



Cooperative Research Centre for
Aboriginal Health

Media Release

New Aboriginal graduates to take up health challenge

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The capacity of Aboriginal people to lead and conduct their own health research will be enhanced when 12 South Australian Aboriginal students successfully graduate from a ground-breaking pilot course in Adelaide tomorrow.

The course, *Certificate IV in Indigenous Research Capacity Building*, has been developed and nationally accredited by James Cook University and piloted by the Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia (AHCSA) over the past 12 months.

The course aims to provide accredited, practical, community-based research and evaluation skills development for Aboriginal health and community services workers.

According to Jenine Bailey, who facilitated course development, the course is "all about empowering Aboriginal people to carry out their own research within their own community."

"The course will assist Aboriginal people to involve themselves in the analysis and critiques of research to address and determine the outcomes of their social, cultural, economic and political issues," said Jenine Bailey. "This involvement is a key component of self-determination and self-management."

The pilot run of the course has demonstrated immense benefit for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For the first time, people are receiving formal training in research which is specifically targeted for them, and are able to apply their skills in Aboriginal communities according to their communities' priorities.

The course also provides much needed pathways into research careers and university education for Aboriginal people and provides the knowledge to evaluate their own programs and research proposals from other organisations.

There is a severe lack of Aboriginal researchers and an historical widespread distrust of researchers by many Aboriginal people throughout Australia. This places great responsibility on any course aiming to increase the number of Aboriginal researchers and promote rigorous ethical participative methodologies.

Despite this mistrust, Aboriginal health and community services professionals in South Australia have enthusiastically embraced the research capacity

phone (08) 89227954 • **fax** (08) 89227797 • **email** alastair.harris@crcah.org.au • **website** www.crcah.org.au
address The John Mathews Building, Royal Darwin Hospital, Rocklands Drv, TIWI NT 0810

building course which has emphasised appropriate consultative, participative research and evaluation methodologies. The course encourages community services workers to incorporate a continuous improvement of practice or ongoing evaluation process into their strategic plans and their daily work thus strengthening the quality of the services.

The 12 graduates of the research course come from as far a field as Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, Murray Bridge, York Peninsula, Port Pirie and Adelaide.

Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health chief executive, Mick Gooda, congratulated the graduates and the AHCSA and James Cook University for their efforts.

“The lack of Aboriginal participation and leadership in health research has been a major obstacle in producing effective and applicable research outcomes in the past,” said Mick Gooda. “The graduation of 12 more of our people with skills and confidence in taking up research challenges in their communities is a good step towards addressing the health inequalities between Aboriginal people and other Australians.

“This is also further proof of the strong desire of Aboriginal people to take the lead in investigating and, ultimately, solving our own health challenges.

“I urge Australian governments and universities to follow the lead of AHCSA and JCU and do what they can to provide courses and training to lift the Aboriginal health research workforce, said Mick Gooda.

THE GRADUATION CEREMONY

**Where: Warriparinga Wetlands and Kurna Living Cultural Centre,
Sturt Road (near the corner of Marion Road), Bedford Park**

When: Friday 22nd August - 12:30 to 3pm

For further information:

Merridy Malin Aboriginal Health Council of SA 0447 482 549
Alastair Harris CRC for Aboriginal Health 0409 658 177