

## The first national survey of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sexual health

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Of Australian-born citizens, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are arguably the most marginalised group in contemporary Australian society. As a result this group faces extraordinary challenges in overcoming multiple disadvantages, manifesting in poor outcomes within the judicial, education and health systems. An increasing area of vulnerability for this population are the sustained rates of sexually transmissible infections (STIs) and increasing risk of transmission of blood-borne viruses (BBVs), due to factors including access to health services, risk behaviours and levels of knowledge about these infections. Over the next three years we plan to conduct the first Australian survey of young Indigenous people reaching from urban to very remote communities to assess levels of knowledge, risk practice and health service access in relation to STIs and BBVs.

This periodic cross-sectional survey will collect data at cultural events enabling behavioural, demographic and access correlates of STI and BBV risk. This project is collaborative in its nature with National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, UNSW and Latrobe University leading the project, together with 16 partner organisations comprising every jurisdictional health department and peak Aboriginal health organisation. The project has a capacity-building component embedded that will ensure Indigenous people are acquiring skills in research throughout this project.

Surveys will be collected using personal digital assistants (hand-held computers) enabling people with English as a second language to participate in the survey. Survey questions will be consistent with other Australian surveys, such as the Australian Study of Health and Relationships and the National Drug Strategy Household Survey to ensure comparability.

This project is of national significance. It aims to collect 5,000 surveys from young Indigenous people and will provide compelling results for communities and policy makers alike.