

# Corka bubs, deadly mums, and strong families

## Connecting pregnant women with support for stress, yarndi or alcohol

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### Background

This study is a 2 year pilot study funded by National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) MRFF. It is led by Aboriginal researchers, will use a strength-based partnership approach with maternal, child and health services, drugs and alcohol services, legal services, counselling services as well as with Aboriginal families and communities. An antenatal care package for Aboriginal pregnant mothers and their support persons/partner was co-developed in Adelaide. The care package includes access to the *Grog Survey App* with additional questions included on cannabis use. The care package also includes access to additional service support in the form of an *Aboriginal Advocacy Worker* skilled with working with people using drugs and/or alcohol, a *Family Legal Representative* and a *General Wellbeing Counsellor/Psychologist*. These workers will be co-located in two Aboriginal specific antenatal clinics in two metropolitan hospitals in Adelaide where we will explore the feasibility and acceptability of the care package.

### Method

The research project utilises a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to tailor the strategies to local organisational contexts and capabilities to ensure that all the activities, stages and milestones are met.

Through a combination of quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative (interviews) data collection, the following data will be obtained through the study;

- Basic demographic questions
- Patterns of alcohol use and context
- Patterns of cannabis use and context
- Reasons for accessing and potential outcomes and benefits for all services in the Corka Bubs care package
- Number of services accessed and referral options
- All aspects of data will be used to inform feasibility and acceptability

The quantitative material is put into RedCap and analysed using appropriate statistical methods.

The qualitative material will be analysed by the researchers using a thematic analysis. The thematic findings will then be sent to mothers and their support person/partners for any final feedback.

### Conclusion and Discussion

The care package for Aboriginal pregnant mothers and their support persons/partner incorporates a wholistic approach to address many concerns for the family. Thus far our preliminary findings indicate the empowering of pregnant women and their support person/partners, by helping to alleviate various stressors, and act as a referral source to further services and other interventions for cannabis, alcohol, and stress.

The care package will provide feasibility pilot data to encourage co-location of services in the antenatal care setting. We are already seeing the benefits of this study and it has helped inform the success of a major 5 year NHMRC grant which started in 2023 and will incorporate a broader care package in one of its stages.

### Results

We are currently in the study phase of the project in which we are continuing to recruit participants for the study at both hospitals. Preliminary narrative findings from many conversations with participants and services indicate positive outcomes. For example what some of the participants have said is:

*Q: During this pregnancy, have you had anyone to talk to or yarn with about things happening in your life? A: "I do now, since joining Corka Bubs" – Participant, pregnant women*

*"Its so much easier seeing DASSA here (Aboriginal antenatal clinic) instead of in outpatients" – Participant, Pregnant women*

*"I want to see a counsellor to help me with ways to support my daughter during her 1<sup>st</sup> pregnancy" – Participant, Support person*

*"It has been a pleasure to work with a team that planned a perfect environment to welcome clients into, where they could be seen in a safe space, where no effort was spared in facilitating services for these women and their families. To provide this service whilst carrying out research is an outstanding benefit to these women and I am very proud to have been a part of this research project" – Service provider*

*"Meeting the women and their support people, hearing their stories, reminding them of their strength and knowledge, celebrating the wins and building resilience is what it is all about. The best part of the program is working as part of a team where we are all committed to working holistically in supporting women during one of the most vulnerable times of their lives" – Service provider*

*"Corka Bubs is a great project, it would be great if we had these services available permanently for families" – AFBP staff*

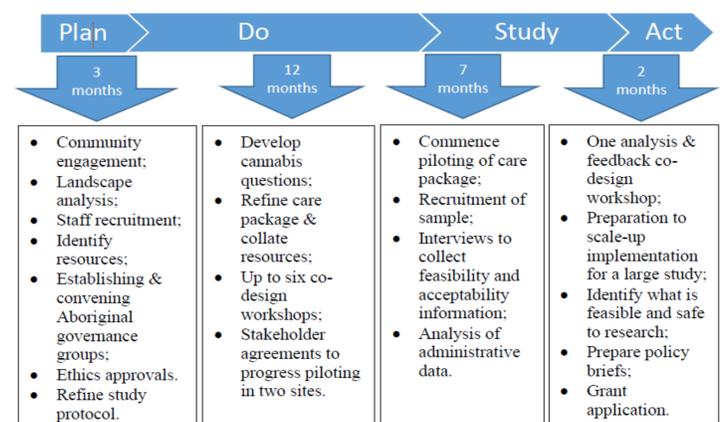


Figure 1: Plan-Do-Study-Act

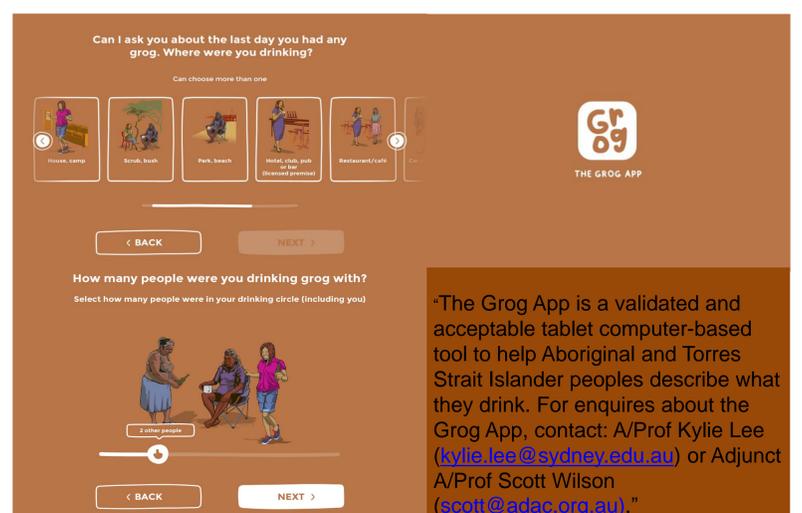


Figure 2: Some example screens from *The Grog App*

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Health Research Alliance