



Flinders
University

Rural & Remote
Health



2025 Activity Report

Professor Jaquelyne T Hughes, Ms Diana Mosca, Associate Professor
Karla Canuto, Ms Vanya Webster, Ms Deidree Whap, Ms Catherine Scotney.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country and People

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Country, Culture, the people and Elders who support this work. We acknowledge Larrakia Country and Traditional owners as the place of our physical work, and the Country and Elders of places featured in this report: ZENADH nation, Kaurareg, Mabuyag, Moa and Badu Islands, Kurna, Gimuy Walubara Yidinji, Yirrganydji.

Our sincere thanks to every person who attended a meeting or talked with us about this work. This report is dedicated to you and those who shared their time and knowledge with the research teams.

Photo Acknowledgement

All photographs have been used with permission from the photographers and subjects or are available publicly.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised this document may contain the names and/or images of deceased persons.

Artist Acknowledgement

The artwork featured in the design of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program is named 'WAYS- Ways of Healing Healed Healthful Advancing Peoples'. It is a digitised form of the original weaving artwork, licensed to the Program by the artist (Jaquelyne Hughes). WAYS draws on Jaquelyne's Torres Strait culture and blood lineage, and her practice (ways), which holds respect for Cultural Protocols, and other methodologies applied to assist health advancement.

Funding

The development and printing of this knowledge dissemination resource was funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council Grant titled: "Yes We Will" GNT1174758.

Suggested citation:

Hughes, Jaquelyne Tataka; Mosca, Diana; Canuto, Karla; Webster, Vanya; Whap, Deidree; Scotney, Catherine (2026) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Clinical Research Program, 2025 Annual Report. Flinders University. <https://doi.org/10.25957/nhpn-9429>

Print ISBN: 978-1-923178-39-7

e ISBN: 978-1-923178-38-0

Key words

Knowledge sharing, community development, kidney health, workforce, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement

Contents

Acknowledgements

- 02. Suggested citation
- 02. Key words

04. An Executive Summary

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Clinical Research Program

- 05. Torres Strait Health Research Symposium with Flinders University, Waiben

Nested projects: a brief profile

- 07. Yes We Will
- 08. Kikirriu Dan Walmai project
- 09. ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council
- 10. eGFR3 Kidney Health Study
- 12. National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce

Knowledge Shared in-person

- 14. Event Highlights: Torres Strait
- 15. Torres Strait Health Research Symposium with Flinders University, Waiben
- 16. Symposium Focus
- 18. Torres Strait Research Symposium Workshop

Event Highlights

- 19. Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference
- 20. 2025 Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival
- 22. Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Congress

24. Publications

Contact Us

Executive Summary

This is the inaugural report of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Clinical Research Program, Rural and Remote Health, Flinders University NT.

The report is for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal people, communities and leaders who partnered and supported the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program during 2022–2025. The report is also for the program's supporters and everyone who celebrates the development priorities of thriving communities of remote and isolated Australia.

The report shares a 2025 snapshot of the program's active research-related projects and shows how knowledge-sharing within events spanned local, regional, national and global audiences using in-person, virtual and research-archived Journal publications. The program promotes positive value from research to assist community-action, discovery (knowing) and better health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Thank you to our partners, to Elders and leaders of the Torres Strait, who sought to visualise the Kikirriu Dan Walmal Project and have their intellectual contributions contextualised in the broader work of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program, and who encouraged this report so it is also useful to others.

“While it’s not possible to re-produce dynamic in-person events in a written report, we are privileged to share some of the activity with readers.”



Photo credit:
Lewis James Media

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Clinical Research Program

“Health life and living are rich, dynamic and flexible journeys, developing from movement, change and momentum”.

- JT Hughes, personal communication, 2026

Advancing in any context can be uplifted by circumstance, achieved with simple, complex or layered approaches, and promoted by tenacious determination. The value of advancing is relative to who holds perspective, who is calling for positive momentum, and how requests for advancement are supported.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Research Program was established in 2022 with a collaboration partnership between Professor Jaqui Hughes and Flinders University, and with contributing funding from the National Health and Medical Research Council grant (GNT 1174758), titled: “Yes We Will: Implementing Indigenous-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kidney health in Northern and Central Australia (2020-2025)” and a Matthew Flinders Professorial Fellowship. The program acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ culture as integral to life, health

and wellbeing, and respects the community’s expectation that the research be useful to promote development. The program’s activity has responded to needs identified by people of remote and isolated settings.

Based in Larrakia Country, Northern Territory, the program has relationships extending through the central corridor of Australia to Kurna Country, outwards to ZENADH and Western Australia, and internationally. It values its belonging-space within a collaborative network with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who hold roles as leaders and members of their community, and participate in other roles including as health-clinical leaders, researchers and service providers.

Information about the program is hosted here:

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/fhmri/research/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-advancement>

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program gratefully acknowledges funding from:

- National Health and Medical Research Council
 - Emerging Leadership 2 Fellowship, GNT1174758: "Yes We Will - Implementing Indigenous-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kidney health in Northern and Central Australia" (2020-2025)
 - Clinical Trial and Cohort Scheme, GNT1184083 Progression of chronic kidney disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults: the eGFR3 Cohort Study
- Matthew Flinders Professorial Fellowship, Flinders University
- Flinders University Research Investment Fund Salary Support Fellowship
- Flinders University Large Scale Transdisciplinary and Partnership Seed Grant

The program secured a further award from the National Health and Medical Research Council Leadership 2 Fellowship (GNT2041798, 2026-2030), titled: "And We Are- Determined as Indigenous Leaders to advance First Nation Kidney Health."

Nested Projects: A Brief Profile

During 2022-2025, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program held a leadership role in delivering the following projects, which are briefly described below:

- Yes We Will
- Kikirrii Dan Walmai Project (KDW Project)
- ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council (ZHSREC)
- eGFR3 Kidney Health Study (eGFR3 Study)
- National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce (NIKTT)

Yes We Will

“Yes We Will - Implementing Indigenous-led Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kidney health in Northern and Central Australia” was a NHMRC funded grant awarded to Professor Hughes.

