



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA**

The School of Indigenous Studies

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry  
and Health Sciences

Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives

# Poche Centre for Indigenous Health

The Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at UWA brings together the University's expertise, programs and resources in Aboriginal health and education around a central theme *Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives*. The Centre is a strong collaborative partnership between the School of Indigenous Studies and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, and its specialist centres and schools: the Rural Clinical School of WA, the Western Australia Centre for Rural Health, the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health, the School of Paediatrics and Child Health and the School of Dentistry.

The Poche Centre at UWA was established through the generous \$10 million gift by leading Australian health philanthropist Greg Poche AO and his wife, Kaye van Norton Poche.

## Highlights 2014–2015

The Poche Centre at UWA has three key focus areas, each led by a senior researcher:

### **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**

Providing health service interventions for better prevention and management of cancer and cardiovascular disease in Aboriginal people in rural areas.

### **Research leaders**

The Research Leaders group comprises senior UWA researchers and academics: Professor Karen Edmond, School of Paediatrics and Child Health; Professor Sandra Thompson, WA Centre for Rural Health; Professor Dawn Bessarab, Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health; Professor Pat Dudgeon, School of

Indigenous Studies; and Professor Jill Milroy, School of Indigenous Studies.

In 2015, Professor David Atkinson Head of the Rural Clinical School WA and Professor Camile Farah, Head of the Dental School joined the Research group and attended the February meeting, along with new Poche researchers, Dr Sandy Hamilton, Ms Carolyn Moylan and Ms Chontarle Bellottie.

### **Poche research fellows**

The Poche Centre at UWA funds a research fellow in each key focus area. Professor Pat Dudgeon joined Poche in 2014 as the Research Fellow (0.2) in Culture, Health and Wellbeing. Two full-time Poche research fellows commenced in 2015. Carolyn Moylan is the Poche Fellow in Aboriginal Children's Health, working with Professor Karen Edmond at SPACH; and Dr Sandy Hamilton as a Poche Fellow in Chronic Disease working with Professor Sandra Thompson



at WACRH. Chontarle Bellottie was also appointed as a Poche Research Assistant with WACRH and has now transitioned into a health promotion role.

## Research and training

### Culture, Wellbeing and Mental Health

- *The Third Conversation: Has Anything Changed?* The Report of the 2014 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Roundtable is available.
- Poche UWA is involved in an NHMRC 2015 Project grant application, with UWA Dental School and other researchers.
- Poche researchers are engaged in The Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention Evaluation Project (ATSISPEP).
- UWA Poche is a sponsor of the Berndt Museum's *Warmun Then and Now* exhibition, supporting Gija artists to attend the opening on 4 July 2015. UWA Poche is working with the Museum to develop an Aboriginal Art and Health exhibition for 2016.

### Aboriginal Children's Health and Development

- Qualitative research into the Aboriginal Ambulatory Care Coordination (AACC) Program is underway looking at the effectiveness of 'out of hospital' healthcare for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in WA.
- Ms Moylan completed a certificate in Cochrane Training at the Harry Perkins Research Centre; attended the 14th Qualitative Methodology Conference in Melbourne and the Creating Futures 2015: Practice, Evidence and Creativity in Tropical and Remote Settings, in Cairns.

### Chronic Disease

- The Bettering Aboriginal Heart Health in Western Australia (BAHHWA) report was launched in early 2015 with specific acknowledgement of the UWA Poche Centre as a means of progressing better cardiovascular outcomes.
- Cardiovascular engagement forums were held through WACRH with Poche researchers. The forums provided the space to talk about heart disease, disseminate knowledge and discuss research with the intention of seeking partnership funding to improve systems of care for Aboriginal people with cardiovascular disease.
- A review on mobile health and a study assessing cardiac rehabilitation services are well advanced.
- Members of the Poche team have been reviewing resources to support Aboriginal

people with cancer. Stakeholder meetings in the Midwest region have explored potential options for Navigator Models, particularly related to cancer.

- The WACRH Poche team commissioned a painting by Charmaine Green and Barbara Merritt, 'In this painting we wanted to tell the story of how important it is to have good health and a healthy lifestyle. Like the blood veins and cells in our body connecting together. Eat good, live good, and look after emotions and physical Barndi.' The commissioned work recognises collaboration between health and communities while supporting and celebrating Aboriginal art and artists. The artwork will be used in the area's marketing, promotions and communications.

## Upcoming activities

- WACRH in collaboration with Rural Health will hold a multidisciplinary, streamed Pilbara Heart Health Forum 28–29 August 2015 in Karratha West. Four streams will feature clinical updates; provision of resources; and case study learning for local doctors, nurses/allied health professionals, Aboriginal health workers and practice managers.
- A research assistant will be appointed shortly to further develop the housing and mental health project.

## Investing in young leaders

Poche leadership awards support Indigenous students in medicine dentistry and health sciences to build their leadership skills, knowledge and health engagement at local, national and international levels.



Poche UWA made 5 awards in 2014, and two in 2015.

- Gemma Johnston, a final year medical student attended the 2014 *AIDA Conference* in Melbourne. Gemma is now an intern at Fiona Stanley Hospital and was named Tertiary Scholar of the year at the Perth 2015 NAIDOC Awards.
- Medical students Bianca Howard and Declan Scott attended the *Pacific Regions Indigenous Doctors' Congress (PRIDoC) Conference* in Taiwan in 2014.
- Tamisha King and Heather-Lynn Theano, students in the Bachelor of Science, undertook a study abroad program on Mapuche culture in Chile in 2014. Tamisha and Heather are now studying in the Doctor of Medicine at UWA.
- UWA students Ashley Marina and Horace Hill will attend the 6th University Scholars Leadership Symposium in Hong Kong in August 2015, along with 700 of the world's most promising young leaders.

Congratulations to all our award winners on their achievements. Congratulations also to Vinka Barunga who attended the Poche giving ceremony in 2013 as a medical student representative. Vinka was featured in *Living Black: Kimberley Healing*, which aired on SBS and NTV in May 2015.

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