



Poche Centre for Indigenous Health



The Poche Centre brings together the University's expertise, programs and resources in a strong collaborative partnership focused on a central theme for Aboriginal people and communities, Healthy Minds Healthy Lives.

The Poche Centre was established through the extraordinarily generous gift of Mr Greg Poche AO, and joins Poche Centres at the University of Sydney, Flinders University (Adelaide and Alice Springs) and the University of Melbourne.

The Poche Centre builds on UWA's Indigenous commitment and its achievements in Aboriginal education and health through the School of Indigenous Studies (SIS), the Faculty of Medicine Dentistry and Health Sciences (FMDHS) and the Faculty's specialist centres and schools:

- The Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health (CAMDH);
- The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia (RCSWA);
- The Western Australian Centre for Rural Health (WACRH);
- The School of Paediatrics and Child Health (SPACH).

Healthy Minds Healthy Lives

The Poche Centre aims to drive a transformative intergenerational Aboriginal health research agenda, which delivers tangible, measurable health outcomes and services directly to Aboriginal people and communities.

Healthy Minds Healthy Lives is a whole of life and life course framework that:

- Recognises the centrality of culture to good mental and physical health;
- Takes a proactive rights-based approach to health and education;
- Values Aboriginal knowledge systems;
- Commits to developing respectful and meaningful partnerships in Aboriginal health.

Key Focus Areas

The UWA Poche Centre has three key focus areas:

Culture, Wellbeing and Mental Health

Recognising Aboriginal knowledge and cultural understanding in health and promoting wellbeing and positive mental health for Aboriginal young people.

Aboriginal Children's Health and Development

Improving health, disability and development outcomes for Aboriginal children by improving access to and quality of care delivered by Aboriginal and mainstream health service providers.

Chronic Disease

Health service interventions for better prevention and management of Cancer and Cardiovascular disease for Aboriginal people in rural settings.

Summary of achievements

The Poche Centre at UWA has been operating for just over six months with the following work undertaken:

- An interim Director (Jill Milroy) and Project Officer appointed (Sabrina Swift);
- The Website is operational;
- Submissions for the Poche Centre's accommodation in the Indigenous Gateway building to be completed in late 2016;
- Poche Network meeting and Forum, planning;
- The Research Leadership Group is active in planning and project development of key focus areas;

- The first Fellowship will commence in September 2014;
- Two leading Indigenous researchers have joined Poche Research Leaders Group;
- UWA Poche Centre's first national roundtable;
- First applications for the Poche Young Leaders Development Award.

Poche research leaders group

A senior researcher leads each of the Centre's key focus areas:

- Professor Jill Milroy, SIS, Culture, Wellbeing and Mental Health;
- Professor Karen Edmond, SPACH, Aboriginal Children's Health and Development;
- Professor Sandy Thompson, WACRH, Chronic Disease.

Two leading Indigenous researchers have also joined the Poche research team:

- Professor Pat Dudgeon, a leading mental health expert and senior Research Fellow and;
- Professor Dawn Bessarab, the Director of CAMDH.

Fellowships

The Centre has three Fellowships, one in each key focus area, for early career researchers to implement and deliver the projects. The first Fellowship, in Culture, Wellbeing and Mental Health will commence in September 2014. The fellowships in Aboriginal Child Health and Chronic Disease will commence in January 2015.

The national roundtable

The Poche Centre co-sponsored the Indigenous Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Roundtable on 23-24 June with the Telethon Kids Institute and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership in Mental Health group.

Professor Pat Dudgeon convened the Roundtable and focused on how Aboriginal self-determination, governance and strong cultural identity contribute to Aboriginal mental health and wellbeing. Professor Michael Chandler, a highly regarded researcher on suicide prevention among Canada's First Nations people, was a keynote speaker.

The Roundtable attracted 50 delegates including Elders, youth leaders, health professionals, academics, community and senior government representatives.

The Poche Centre sponsored two key community delegates:

- Lorna Hudson OAM, a Senior Bardi Elder from Derby WA and co-author of The Elders' Report into Preventing Indigenous Self-Harm and Youth Suicide;
- Greg Phillips, of the Waanyi and Jaru peoples, as facilitator.

Young leaders professional development awards

The Awards provides opportunity and support for Indigenous students in medicine, dentistry and health sciences to build their leadership skills, knowledge and professional engagement in health at local, national and international levels.

The Centre will make five awards in 2014, and has received applications from Indigenous medical students to attend:

- The Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association Conference, October, Melbourne;
- Pacific Regions Indigenous Doctors' Congress, Taiwan, November 2014.

The Awards meet Indigenous students requests for a stronger UWA student presence at health conferences and high level engagement in Aboriginal health and professional networks.

Upcoming activities

- Roundtable follow up: a potential project on mental health and housing;
- Research mapping project on Aboriginal Health Research at UWA with a view to developing an internal research network and grant for 2015;
- Forum on culture, wellbeing and health curriculum and training resources;
- Poche Scholarships for award in 2015.



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