



End of year Newsletter



As we come to the end of another big year, we reflect proudly on the growth, connection and learning across the ACRA team. Together with our Elders, families, young people, community partners and researchers, we have continued to walk alongside community to support culturally grounded, strengths-based research that makes a real difference for Aboriginal families.

We are grateful for your guidance, trust and partnership throughout the year. Thank you for sharing your knowledge, your time and your voices. We look forward to continuing this important journey together in the new year, strengthening community leadership and celebrating Aboriginal excellence in research and beyond.

Wishing everyone a safe and restful holiday break.

PROJECT UPDATES



Photo: Seated L-R: Karen Glover, Catherine Leanne. Standing L-R: Renae Jordan, Arwen Nikolof, Imani Austin, Katherine Moore, Yvonne Clark

Aboriginal Families Study

Aboriginal Young People's Social and Emotional Wellbeing

- We are conducting **yarning circles** and interviews with Aboriginal young people aged **14–17 years**, as well as mothers or caregivers of young people.
- The focus of our yarning circles is on young people's wellbeing:
 - What does social and emotional wellbeing mean to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 14–17 years?
 - What supports strong wellbeing?

Insights from these yarning circles and interviews will help shape the questions for the **Wave 3 questionnaire**. Our goal is to ensure we ask the right questions, use the right language, and include questions that are meaningful to young people.

The questions included in the Wave 3 questionnaire will be used as a measure of **Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB)** for young people.

Yarning circles and interviews will be facilitated by Aboriginal team members and will include weaving and art activities. Each session takes approximately **1 to 1.5 hours**, and participants receive a **\$50 gift card** (young people) or a **\$75 gift card** (mothers/caregivers) as a thank you for their time.

Community Engagement

Our team has attended community centres and events to promote the study, including:

- Southern Nunga Tag Carnival
- Tauondi College Open Day
- Playford International Nunga Night
- Murray Bridge Hang Out Club
- Hackham West Community Centre
- Neporendi Accountability Forum

If you are interested in taking part in a yarning circle or interview, or would like more information about the study, please contact us:

 **Email:** afs@sahmri.com
 **Arwen Nikolof:** 0493 020 983
 **Kath Moore:** 0491 784 018
 **Imani Austin:** Imani.austin@sahmri.com

Best4Gest

Optimising culturally safe and self-determined management of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM) among Aboriginal women in South Australia, assisting child health outcomes

This study is working with two Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHOs) – Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service and Pika Wiya Health Service, Port Augusta, and the Aboriginal Family Birthing Program (Ngangkita Ngartu), Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) and the Port Augusta Hospital (Anangu Bibi Birthing Program).

The aim of the study is to improve GDM self-management (to reduce adverse effects for both mother and baby), in partnership with culturally safe services within a known and trusted health service and/or birthing unit. The intention is to translate this study into routine antenatal care.

Key activities:

- Research will be community-led. Consultations and yarning will involve Elders, community members, Consumers, WCH and Port Augusta Hospital staff, and ACCHO providers.
- Continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) devices will be provided and given to each participant to monitor 14-day continuous glucose from diagnosis of GDM and throughout pregnancy.
- One healthy meal (~30-45 g of carbohydrates) per day will be provided to the participant from diagnosis of GDM and throughout pregnancy.
- Nutrition education on healthy eating throughout pregnancy, focusing on carbohydrates, will be given on initial consult, and follow-up nutrition advice and diabetes education will be given throughout pregnancy.
- Education to members in household on food security for the mother.

Please contact Rachel Elovaris or Angie Llewellyn from the Best4Gest team, if you would like more information about this study.

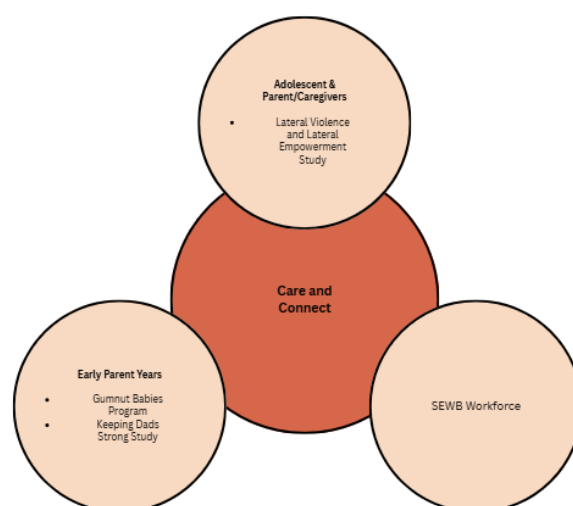
Rachel Elovaris: rachel.elovaris@sahmri.com

Angie Llewellyn: angela.llewellyn@pikawiyahealth.org.au

Care and Connect

The Care and Connect Pathways study will focus on reconnecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, families and communities to their cultural, social and emotional wellbeing with 'Care and Connect Pathways' to address intergenerational trauma and health inequalities. Aboriginal empowerment is an essential driver of personal and cultural strengths, resilience and Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB).