The grant assisted the establishment of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program at Flinders University, and contributed funding to the project-related activities described in this report and other research supporting activity, including training and developing capability among the project staff and collaborators of the program.

A 2023 flyer describing “Yes We Will” was specifically developed to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program to participate with other First Nation researchers and health leaders for the Lowitja Institute 3rd International Health and Wellbeing Conference.

“Yes We Will” provided assistance to growing an intellectual collaboration with field-leaders regionally and internationally during 2023–2025, the integration of Indigenous intellectual scholarship within health-sciences through contributions to national committees and peak professional bodies, and supporting participation at research meetings, to support others to learn about our work.

Flyer found here:

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/fhmri/research/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-advancement>



Kikirriu Dan Walmai Project

The KDW Project is a partnership comprising an Elder-led community development initiative complemented by a research approach to expanding affiliated supports within the near western island cluster region of the Torres Strait.

Professor Hughes is a Torres Strait Islander woman of Panay and Wagadagam of Lag Mabuyag, Kuike of Medicine, specialist physician (nephrologist), and the research leader of KDW Project. Flinders University's Professor Hughes and Associate Professor Karla Canuto were the research leads of KDW Project in 2025.

KDW Project in 2025

- Developed conference-ready presentations of KDW Project research and worked with Elders and Leaders of KDW Project from Mabuyag, Badu and Moa Islands to ensure two-way understanding of the meaning of data, before these were presented in external audiences.
- Two grants submitted in 2024 to the National Health and Medical Research Council, in the category of NHMRC Leadership Awards, were awarded in 2025, with funding commencing 2026.
- Awarded \$50,000 funding from Flinders University Large Scale Transdisciplinary and Partnership Grant scheme in 2025, enabling the delivery of the "Torres Strait Health Research Symposium - with Flinders University" in Waiben, and a workshop, to develop a research-enabled health advancement plan, which informed a NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence Grant submitted in late 2025.

- Worked with leaders from Community and the research team to develop a community-accessible video report (expected for release in 2026), highlighting information learned through the research describing the Torres Strait Islander people recorded in the ANZDATA Registry.
- Acknowledged Wakaid Tribal Council Elders and supporters who led the Badu Island consultative design phase for their local haemodialysis unit, a land blessing for the proposed facility-location, and acknowledged Buway impacted by kidney failure. Wakaid Tribal Council Elder and Elder of KDW Project was interviewed by ABC News Breakfast, stating the importance of the Badu Island dialysis unit which...

**"...will save lives in
community, ...will create
jobs, and our people to
look after our people"¹**

- Championed community members' participation in National Conferences to present Torres Strait Islander health research, to share knowledge with other community-aligned health programs and deepen professional networks.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1114702674066402> (Elder Robert Sagigi, ABC News Breakfast, Waiben (Torres Strait). Published on 15 September 2025)

Information about KDW Project activity in 2023-2024 is found here: <https://www.flinders.edu.au/fhmri/research/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-advancement>

Information about awards to Professor Hughes and Associate Professor Canuto are found here: <https://www.flinders.edu.au/fhmri/research/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-advancement>



ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council

ZENADH is an acronym of three Torres Strait Islander language words, conceptualised and created in the 1980s by Patrick Whap, a linguist by formal training and fluent language master of Kala Lagaw Ya.

He held title as Koeymabayg of Wagadagam, and Kuike Mabayg of Whap family of Mabuyag Island, and passed away in 2025. Shared here for ease for English-language users, the term “ZENADH” identifies the centrality of Torres Strait people and islands between the great land mass to the south and north, and the First peoples of those three lands. In this report, we use ZENADH in reference to the original conceptualisation and citation of source of Torres Strait Islander knowledge¹.

The ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council (ZHSREC) is an Elder-led initiative, modelled on the principle to a former entity, the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area

Health Council, which operated during the 1990’s to mid-2010’s. The contemporary importance of Torres Strait Islander peoples’ intellectual sovereignty, as ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council, was published in the Medical Journal of Australia in 2024².

The ZHSREC has gained research funding for 2026 activity through the NHMRC Grant

“And We Are- Determined as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leaders to advance First Nation Kidney Health.”

Activity of the ZENADH included developing its regional, national and international recognition, and contributed as core partner in a NHMRC Centre of Research Excellence submission in late 2025.

¹ <https://soundcloud.com/tsima4mw/the-explanation-of-the-word-zenadh>

² <https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2024/221/1/securing-surviving-futures-zenadh-health-science-research-and-education-council>



Photo credit: Diana Mosca

eGFR3 Kidney Health Study

The eGFR3 Kidney Health Study (eGFR3 Study) is learning about the long-term kidney health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults who live in NT, WA and Qld.

The kidney health research assessment of the first eGFR Study, occurred during 2007–2011, led by Menzies School of Health Research at that time. Some of the participants agreed to be re-contacted by the research team.

In 2024–2025, eGFR3 Study invited those same people to participate again, to seek their agreement (consent) to reassess their current kidney health, collect, and collate demographic and socio-economic information, and to link health information from medical record data sets, to tell a fuller story of long-term kidney health.

Local communities and health services who were part of the first eGFR Study have partnered in eGFR3 Study, which is led with a Tri-governance approach to decision making and supporting the study progress. eGFR3 Study is a multi-partnered study funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council (2020–2027) and delivered from Flinders University since 2022.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program acknowledges that the eGFR baseline and eGFR2 studies were initiated, conducted and supported by the Menzies School of Health Research under the leadership of Professor Louise Maple-Brown. We acknowledge that the eGFR3 Study, under the leadership of Professor Jaqui Hughes, was initiated at Menzies School of Health Research and continues at Flinders University.



