reconciliation Week on 1st June, 2022.