This 5 year study will explore how supporting connections to culture, country and spirituality and key domains of the Social and Emotional Wellbeing (SEWB) framework disrupts the impacts of historical, political and social determinants to improve intergenerational health outcomes.



There are 4 main aims of the study:

- Aim 1: Co-develop of novel care and connect pathways
- Aim 2: Service delivery to enhance, embed and address implementation barriers
- Aim 3: Evaluation of feasibility, cultural acceptability, value and outcomes
- Aim 4: Establishing data governance systems and benchmarks for monitoring long-term impacts

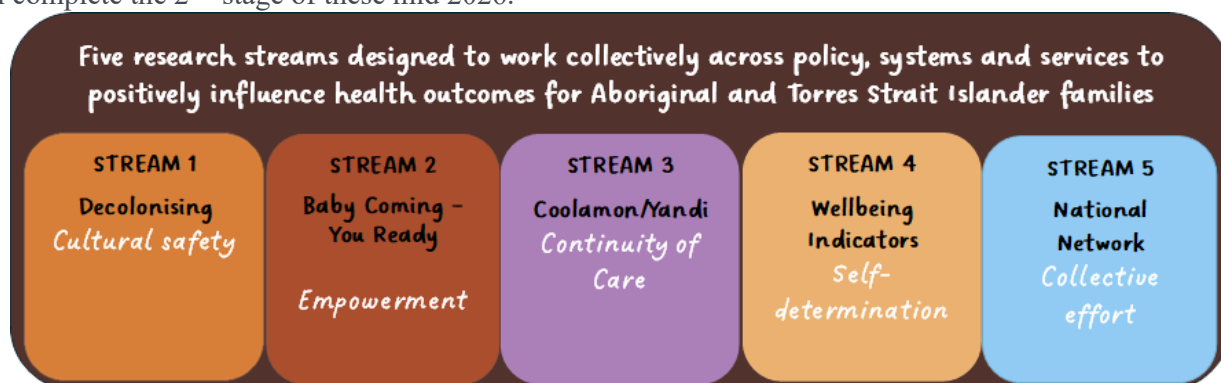
The study will address three streams being Adolescents and Parents/Caregivers; Early Parenting Years and the SEWB Workforce. Below are a selection of studies that are underway across each stream, there are a number of studies that are under development and awaiting commencement.

ICARE

It's time to flourish: Co-designed perinatal and early years care, self-determined by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, Resulting in policy and practice transformation and Exceptional Service (ICARE)

We are recruiting for Stream 3 (Coolamon Care) at the Women's and Children's Hospital, we have had a lot of interest and have recruited 31 participants. Some of our babies are already 3 months old which is very exciting and we look forward to keeping in contact with our families and seeing them again when baby is 6 months old.

We have also nearly completed the 1st lot of research yarns as part of Stream 1 (Decolonising) at WCH and will complete the 2nd stage of these mid 2026.



South Australian program supporting Aboriginal families through pregnancy and beyond – Corka bubs and ICARE

SAHMRI recently interviewed a participant who has been part of research to read more please visit

[South Australian program supporting families through pregnancy](#)

MEDIA UPDATES

Royal Commission

We recently made a submission to the Royal Commission into Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence, highlighting the importance of culturally grounded, community-led approaches to keeping families safe and strong. In the Royal Commission's report, our work was acknowledged with specific recommendation relating to Corka Bubs - recognising its impact and calling for a trial of the program in regional areas, with a focus on supporting families involved in child protection systems.

This acknowledgment reflects the strength of community-designed programs and reinforces the need for culturally safe, preventative and early-intervention approaches for Aboriginal families across South Australia.