We acknowledge that the eGFR baseline and eGFR2 studies were initiated at, conducted and supported by the Menzies School of Health Research under the leadership of Professor Louise Maple-Brown. We acknowledge that this eGFR3 Study, under the leadership of Professor Jaqui Hughes, was initiated at Menzies School of Health Research and continues at Flinders University.

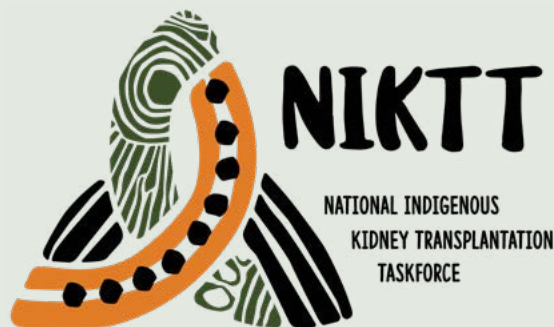
eGFR3 Study in 2025

- The in-person participant assessment phase of the eGFR3 Study was planned for 2025 across the Northern Territory, Queensland and Western Australia. We worked with Community Leaders and health service partners to confirm the preferred times for this work and were supported by eGFR3 Study Community-Based Researchers. Community engagement activities, such as training Community-Based Researchers occurred around the community visits.
- In March, the eGFR3 Study Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Governance Group hosted its 6th annual workshop. Workshops were delivered in Broome, WA, in 2025, and previously delivered in Mparntwe, Waiben and Garamilla.
- In June, the eGFR3 Study delivered a poster presentation at Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference about the impact of training Community-Based Researchers in response to community wishes.
- In July, the eGFR3 Study supported the NAIDOC Family Fun Day in Darwin, as well as other events throughout the year, making information about the study available to community. More information about this on page 19.
- In August, the eGFR3 Study celebrated the publication of a research paper (spanning work from 2007–present) by an international journal. The research explained how a blood test at the baseline health-assessment, which detected inflammation and cardiac-muscle damage, was predictive of annual decline in kidney function among some participants¹.
- Community development advocacy included writing to leaders in governments and peak organisations in support of feedback from eGFR3 Study workshops and community events – the need for clear community messaging in community-understood languages about how to prevent progressive kidney disease. Responses to letters sent in January 2025 included National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation thanking the eGFR3 Study Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Governance Group for their leadership and advocacy, and committing to advocate for this need as part of their funding submission to the Federal Budget.
- In August, the eGFR3 Study contributed to the NHMRC public call for research priorities in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. Our submission requested NHMRC prioritise funding for kidney health support and targeted health interventions for communities living with highly progressive chronic kidney disease.
- In September, the eGFR3 Study delivered four research presentations at the 60th Anniversary Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Congress (Perth). More information about this on page 22.

Information about the eGFR3 Study is shared directly with partners of the study and regularly updated on the project website, which is found here: <https://www.flinders.edu.au/fhmri/research/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-advancement>

¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/20543581251363126>

National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce



NIKTT was established in 2019 and is based at the South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (Adelaide).

With Federal Government grants, NIKTT has aimed to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' access to kidney transplantation, which is a supportive treatment for people who have kidney failure. NIKTT has worked to achieve these aims by supporting Australia's health system so that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients and families can navigate the process of transplant assessments, be waitlisted for a donated kidney, and be fit for transplant surgery, which can be an extensive operation of many hours. NIKTT works closely with the Transplant Society of Australia and New Zealand and the Australia and New Zealand Dialysis and Transplant Registry.

In late 2024, the Federal Government acknowledged NIKTT's work within the National Strategy for Organ Donation, Retrieval and Transplantation specifically for "Priority Area 2: Equitable access for Australians who would benefit from organ transplantation with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and those living in rural, regional and remote areas"¹.

NIKTT in 2025

- NIKTT hosted the Gathering event in Tarndanya, where the NIKTT Position Statement (developed in 2023) was reviewed and again endorsed.
- The NIKTT Gathering event was delivered over two and a half days, scheduling the first day for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the next day and a half supported a diverse group of leaders and interest holders.
- NIKTT contributed to the Australian Law Reform Commission consultation reviewing Australia's human tissue laws².
- During 2025 NIKTT was invited to work closely with the Department of Health to prepare a fully costed 2026 Federal Budget submission that would support NIKTT to continue to deliver impact aligned to the National Strategy for Organ Donation, Retrieval and Transplantation. The Department of Health committed to release a communique after its meetings with NIKTT.

Information about the National Indigenous Kidney Transplantation Taskforce (NIKTT) is hosted on their webpage here: www.niktt.com.au

More about the 2025 NIKTT Gathering can be found here: <https://www.niktt.com.au/gathering2025>

¹ <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-strategy-for-organ-donation-retrieval-and-transplantation?language=en>

² <https://www.alrc.gov.au/inquiry/review-of-human-tissue-laws/>

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40621681/> and also discussed the work in a podcast interview here: <https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/healthreport/kidney-transplant-indigenous-gap/105520444>

- In July 2025, the Medical Journal of Australia published “Am I on the list? Clinician reported factors for kidney transplantation non waitlisting among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with kidney failure: a cross sectional study”³.
- In August 2025, NIKTT delivered a community-connected presentation in Waiben to share progress on NIKTT and invite advice about a more dynamic way to examine data, in a data dashboard, about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being counted as receiving dialysis and kidney transplant.
- In September, NIKTT participated in the Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Congress (Perth), as an important way to stay connected with patients, families, clinicians and researchers and report about our work.



Knowledge Shared In-Person

In-person knowledge sharing is a core learning method for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the network of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program.

