ACRA 2026-2028

The Aboriginal Communities and Families Health Research Alliance (ACRA)

OUR VISION

To lead culturally safe, trustworthy and respectful research to empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families to flourish.

WHO WE ARE

A team within SAHMRI Women and Kids, and an Alliance of more than 50 members spanning Aboriginal community organisations and individuals, services, policy leaders, researchers, non-government and government.

OUR WAYS OF WORKING

- Holistic and strength-based.
- Listening to community voices through yarning.
- Honour cultural authority, community protocols and cultural diversity.
- Genuine and trusting relationships.
- Maintain accountability to community, stakeholders, funders and ourselves.
- Acknowledge Aboriginal concepts of time and space
- Place-based research may yield quality outcomes over quantity outputs.
- Focus on Wellbeing of community



OUR PURPOSE

To bring together Aboriginal communities, researchers, service providers and policy leaders to respectfully co-design research that improves outcomes for Aboriginal children, young people and families.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Research Excellence
- Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing
- Principle based*, ethical research, data sovereignty.

Aboriginal Community Driven Research
- Accountable and adaptable to community priorities and needs.

Building Aboriginal Research Capacity
- Building research capacity and capability in the ACRA team, Alliance members and wider community.

Influencing Policy and Systems Change
- Advocacy and changes to improve wellbeing.

* SA Aboriginal Health Research Accord & NHMRC guidelines

OUR IMPACT

SA domestic, family and sexual violence royal commission report: Recommendation 49 named the Corka Bubs Study wraparound model of care be piloted regionally, (Capital Royal Commission Report, policy brief 1, 2025, p306)

The same report, p145 discussed findings and methods from the Aboriginal Families Study policy brief 10, 2025, in the development of practice guidance for a SA Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

Research engagement with Aboriginal communities across South Australia. Participant numbers vary across our studies from 30 – 344.

Commissioned report underpinned the current SA Health implementation of the Aboriginal maternal and child health continuity of care protocols (2023)

OUR PRIORITY POPULATIONS

Infants, children, young people, and parents, families and caregivers (before, during and after pregnancy) and health and social services.



THE DIFFERENCE OUR PROJECTS ARE MAKING FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Generate self determined empowering care models, family support, reduce distress and stress for mums and bubs.

Develop a Social and Emotional Wellbeing tool for children and young people. Improved inter-generational understandings.

Empower mothers, fathers, families, young people and support people, to improve social and emotional wellbeing.

Improve self and system management of Gestational Diabetes among mums.

Increase understanding of lateral violence and lateral empowerment with young people and co-creating interventions and tools.

ACRA
Aboriginal Communities and Families Health Research Alliance

Who are the Alliance?

sahmri.au/ACRA

Communities and community organisations:

Aboriginal Health Council South Australia, KWY Aboriginal Corporation, Nunga Mi:Minar, Nunkuwarrin Yunti Health Service, Tauondi Aboriginal Community College, Aboriginal Family Support Services, Grannies Group, Pangula Mannamurna Aboriginal Corporation, Port Lincoln Aboriginal Health Service, The Hangout Club Ac.care (Murray Bridge), Moorundi Aboriginal Health Service, Yadu Aboriginal Health Service, Ceduna Youth Hub, Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation, Mintbush Gallery (Ceduna), Hackham West Community Centre, Tiraapendi Wodli, Kaurna Plains Child and Family Centre, Neporendi Aboriginal Community Centre

Service providers:

Drug and Alcohol Services SA, Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council, Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement, Women's and Children's Health Network, Northern Adelaide Local Health Network

Policy and planners:

Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, SA Health, regional LHN Aboriginal Directors, Dept Human Services, Dept Education, Aboriginal Health Council of SA, Depts of Social Services, Housing, Treasury & Finance, Aboriginal Affairs, Child Protection, Attorney General, Secretariat National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care, Office of Early Years, Australian Indigenous Psychologists Association, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Researchers:

SAHMRI, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Adelaide University, Melbourne University, Flinders University, Ngangk Yira Murdoch University WA, La Trobe University, Molly Wardaguga Institute, Charles Darwin University

PROJECTS

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. Metropolitan Adelaide over 120 participants.
AFS Wave 3 - The Aboriginal Families Study (Wave 3) grounded in Aboriginal knowledge and culture (epidemiological cohort study): Exploring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's and their mother/carer's social and emotional wellbeing Metro, rural and regional, over 320 participants.
Care and Connect - 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 over 100 participants metropolitan and regional.
Best4Gest - Optimising culturally safe and self-determined management of gestational diabetes mellitus among Aboriginal women in South Australia: A feasibility and acceptability study, small exploratory group metro and regional.

Other research partnerships

1. Building Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorder App
2. Preventing pre term birth
3. Improving health literacy in community and health services
4. Preventing Cerebral Palsy
5. Challenging and training to prevent racism
6. Mother's milk and milk bank