[Find out more >>](#)

'It gives me purpose'

We are proud to share new research led by Charlotte Sapio and other members in our team, published in the Australian Journal of Psychology. This paper, ***"It gives me purpose": Stories shared by Aboriginal mothers and their perspectives on nurturing resilience***, highlights the voices and experiences of Aboriginal mums and the strengths they draw on as they raise their babies and families. Through yarning with mothers who took part in the Corka Bubs program, the research explores what resilience looks and feels like from an Aboriginal perspective. Themes of connection, identity, learning, and caring for self and others emerged strongly, showing the deep cultural, family and community strengths that support mums through challenging times.

You can find out more information via the link.

[Find out more >>](#)

National Indigenous Times

ICARE offers culturally safe, co-designed support for Aboriginal women during pregnancy and early parenting. With multiple mums already enrolled, the program provides access to Aboriginal counsellors, tailored wellbeing plans, and practical assistance to reduce stress and improve system navigation. Led by Dr Yvonne Clark and Ms Karen Glover, ICARE builds on the success of the Corka Bubs pilot and reflects ACRA's commitment to empowering families through community-led, strengths-based approaches to social and emotional wellbeing.

You can read the article via the link.

[Read the article >>](#)

EVENTS

SNAICC National Conference 2025

Karen Glover attended the SNAICC conference in Meanjin (Brisbane) at the start of October. It three-day event showcased excellence in Aboriginal-led practice, shared lived experience and research, and strengthened national efforts to drive reform for better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities.

ADIPS/SOMANZ Annual Scientific Meeting 2025

The joint congress between the Australasian Diabetes in Pregnancy Society (ADIPS) and the Society of Obstetric Medicine of Australia and New Zealand (SOMANZ) welcomed Rachel to Aotearoa, the land of the long white cloud, to 'Look Beyond' in 2025. Their globally renowned speakers provided an exceptional conference experience that enhanced knowledge and delivered up-to-date, evidence-based insights for patient care.

Rachel enjoyed a program that highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary, holistic care in pregnancy and beyond, focusing on the management of diabetes and a range of complex maternal medical conditions. The

program appealed to allied health professionals, diabetes educators and nurses, dietitians, endocrinologists, general physicians, general practitioners, midwives, obstetricians, and obstetric medicine physicians from across New Zealand and Australia.

Nunga Night

In early November, Imani and Kath from the Aboriginal Families Study Team visited Playford International College to take part in Nunga Night. They hosted a vibrant stall featuring a rock painting activity, inviting students to stop by, decorate a rock, and have a yarn. As the students painted, Imani and Kath shared information about how they could get involved in yarning circles as part of the study.

Photo: Imani Austin and Kath Moore



Southern Nunga Tag

In early November, the Aboriginal Families Study (AFS) team brought their vibrant energy to the Nunga Tag event at Hackham Football Club on a cold and windy day. Arwen, Imani and Kath set up a rock painting stall, just like the one at Nunga Night. Throughout the day, they connected with many primary and high school students participating in the carnival, as well as their families, making it a great opportunity to spark conversations and encourage interest in the study.

Taoundi Open Day

In November, some of our team headed out to the Tauondi Open Day, which was a great chance for us to connect with community in a relaxed and welcoming space. We set up our stall and spent the day yarning with mob about who we are, the projects we're working on, and the different ways people can get involved.

We had lots of meaningful chats about the work happening at ACRA and shared information about how community members can participate in our projects. It was really valuable to hear what people are interested in and to answer any questions they had.

The atmosphere throughout the day was warm and full of good energy and the surprise highlight was a friendly wombat wandering around to say hello to everyone! It definitely brought a few smiles and made the day even more memorable.

Photo Below (L-R): Arwen Nikolof, Kath Moore, Feda Ali and Michael Collard



Ceduna Boys Visit SAHMRI

We were delighted to welcome 20 boys from Ceduna to SAHMRI for a special visit. During their time with us Rachael spoke to them about the importance of healthy eating in which they created their own healthy lunchboxes filled with nutritious choices.

The visit also included a tour of SAHMRI and an exciting virtual reality session with Wardliparingga. It was a fantastic opportunity to share knowledge, spark curiosity, and connect with the next generation about health and research.



Ceduna Trip

Last week members of our team travelled to Ceduna to spend time connecting with community through interviews and yarning. It was a valuable opportunity to listen, learn, and ensure community voices continue to guide our work.