It is relational practice and invites participation of all. It can be different from uni-directional knowledge environments which reference a status knower and others who are learner/listener. The Program proudly shares the prominent knowledge-sharing events we participated in during 2025:

Torres Strait

- Island visits knowledge sharing – Kikirrii Dan Walmal project, Waiben and Mabuyag
- Torres Strait Health Research Symposium with Flinders University, Waiben
- 2025 Winds of Zenadh Cultural Festival, Waiben

International Conferences hosted within Australia

- Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference, Adelaide
- Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology – Congress, Perth

Event Highlights: Torres Strait

Learning with each other holds deep cultural principle and method and promotes learning outcomes. Learning together was the Community-preferred method incorporated in the three 2025 events in the Torres Strait. In respect of ZENADH cultural and intellectual property rights, we acknowledge the deep theory of cultural protocol

governing learning practices, which is held and governed by ZENADH Elders. In accordance with cultural protocol, this report will serve as a record of highlighted activity.

Mabuyag Island

Mabuyag Island is a partner of Kikirrii Dan Walmal Project. Mabuyag Elders and Leaders hosted KDW Project team members, Associate Professor Karla Canuto, Professor Jaqui Hughes and Ms Deidree Whap, who travelled by light aircraft from Horn Island airport. The event was supported by local vendors including accommodation facilitated by the Torres Strait Island Regional Council. The meeting observed cultural protocols. While everyone could bring updates, specific knowledge sharing included delivery of print copies of the 2023¹ and 2024² Kikirrii Dan Walmal Project Reports, showing large wall images of posters delivered at 2024 Conferences and the Badu island meeting in October 2024. We reviewed and discussed the current stage of preliminary research intended for presentation at the Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference, and Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Congress.



Photo: KDW team at Mabuyag
Photo credit: Jaqui Hughes

¹ and ² <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-strategy-for-organ-donation-retrieval-and-transplantation?language=en>

2025 Torres Strait Health Research Symposium

with Flinders University




Looking, Sharing, Learning, Hearing, and Advocating for Advancement




Featuring
 Prof Jaquelyne Hughes (Wagadagam and Panay) and A/Prof Karla Canuto (Kulkalgal) who will present on their Flinders University health and clinical research work aimed at restoring health and survival in the Torres Strait.
 Facilitated by Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM (Sipingurr and Kaurareg)

Date: Tuesday 12th of August, 2025
Venue: Port Kennedy Hall, 64-66 Douglas Street, Thursday Island
RSVP: kdw_rh@flinders.edu.au

Come along if you are interested in health improvement, science and research in the area, or are keen to learn more.

Professor Jaquelyne Hughes A/Professor Karla Canuto Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM



Rural & Remote Health








Photo: Norma Whap receives thesis for Mabuyag Community.
Photo credit: Lewis James Media

KDW Project hand delivered a hard-bound copy of Judith Fitzpatrick-Nietschmann's thesis to Mabuyag Elders at the Symposium Event in Waiben. Members of Mabuyag community supported and led with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program at all events in Torres Strait and contributed to research sharing and discussions in two international conferences where Torres Strait Islander research and health-data were presented.

Torres Strait Islander peoples, including leaders of the KDW Project, requested that knowledge developed from KDW Project be shared more broadly with other Torres Strait Islander peoples to enable knowledge to be beneficial to more people in the Torres Strait. That request enabled the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program to support two more events in the Torres Strait during 2025.

Torres Strait Health Research Symposium with Flinders University, Waiben

Hosted at Port Kennedy Hall, the Symposium intended to facilitate knowledge to be accessible to Elders, Leaders and Community members of the Torres Strait, including those Elders interested in the community-action led from Maluilgau. Cultural protocol was respected. Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM facilitated the event. The event observed Welcome to Kaurareg Country, a commencing (and concluding) prayer and reading of Magau Ngalpun Lagangu (poem) in Kala Lagaw Ya and English. The Symposium program is a record of knowledge shared during the day.

2025 Torres Strait Health Research Symposium

with Flinders University

Looking, Sharing, Learning, Hearing and Advocating for Advancement
 Tuesday the 12th of August, 2025, Port Kennedy Hall

Time	Session	Speaker
7:45	Registration and Tea/coffee opens	Manuel Crossfield and Elsie Seriat
8:30	Opening Prayer and Welcome to Country	Elsie Seriat
8:40	Setting the scene: Introduction to the Symposium	Pedro Stephen AM
9:00	Reflecting on the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Health Council	Jaqui Hughes
9:15	Introduction to Zenadh Health Science Research and Education Council	Nalzel Enosa
9:30	Badu Plan: Care on Island for More People	Norma Whap
Morning Tea		
10:30	Invitation to discuss morning activity	Elsie Seriat
11:00	A presentation of Aunty Judy's Thesis and an introduction to the Scoping Review	Karla Canuto
11:10	Remote Community based kidney health	Jaqui Hughes
11:30	Remote Community based kidney health	Katie Cundale and Jaqui Hughes
12:00	ANZDATA incidence calculation for Torres Strait Islander people with kidney failure	Diana Mosca and Jaqui Hughes
Lunch		
12:30	Learning about long term kidney health: A research project called the eGFR3 Study	Katie Cundale
2:15	NIKIT: Caring for people who have transplantation	Elsie Seriat
Afternoon Tea		
2:30	What is next?	Elsie Seriat
3:00	Panel discussion: Collective reflections	
3:30		
4:00	Close	



Rural and Remote Health NT



Image: Symposium Program

Most presentations were delivered from a speaker at the front of the venue, other knowledge was pre-recorded and shared on the large film projection screen, and a section of the hall showcased a wide range of locally-led and research partner-collaborations. Small group encounters at break-times and “What’s important” highlights were also invited. On the 2nd day, an invitation-only workshop for leaders of Kikirriu Dan Walmai project provided an opportunity to discuss and prioritise a Centre of Research Excellence Grant, which was further developed and submitted in late 2025. Funding from a 2025 Flinders University Transdisciplinary Grant enabled the convening of the Symposium and Workshop.

Symposium Focus: Culture Practiced in Medicine

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) is a professional organisation responsible for training and educating physicians in Australia and New Zealand. The Arthur E Mills Oration promotes and encourages medical education and general culture and dissemination of knowledge.

