

Building on Strong Foundations for Future Generations

Created by Kurna, Kokatha and Narungga Artist Steven Warrior in partnership with Eastern Arrernte Artist Pat Caruso



This artwork represents the living heartbeat of Aboriginal-led health research across South Australia, a collective movement grounded in culture, Community, truth, and shared responsibility for future generations, situated on Kurna Yerta (Kurna Country) while honouring the diverse Aboriginal Nations and Traditional Custodians whose knowledge, leadership and lived experiences continue to shape Aboriginal health research across the State.

At the centre of the artwork sits a powerful gathering piece, symbolising Aboriginal Community authority, leadership, and connection. The concentric circles reflect generations of knowledge, lived experience, and cultural wisdom that continue to guide the direction of Aboriginal health research. The 10 white solid rings embracing the meeting place represent the 10 principles to come out of the stakeholder engagement. This centre is not symbolic of a single organisation or institution, but of Community itself, the rightful place where priorities are determined, voices are heard, and decisions begin.

Radiating outward from the centre are pathways and connected nodes, representing the many organisations, researchers, health systems, and Communities walking together in partnership. Each pathway signifies collaboration, co-design, and shared stewardship, reflecting the commitment of signatories to reshape systems and conduct research in ways that are culturally safe, accountable, and Community driven.

The flowing movement throughout the artwork evokes waterways, songlines, and knowledge systems, illustrating that Aboriginal knowledge is living, connected, and continuously carried across generations. The intricate dot work reflects the diversity of Communities, experiences, and stories across South Australia, while also symbolising data, communication, and the exchange of knowledge grounded in respect and reciprocity.

The branching forms extending from the central gathering place represent growth,

leadership, and intergenerational impact. They symbolise the investment in Aboriginal researchers, future leaders, and Community capability, acknowledging that the work undertaken today creates pathways for the next 10 generations.

The use of blue tones throughout the artwork reflects healing, water, and life, while the layered earth colours ground the work in Country, culture, and continuity. Contrasting vibrant pathways signify innovation, transformation, and the strength of Aboriginal people driving systems reform across sectors and across the State.

The artwork acknowledges the enduring health knowledge embedded in Kurna cultural practices, including the use of native plants such as Karra (River Red Gum), Emu Bush, Native Mint and Tea-Tree. These healing traditions reflect generations of evidence gathered through observation, practice and connection to Country, underscoring that Aboriginal knowledge systems have long informed approaches to health and wellbeing. The inclusion of these medicinal plants symbolises the relationship among cultural knowledge, healing and contemporary Aboriginal-led research.

Embedded within the artwork is the understanding that research must privilege Indigenous knowledges, uphold Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP), and honour Indigenous Data Sovereignty. The visual connections illustrate that research is not isolated work; it is relational, accountable, and tied to Community outcomes and wellbeing.

This artwork honours more than ten years of work and leadership that shaped the original Accord, while looking forward toward a future where Aboriginal Communities continue to lead research priorities, influence policy and practice, and create meaningful health outcomes for Aboriginal people across South Australia.

It is a visual declaration of unity, responsibility, and hope, a commitment to doing Aboriginal health research the right way.

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Eastern Arrernte Artist Pat Caruso

Pat was born creative, a skill he has expertly applied in product creation and life cycle management across his career working with brands including Harris Scarfe, Vili's Family Bakery, Hyundai and BHP.

Pat's family background is of an Eastern Arrernte person whose connection to country and community was disrupted by his mother's removal in Alice Springs in the mid-1950s. Despite this event, he strongly identifies as both a person of Eastern Arrernte background and the Sultan family.

Pat has spent 20 years reconnecting to his roots, taking his children, communities, and clients on a profound journey of knowledge sharing and reflection, and encouraging us all to embrace all facets of our unique identities.

Through We Create Print Deliver, an advertising and business agency he founded in 2015, Pat is building a legacy that honours his cross-cultural identity. As Founder and Director of We Create Print Deliver, Pat is in his element. Passionately working with a multitude of industries daily; Defence, Retail, Not-for-Profit, Food and Beverage.

Pat's diverse experience in the industry generates business opportunity for We Create's clientele. In addition to working in We Create, Pat is a Board member of Operation Flinders Foundation.

He is also a sought after First Nations artist creating individual pieces with painted medium and digitally.

Kurna Kokatha and Narungga Artist Steven Warrior

As an Aboriginal man, it is important for me to know and acknowledge who I am and where I come from. I am a proud Kurna/Narungga/ Kokatha man. I grew up on Narungga Country, the Yorke Peninsula of South Australia.

After completing high school, I moved to Adelaide and worked as an Aboriginal Community Education Officer for over eight years. Many of the families I worked with experienced intergenerational trauma from the past mistreatments of our people, and it was very rewarding to see their resilience shine through to achieve success.

When I was presented the opportunity to take up a role as an Indigenous Liaison Officer for the Air Force, I said yes! I was inspired by strong role models in my family and community. My great-grandfather volunteered and served in WW1, my great grandfather was a champion footballer who won five medals whilst working on railways in the mid-north and my great nanna who raised 12 children. My elders achieved great things at a time when our people did not have the most basic human rights. I strive always to follow their example. I am now a Royal Australian Air Force Flight Lieutenant, former Indigenous Liaison Officer (ILO) for RAAF Base Edinburgh and broader South Australia. I was the first full-time commissioned officer to be appointed to the role.