We also spent time hanging out at the Ceduna Youth Hub, enjoying the sunshine and having relaxed yarns with

young people. These moments were a great chance to connect, build relationships and simply be present in community.

A key part of our time in Ceduna was coming together for a Community Accountability Forum. We were grateful to present updates on our projects, listen to local priorities and yarn with community about how we can continue to strengthen our work moving forward. It was encouraging to see such strong attendance and engagement and we deeply value the feedback, knowledge and guidance shared with us. These conversations help ensure our work remains grounded in community needs, strengths and aspirations, and we look forward to continuing this dialogue as we walk alongside community.

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY FORUMS

Over the past few months, our team has been out and about across Adelaide Metro and throughout South Australia, connecting with community and sharing our work. We've been honoured to sit down together at our Community Accountability Forums, where we presented updates on our projects, listened to community priorities and yarned about ways we can continue to strengthen our work.

These conversations and the feedback we received have been incredibly valuable, and we are grateful for the time, knowledge and guidance shared with us. Your voices continue to shape our direction and ensure our work remains grounded in community needs, strengths and aspirations. We look forward to continuing these conversations and walking alongside community as we move ahead.

Tauondi Aboriginal College



Ceduna Community Forum



STAFFING UPDATES

We like to welcome Treena Clark who is an Aboriginal Kokatha and Wirangu woman and researcher in the areas of Indigenous Australian public relations, activism, feminism, fashion, and wellbeing. She completed a Bachelor of Public Relations and Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degrees from the University of South Australia and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). She is currently employed as a Qualitative Researcher within the Aboriginal Communities and Families Health Research Alliance (ACRA) team, where she will assist in the design, collection, analysis, and dissemination of qualitative research. In this role, she will also contribute to staff training, developing study protocols and training materials, and supporting the design and conduct of culturally responsive research.

We like to welcome Dr Mohammad Radwanur Talukder (Radwan) who is a public health professional with a clinical background and research expertise in conducting collaborative, interdisciplinary, mixed-methods study design, and statistical analysis. Radwan's experience spans various areas of public health and health system research, including First Nations health, maternal and child health, regional and rural health, infectious and chronic diseases, and environmental health, both within Australia and internationally. Most recently he has led and coordinated the first-of-its-kind implementation research in Australia aimed at enhancing primary health care capacity for timely detection and place-based support for regional and rural patients living with blood cancer with the Leukaemia Foundation. He also worked across the Northern Territory and held several program management and leadership roles at the Menzies School of Health Research and Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute. Radwan has multiple publications in the international peer-reviewed journals including the Lancet, Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia, Environmental Pollution, Environmental Research and serves as a peer reviewer of several international journals.

Working with the ACRA leadership team, Radwan will focus on research translation and support ACRA team members in the development and completion of peer-reviewed articles, reports, policy briefs, and related outputs based on ACRA's priorities. Radwan loves travelling and exploring new places.

We'd like to extend a warm welcome to Belinda James, a proud Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara woman joining our team. Belinda has come on board as a Research Assistant with ICARE, bringing her strong commitment to supporting community and contributing to meaningful projects.

Belinda is passionate about helping people and building positive connections. Outside of work, she enjoys listening to music, spending time with animals, and being with family, which is where she feels most grounded.

We're excited to have Belinda with us and look forward to the skills, insight and energy she brings to the team.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Celebrating a Remarkable PhD Achievement

We are thrilled to congratulate Arwen on the successful completion of her PhD, with a research focus on "Understanding factors associated with housing mobility and a new approach to assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's social and emotional wellbeing."

This important work sheds light on the complex dynamics of housing mobility and offers a culturally informed framework for supporting the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. It represents a meaningful contribution to both academic scholarship and community practice.

We commend Arwen for their dedication, insight and commitment to advancing equity and understanding. Congratulations on this outstanding achievement!

As we come to the end of this edition, we would like to acknowledge and thank our community members, families, Elders, young people, partners and everyone who has taken the time to connect with us throughout the year. We are grateful for the conversations, yarning, shared experiences and knowledge that have been offered.

This year has been shaped by the voices and guidance of community and we recognise that the strength of our work comes from listening, learning and working together. Every conversation, activity and moment of engagement contributes to building stronger relationships and more meaningful outcomes.

Thank you for staying connected, participating and supporting our work. As the year comes to a close, we wish everyone a safe, restful, and happy holiday period. We look forward to continuing to yarn, learn, and grow together in the year ahead.