<https://www.racp.edu.au/foundation>

In June 2025, Professor Hughes accepted the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) Arthur E Mills Memorial Medal at the RACP Convocation Ceremony in Sydney Town Hall. In accepting the Medal, Professor Hughes delivered an Oration called ‘Culture Practiced in Medicine’, and shared the importance of culture, history, inter-cultural connection in the health of First Nations people, and the importance of continued innovation of health practice, since founding member of RACP, Professor Arthur E Mills, pioneered modern

medical education at the University of Sydney Medical School in 1890. Testament to her influential contribution as a medical leader in education and culture, Professor Jaqui Hughes advocated directly to the leaders in medical education for the enduring cultural and sovereign right for health among First Nation people.

Professor Hughes showed a video recording of the Oration in the Torres Strait Health Research Symposium, and a discussion among Elders and others focussed on the responsibility to educate others, to help them provide the best clinical-cultural care to patients. The forum agreed wholeheartedly that Professor Hughes work with the RACP to support the information to be available as a teaching resource of ZENADH Culture Practiced in Medicine.

Symposium Focus: Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Health Council & the ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council

Torres Strait Islander autonomy and governance was promoted in two symposium presentations. An opening pre-recorded message from Elder Napau Pedro Stephens AM, who Chaired the Health Council which operated until the mid-2010’s, reminded listeners of the Eldership through family-leaders contributing to decision making in all levels of government operating in the Torres Strait. The symposium next heard about the ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council led jointly by co-chairs, Professor Jaqui Hughes and Adjunct Professor Phillip Mills FRACP(Hons) OAM, which gained further Community leader support in that forum. Following the Symposium, more of the Torres Strait community heard about the ZHSREC during the Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival Community Day hosted in ANZAC Park, giving opportunity for a wider community discussion.



Photo: Forum attendees at end of Symposium.

From back left: Naizel Enosa, Selina Signal, Elia Faa, Katie Cundale, Marita Sagigi, Sam Mills, Damian Arndt, Karla Canuto. *From Left Middle:* Jennifer Mairu, Manuel Crossfield, Counsellor John Levi, John Repu, Annie Seriat, Thowa Whap, Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM, Norma Whap, Jaqui Hughes. *From left front:* Deidree Whap, May Seriat, Jennifer Wymara, Tasi McDonald, Diana Mosca

Photo credit: Lewis James Media

Attendees at Research Symposium and/or Workshop (12–13th August 2025)

Chenoa Wapau	Caitlyn Miller	Selina Signal
Sylvia Tabua	Ineke Wever	John Repu
Mary Bani	Naizel Enosa	John Bob
Anna Bon	Manuel G Crossfield	Ben Bowcock
Bertha Natanielu	Deidree Whap	Sam Mills
Jennifer Wymara	Elia Faa	Jennifer Mairu
Regina Turner	Elsie Seriat	Maletta Seriat
Hylida PoiPoi	May Seriat	Robert Bongo Sagigi
Jen Enosa	Annie Seriat	Betty Sagigi
Ella Stangerlin	Marita Sagigi	Tom Jack Baira
Jordana Kris	Damian Arndt	Dane Gagai
Abigal Harry	Ella Kris	Jaqui Hughes
Maryanne Cook	John Levi	Karla Canuto
Tasi McDonald	Thowa Whap	Diana Mosca
Kathyn Boon	Norma Whap	Katie Cundale

Torres Strait Research Symposium Workshop

The workshop hosted leaders from Kikirriu Dan Walmai project. Invitees were the community champions who culturally governed the knowledge which was developed from the KDW Project's Near-West Island Cluster collaboration. The workshop was an opportunity to reflect on previous workshops in 2023–2024 with the inaugural Symposium event, and towards Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival and shared within 2025 international conferences.

The workshop reflected on the achievements of the Symposium to express Torres Strait Islander intellectual sovereignty, and on continuing to develop health advancement strategies focussed on capability in community-accessible health-knowledge, locally-led leadership and governance, and funding and infrastructure support.

Kikir (sickness) such as kidney failure is known for its complex English-language medical terminology. The workshop confirmed the need to develop this into Torres Strait Islander accessible languages, and shared and taught through investing in communication methods preferred and successful in Torres Strait.

'Sometimes people have to step outside their boundaries to make things happen'.

***[now]* 'the only opportunity for health education is during clinic sessions when you are already unwell'**

Agreed Priorities and Solutions

- To keep working together, respectfully, courageously and strategically, and produce collective benefit to the Torres Strait nation.
- Culturally safe healthcare and health-support is important, and requires a fully equipped culturally safe health service workforce and resourcing.
- To implement an efficient kidney health, chronic kidney disease and safe-dialysis strategy that promotes wellbeing and vitality for everyone in the isolated islands of Torres Strait.
- To support the development, and sustainable use, of a nurse-assisted dialysis model of care at Badu, as a hub structured to support a whole of renal care continuum in the region.

Event Highlights

The following pages show event highlights from the following events:

- Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference
- 2025 Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival
- Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Congress

Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference

Karna country, June 2025

“Stand Strong, Be Fearless and Work Together” was the theme of the Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference, which attracted over 1370 delegates from across Australia and around the world, and provided incredible opportunities to share knowledge, learn from each other, and celebrate Indigenous Knowledges applied to Health and Wellbeing.

Flinders University’s Rural and Remote Health supported many researchers and professional staff from Darwin, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and South Australia to attend. A contingent from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program team travelled to Karna Country (Adelaide) to participate in, learn and share knowledge learned through research.

By attending and preparing for the conference together, the Flinders University contingent from all over Australia built awareness of the breadth of research achieved from Flinders University partnerships and relational practice. We celebrated as a group, the confidence and power from many speakers, (either first-time or experienced conference speakers), and enjoyed the opportunity to attend and learn from other discipline areas.



Photo: Community-Based Researchers, Loyla Leysley and Deidree Whap present a poster at the Lowitja Conference
Photo credit: Jaqui Hughes

“It’s important for us to connect with other health services. The services that eGFR3 provide, the training opened my eyes to see how huge it can excel and it’s important that [my workplace team] continues to be a part of it”.

