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# IRNet Showcase 2020 Report

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27TH - 28TH FEBRUARY  
2020



# IRNET SHOWCASE 2020 REPORT

## 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research: Reflections and Future Directions.'

The National Indigenous Research(er) Capacity Building Network (IRNet), an initiative of the Australian Health Research Alliance (AHRA), was established to build on and add value to existing connections in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health across the Alliance, through strengthening and sustaining the national IRNet, and co-creation of opportunities to connect researchers, projects, training, evaluation and knowledge translation to improve the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples. Specifically, the three priorities of the IRNet Action Plan are to:

1. Progress and strengthen a robust Indigenous Research(er) Network
2. Invest and develop the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Workforce
3. Enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research(er) capabilities

With these priorities in mind, on February 27-28, IRNet hosted their first event. Researchers from across the country came together over two days at SAHMRI, Adelaide, for the IRNet National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Showcase, which facilitated discussions about current research addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health priorities, gave us a chance to reflected on our progress and successes over recent decades and touch on future directions. The showcase also provided opportunities to network with others engaged in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research.

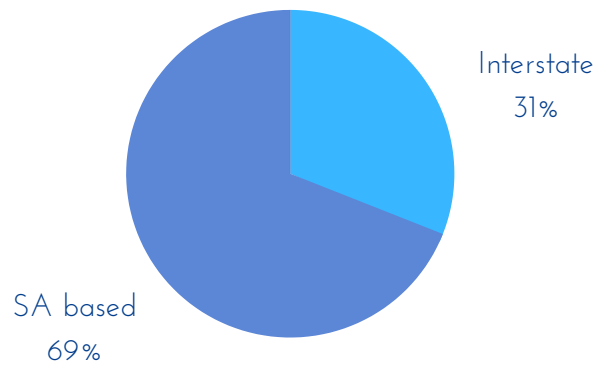
15		178		24
Invited speakers		Showcase attendees		Abstract presentations



This project was supported by the Australian Government's Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) as part of the Rapid Applied Research Translation program (MRF9100005).

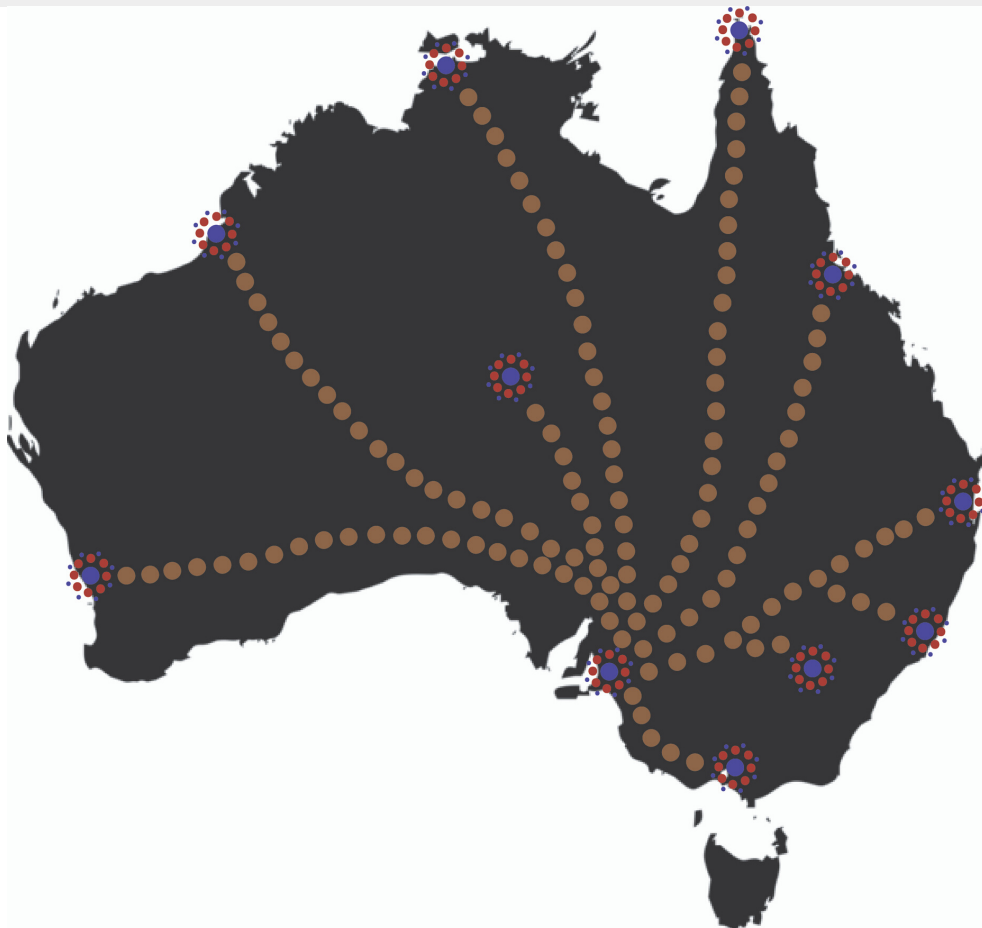
# SHOWCASE ATTENDEES

## Registered attendees



Of 173 registered attendees, 31% of those were from interstate, from as far as Perth, Alice Springs, and Thursday Island. Researchers and other academics attended from universities including UniSA; Flinders University; the University of Adelaide; the University of Melbourne; the University of Sydney; Western Sydney University; Curtin University; Charles Sturt University; and Central Queensland University.