“It was good to see how researchers and communities are working together to make health and wellbeing changes. It was great that we could learn about Indigenous research projects from around the world and in Australia”

Quotes from Community-Based Researchers at Lowitja Conference



2025 Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival

16–19 September, Waiben Thursday Island Kaurareg Country

Hosted by the Torres Shire Council in Waiben, this festival celebrates Island culture during a week of traditional activities including music, dance, art, storytelling and key speaker forums.

Contributing to the Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival was a request that we had been hearing for years from community and community leaders. We were proud to participate over several days and in multiple ways, which created effective knowledge dissemination impact when supporting locally-organised festivals.

Flinders University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program was present throughout the festival at ANZAC Park and Ken Brown Oval. Many informal conversations with community leaders and community members about kidney health research led by Professor Hughes were witnessed at the Flinders marquee. Sharing information about kidney health with community happens in many ways with different people.

Professor Jaqui Hughes and Catherine Scotney talked about the eGFR3 Kidney Health Study, its progress, importance and potential impact for the people of ZENADH in a public presentation at ANZAC park.



Photo: Sasau Mills, Norma Whap, Professor Jaqui Hughes, Deidree Whap
Photo credit: Lewis James Media



Left photo: Professor Jaqui Hughes, eGFR3 Study ATSCGG member and Mayor Elsie Seriat OAM, dignitary Denna Nona, eGFR3 Study CBR Deidree Whap and Catherine Scotney with Alick Tipoti and the Dhamuw Koedal Dancers.

Photo credit: Lewis James Media



Photo: eGFR3 Study Chief Investigators (Professor Jaqui Hughes and Adjunct Professor Phillip Mills OAM) with eGFR3 Study research team members Catherine Scotney and Deidree Whap engaging with community members at the Flinders Booth

Photo credit: Lewis James Media



Photo: Professor Jaqui Hughes & Catherine Scotney conducting the Flinders dialogue presentation

Photo credit: Lewis James Media

Professor Hughes highlighted that research is a tool to learn more about health. Her privilege is to apply her medical knowledge to work with government and policy in strategic and purposeful ways for health restoration. The ZENADH Health Science Research and Education Council can be a place for bringing together wisdom and knowledge holders in a learning environment, with community and cultural control for knowledge development (research) and exchange (education).

The Flinders presence at the festival created community conversations about individual responsibility for health and how information generated by research can inform local health policy. Interviews with 98.7FM and NITV highlighted conversations about kidney health at the festival, and Flinders University was invited to the 40th Anniversary of the Winds of Zenadth Cultural Festival in 2027.



Photo: Associate Professor Shahid Ullah and Professor Jaqui Hughes presenting at ANZSN Congress
Photo credit: Anthea Auld, Still Media

Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Congress 1-3 September 2025, Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Perth WA

The Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology (ANZSN) is an organisation that represents the interests of health professionals committed to the prevention and treatment of kidney disease.

The ANZSN hosted its 60th Anniversary in a Congress event on Noongar Country, Perth, Western Australia, themed “Shaping Aotearoa and Australian Kidney Health: Past, Present and Future.” The Congress featured presentations on new research, emerging technology and clinical strategies.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program was proud to sponsor, from the Yes We Will Grant, a 15-member multi-disciplinary delegation including 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health professionals from regional and remote Australia to participate in this conference – their first ANZSN. All members had made an independently important contribution to

healthcare and or kidney health and community-championing, and all have previously or current work with Professor Jaqui Hughes:

- Jaqui Hughes
- Sian Graham
- Catherine Scotney
- Norma Whap
- Deidree Whap
- Sam Mills
- Naizel Enosa
- Valerie Nancarrow
- Alex Warria
- Julian Conboy
- Craig Castillon
- Selina Signal
- Katie Cundale
- Shahid Ullah
- Diana Mosca

As a prominent delegation, the Program were intentional about creating meaningful networking opportunities with other conference delegates, attending plenary and symposium sessions of the whole Congress and special sessions where members of the delegation were presenting original research abstracts. Networking and learning from peak organisations, such as Kidney Health Australia, the Australian Organ and Tissue Authority, and Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology was also important.

Members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program delivered seven original research abstracts or invited speaker presentations. We sought out knowledge-sharing opportunities that resonated strongly with our interests, particularly remote and isolated Australia. We were warmly supported, included and celebrated by other ANZSN delegates who were deeply interested in our work. We also created meeting spaces to reflect on the sessions, including a dinner event on the first evening, an exhibition hall space and celebrating at the Gala Dinner. We learned about ways to stay connected to news and initiatives afforded through ANZSN membership which promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kidney health.



Photo 1a: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Advancement Program hosted a dinner in Perth at the ANZSN Congress, so delegates could meet, network and discuss interests with other ANZSN Congress delegates, champions of kidney health and friends.

Photo credit: Jaqui Hughes



Photo 1b: Flinders group members discuss transplantation and organ donation with leaders of Organ and Tissue Authority, who sponsored the "Equity and Diversity Symposium".

Photo credit: Jaqui Hughes

Working together at the conference provided confidence to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kidney health.

- "The group demonstrated a strong presence and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in a traditionally non-Indigenous environment".
- 'That moment during her presentation, when Professor Hughes asked her team to stand up made us proud to be seen and heard'.
- "A team dinner provided opportunity to share health and professional journeys with other ANZSN delegates in a safe space with excellent food".

This group book-ended the Congress with a Dinner with other peers and colleagues (Photo 1a and 1b) and reflect on the whole Congress (Photo 2).



Photo 2: Flinders group with international plenary speaker Dr Api Talemaitoga and Professor Carol Pollock, Board Chair- Kidney Health Australia

Photo credit: Jaqui Hughes

Publications

- SP McDonald AM, K Cundale, CE Davies, K K Owen (Kaurna, Nharangga, and Ngarrindjeri), K Dole, F Kholmurodova, M D'Antoine (Paakantyi) and JT Hughes (Wagadagam). [Am I on the list? Clinician-reported factors for kidney transplantation non-waitlisting among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with kidney failure: a cross-sectional study](#). *Med J Aust* 2025; 223 (1): 46–53. || doi: 10.5694/mja2.52698.
- Barr ELM, Barzi F, Mills Kulkagal P, Nickels M, Graham S, Pearson O, Obeyesekere V, Hoy WE, Jones GRD, Lawton PD, Brown ADH, Thomas M, Sinha A, Cass A, MacIsaac RJ, Maple-Brown LJ, Hughes JT. [Cardiometabolic Biomarkers and Prediction of Kidney Disease Progression: The eGFR Cohort Study](#). *Can J Kidney Health Dis*. 2025 Aug 17;12:20543581251363126. doi: 10.1177/20543581251363126. PMID: 40831908; PMCID: PMC12358709.
- Tungsanga S, Okpechi IG, Bianchi MEV, Chaturvedi S, Collister D, Crowshoe H, Rodriguez de Sosa GM, Galadanci HA, Hedin E, Ibrahim KS, Jain AK, Noronha IL, Erickson RL, Hughes JT, Komenda P, Kulvichit W, Pecoits-Filho R, Raphael KL, Shah VO, Tafuna'i M, Tait C, Turner C, Walker C, Walker R, Woods C, Levin A, Bello AK. [Global landscape of kidney health across Indigenous populations](#). *Nat Rev Nephrol*. 2026 Feb;22(2):99–121. doi: 10.1038/s41581-025-01016-2. Epub 2025 Oct 16. Review. PubMed PMID: 41102463.
- Levin A, Jaure A, Little DJ, Schell J, Lees JS, Eckardt KU, Weinfurt K, Rose M, Jardine MJ, Grams ME, Schloemer P, Krishnasamy R, Sinha S, Caskey FJ, Nangaku M, Wheeler DC, Oni L, Hughes JT, Wang B, Cook C, Sunwold D, Jones J, Chong K, Ng T, Donner JA, Damster S, Malik C, Heerspink HJL. [Changing paradigms of studies in kidney diseases](#). *Kidney Int*. 2025 Dec;108(6):1002–1017. doi: 10.1016/j.kint.2025.09.016. Epub 2025 Sep 29. PubMed PMID: 41033457.
- Tungsanga S, Okpechi IG, Chaturvedi S, Bianchi MEV, Hughes J, Crowshoe H, Bello AK. [Inequities in the Care and Outcomes of Indigenous People Living With Kidney Failure](#). *Adv Kidney Dis Health*. 2025 May;32(3):279–289. doi: 10.1053/j.akdh.2024.10.008. Review. PubMed PMID: 40818893.
- Ulasi I, Sumaili EK, Bajpai D, Claire-Del Granado R, Hughes JT. [Regional Perspectives of Inequities in Chronic Kidney Disease: Beyond the Obvious](#). *Adv Kidney Dis Health*. 2025 May;32(3):229–240. doi: 10.1053/j.akdh.2025.05.005. Review. PubMed PMID: 40818888.

International Conferences

Oral Presentations (unless otherwise stated) were delivered at two international conferences hosted within Australia, identified as follows:

- [LI] Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference (16–19 June 2025), Kaurna Country (Adelaide, South Australia)
- [ANZSN] 60th Australian and New Zealand Society of Nephrology Congress (30 Aug – 3 Sep 2025), Whadjuk Noongar Country (Perth, Western Australia)

JT Hughes, K Cundale, C Liddy-Stokes, L Newcombe, G Ah Mat, KJ Canuto. *Kikirrii Dan Walmai: Health Resurrection Projects for Maluilgal (the people of Maluilgau, the near western cluster, Torres Strait)* [LI].

KJ Canuto, K Cundale, L Newcombe, C Liddy-Stokes, G Ah Mat, JT Hughes. *Health Resurrected: A Scoping Review of Health Research Literature in the Torres Strait and Northern Peninsula Area*. Oral Presentation [LI]

C Scotney, V Webster, D Mosca, D Whap, L Leysley, J Lawrence, E Stubbs, A Porteous, JT Hughes. Community Based Researchers Facilitating the advancement of Kidney Health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Adults. [LI] Poster presentation

JT Hughes, S Graham, O Pearson, on behalf of eGFR3 Study Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Governance Group. *Community-guided reporting of kidney failure incidence among Torres Strait Islander people in Australia: 2004–2022*. [ANZSN] Joint winner of the ANZSN Rural Science Award

JT Hughes, S Graham, O Pearson, on behalf of eGFR3 Study Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Governance Group. *What Our Family and Community Must Know – Caring for Long term Kidney Health: eGFR3 Kidney Health Study* [ANZSN] Joint winner of 2025 Rural Science Award

JT Hughes, O Pearson, Sian Graham. *Partnership Through Governance– A methodology for long-term follow-up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants of the eGFR3 Cohort Study*. [ANZSN]

S Ullah, K Cundale, KJ Canuto, JT Hughes *Community-Guided Reporting of Kidney Failure Incidence Among Torres Strait Islander People in Australia: 2004–2022*. [ANZSN]. Kidney Health Australia (KHA) Clinical Science Award Session (Finalist). Abstract published: p. 15, in *Nephrology*, 2025. 30(Supp3): 3. <https://anzsnevents.com/27951/>

JT Hughes (Wagadagam), K Cundale, PJ Mills (Kulkalgal), KJ Canuto (Kulkalgal), *A Torres Strait community-development project to restore kidney health and overcome death from kidney failure and its related conditions: Kikirriu Dan Walmai Project* [ANZSN]. Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Māori Health Symposium. Abstract archived at: <https://anzsnevents.com/27903/>

JT Hughes. Sovereignty exercised by and for Torres Strait Islander peoples, “*Culture Practiced in Medicine. A discussion following the viewing of the 2025 Arthur E Mills Memorial Oration, Delivered within Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Actions– a set of conversations*.” [ANZSN].