Other attendees included primary health care workers and allied health workers, including from Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs); health research institutes including Telethon Kids, Menzies, and QIMR Berghofer; Poche Centres; and a documentary filmmaker. There was government representation from various organisations such as the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS); Department for Education; and South Australia's Local Health Networks (LHNs).



# SHOWCASE CONTENT

The Showcase was opened by Professor Alex Brown, followed by an invitation for the audience to introduce themselves and share what they hoped to gain from the event, and Professor Chris Levi's outline of AHRA's vision for national networks. The program featured an inspirational keynote address by Professor Lisa Jackson-Pulver, invited speakers including Dr Kalinda Griffiths (UNSW), Greg Pratt (QIMR Bergdorfer), and Glenn Pearson (Telethon Kids Institute), some fantastic panellists, and a session by Dr Misty Palmer (NHMRC) on demonstrating research impact.

Peer-reviewed abstracts received from across the country were showcased in short presentation and poster format; a fantastic way to learn and be inspired about current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. Presentations covered areas such as social and emotional wellbeing; cardiovascular health; chronic disease; aged care; cultural safety; data sovereignty; language; and workforce.



# SHOWCASE CONTENT

On the Thursday, attendees chose between concurrent abstract presentation sessions on a number of important topics. After lunch, the whole audience came together for a panel discussion by Professor Alex Brown, Vicki Wade (Menzies), and Aunty Christine Franks; moderated by Dr Odette Pearson (SAHMRI), followed by a session by Dr Misty Palmer (NHMRC) on how to address research impact in grant applications. Finally, a panel discussion on how research can influence policy by Greg Pratt; Glenn Pearson; and Tanya McGregor (SA Health), was moderated by Kim Morey (SAHMRI).

On the Friday, following a wrap up by Wendy Keech from Health Translation SA (HTSA) and two presentations by Dr Kalinda Griffiths and Greg Pratt on data sovereignty and genomics, the audience watched presentations by presenters at various stages of their career. Feedback on the abstract presentations over the 2 days included comments about their relevance for people's work, as well as being insightful, and engaging. Following this, there were presentations by Glenn Pearson; and Karen Glover & Lisa Khan from SAHMRI Women & Kids. Finally, Dr Karla Canuto and Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle gave an overview of IRNet, followed by Aunty Kerrie's final wrap up and presentation of awards. The Showcase awards included best poster presentation: Aneta Kotevski, and best abstract presentation for each session- Thursday Auditorium: Rosemary Walley, Thursday Level 4: Leda Sivak & Seth Westhead, and Friday: Kim Morey & Anna Dawson. Additional activities for attendees included a SAHMRI Building tour with Seth Westhead on Thursday, and a cultural walk led by Kurna Elder, Uncle Frank Wanganeen on Friday.



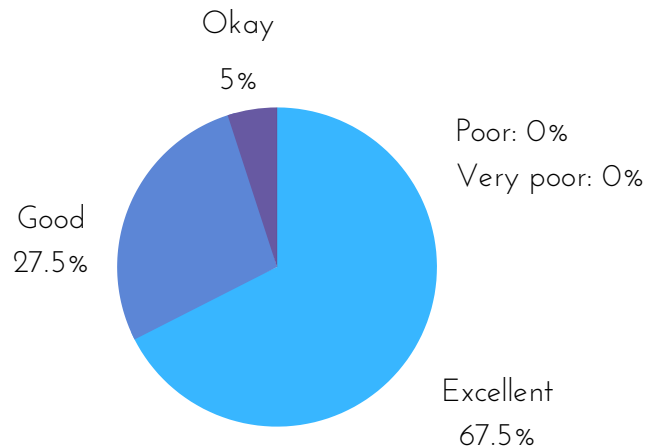
# EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

*“I have left feeling inspired and challenged.”*

*“I have learnt so much from the 2 days. Thank you so much.”*

## Respondents rated the program

### format



To gather feedback from the Showcase for the planning of future IRNet activities, a survey was sent to all registered attendees, with a response rate of ~23% (40 respondents). The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. 52% of survey respondents rated the program format as excellent, 67% rated the variety of topics as excellent, and 72% of survey respondents rated the quality of speakers very highly.

Many respondents reported feeling inspired and challenged by the two-day program. Feedback shared with Capacity Development staff during the Showcase included a sense of re-energised enthusiasm for their research. The Showcase facilitated some important networking opportunities for people engaged in the area, and 90% of survey respondents reported making new connections at the Showcase: potential research collaborations (33%), networking/friendship (33%), or both. Of those, 30% of respondents reported making 3-4 new connections, and 25% of survey respondents reported making 5 or more new connections. In this way, by enabling researchers to come together in a safe space to discuss their research, IRNet expects that the Showcase may lead to enhanced Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research capabilities.

## New connections made at the Showcase