C Scotney, V Webster, D Mosca, D Whap, L Leysley, J Lawrence, E Stubbs, JT Hughes. *From Community to Clinician: Improving Kidney Health Research Practice Community-based Researchers*, eGFR3 Kidney Health Study. [ANZSN]. Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Māori Health Symposium.

Other sharing forums

Information (created) from research that promotes health actions (article) in, “Research Highlights across the Ditch. Australia and New Zealand Society of Nephrology. December 2025. Accessed from: <https://mailchi.mp/nephrology/update-from-the-anzsn-equity-diversity-inclusion-chair-8334673?e=7b8c96d5f5>

N Brown. A Kuike of Medicine: Professor Jaquelyne Hughes honoured for transforming health through culture and care. National Indigenous Times (online). 2 July 2025. Accessed from: <https://nit.com.au/02-07-2025/18903/a-koike-of-medicine-professor-jaquelyne-hughes-honoured-for-transforming-health-through-culture-and-care>

JT Hughes and SM MacDonald, interviewed in “Indigenous people less likely to be waitlisted for a kidney transplant”. Health report. ABC (podcast). 12 July 2025. Accessed from: https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/healthreport/kidney-transplant-indigenous-gap/105520444?utm_content=link&utm_medium=content_shared

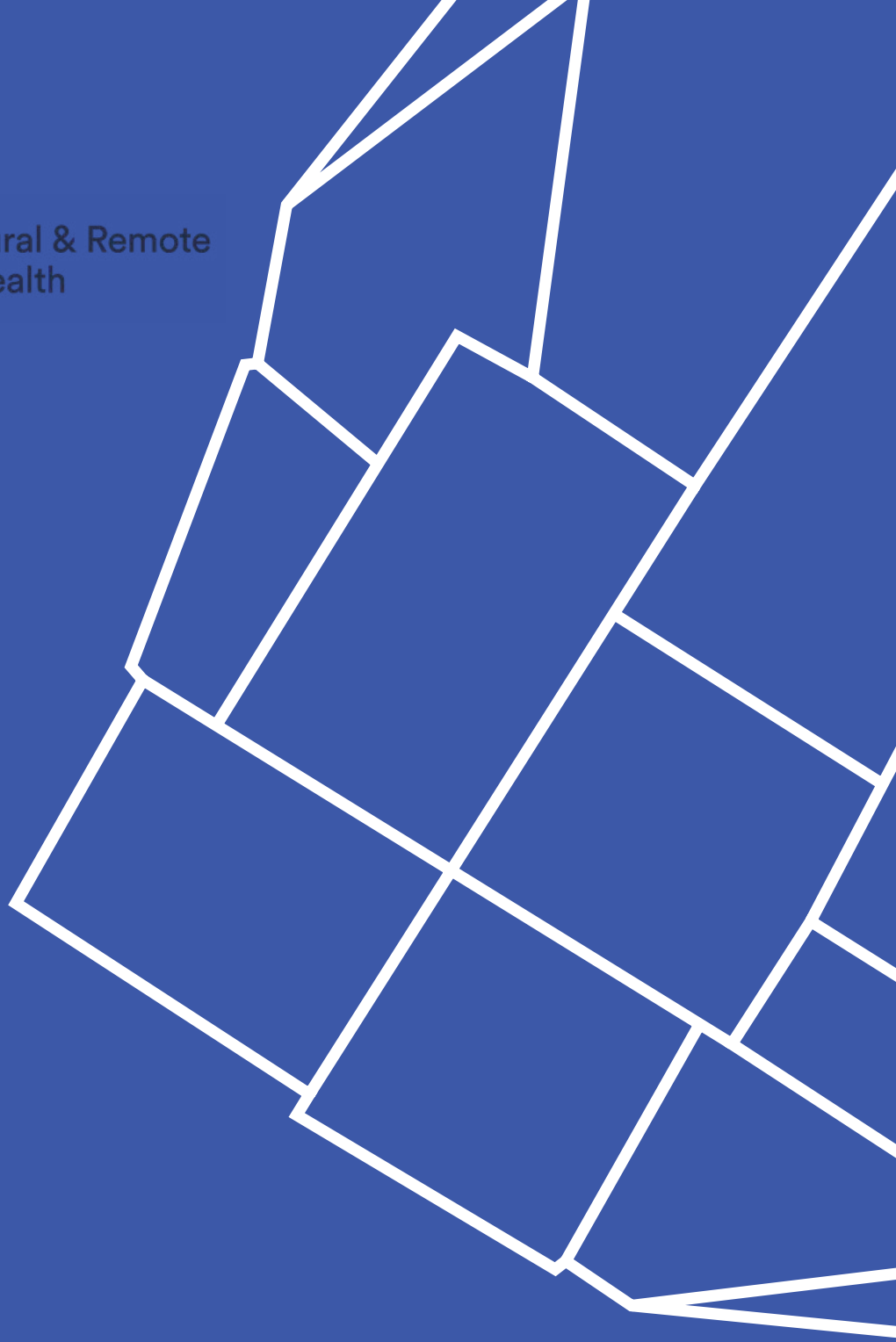
RACP News. “Professor Jaquelyne Hughes awarded the Arthur E Mills Medal”. 10 June 2025. Accessed from: <https://www.racp.edu.au/news-and-events/all-news/news-details?id=8b08c8af-bbb2-61c2-b08b-ff01001c3177>

Empowering Health restoration in Torres Strait. Mirage News (online). 8 August 2025. Accessed from: <https://www.miragenews.com/empowering-health-restoration-in-torres-strait-1511675/>



Flinders
University

Rural & Remote
Health



Contact Us

For more information, please visit our website:

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/fhmri/research/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-health-advancement>

or contact us via email: kdw@flinders.edu.au or egfr@flinders.edu.au or zhsrec@flinders.edu.au