



Director's Communiqué

Issue 15:
December 2017

Director's welcome

Welcome to my final communique of 2017. There is so much to tell you so I won't hold you up with this welcome. In 2017 we had many milestone moments. We were awarded a further three years funding from our core funder at the Australian Department of Health. Importantly, we were able to align two key projects funding streams – the main resource and the Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre. We continue to enjoy, and are most grateful for the support of our other funders such as the Healing Foundation, the Fred Hollows Foundation, Ninti One, the

West Australian Department of Health's Office of Aboriginal Health and the Monash Centre for Health Research and Implementation (MCHRI).

We also had the great honour of celebrating our 20th birthday with a reception at Parliament House in Canberra with many friends, supporters and colleagues. I have included some photos and further news below. My sincere thanks to all our supporters for your continued encouragement and guidance throughout 2017 including our funders, Advisory Board, Honorary

Consultants, formal partners and everyone who has made it such a privilege to work at the HealthInfoNet. All the very best for the Festive Season to you your families and other loved ones. I look forward to seeing you in 2018.



Professor Neil Drew

Annual HealthInfoNet Advisory Board meeting

Our Advisory Board met on 13 September in Canberra. As always I was heartened by the strong leadership and advice of our board members as we acknowledged two decades of working in authentic partnership with key leaders and supporters from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector.

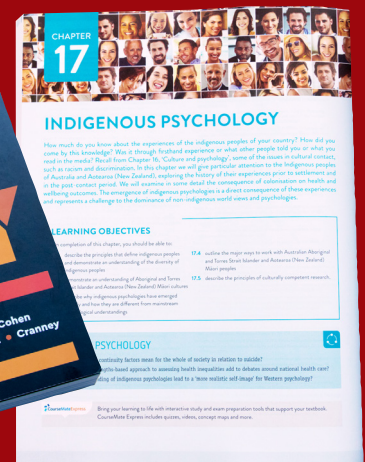
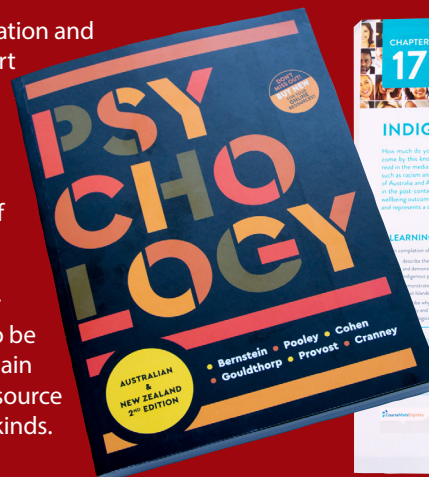


HealthInfoNet Advisory Board meeting participants

Revised Psychology text

Over the last year I have worked with co-authors Dr Graeme Gower and Professor Julie Ann Pooley to contribute two chapters to the very popular introductory psychology text by Bernstein, Pooley, Cohen, Gouldthorpe, Provost and Cranney. The two chapters, one on Indigenous Psychology and the other on Cultural Psychology are new additions to the text. I was able to become, once again, an everyday user of the HealthInfoNet to

source key information and statistics to support our perspectives on Indigenous and cultural psychology. I was a long time user of the HealthInfoNet resource prior to joining as Director and it was good to be reminded once again how valuable a resource it is to users of all kinds.



20th anniversary HealthInfoNet celebrations



CELEBRATING
20 YEARS IN 2017



Neil Drew, Colleen Hayward, Minister Wyatt MP, John Finlay Jones & Mick Adams

We officially celebrated our 20th birthday on 22 September. Speaking at the official 20 year anniversary event held earlier in

closing the gap in Indigenous health." Guests also included Warren Snowdon, Shadow Assistant Minister for Indigenous

Canberra on the 13th September, The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP, Minister for Indigenous Health said "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are the real winners from the HealthInfoNet, as it plays an important role in

Health, members of the HealthInfoNet advisory board, ECU Executive team representatives, partners, consultants, representatives from the Australian Government Department of Health (core funder) and peak bodies and organisations.

This is an historic achievement for a unique resource that is not replicated anywhere in the world. That the vision of one man over 20 years ago is testament to founder Professor Neil Thomson. The HealthInfoNet remains a vital part of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health infrastructure.

20th anniversary commemorative art



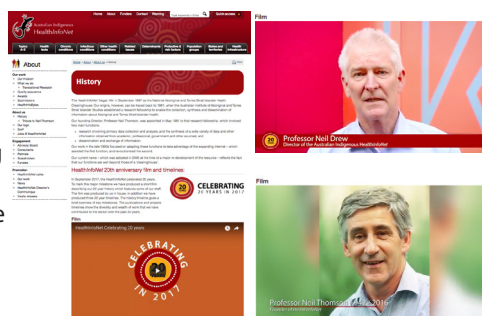
Artwork by Dr Uncle Mick Adams

To commemorate the 20th anniversary, a painting was commissioned to tell the story of the history of the HealthInfoNet and its relationships and connections across the country. Minister Ken Wyatt unveiled the artwork by Dr Mick Adams,

a well-known Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artist, Senior Research Fellow at the HealthInfoNet, one of the HealthInfoNet's founding advisory board members and long term colleague of Foundation Director Neil Thomson.

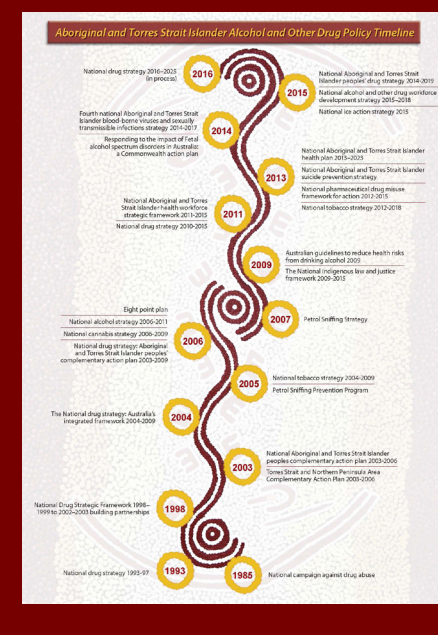
20th anniversary short film

As part of our Digital Evolution Strategy we have developed in house expertise in short film production. Their first production was a short film featuring HealthInfoNet staff and supporters telling the story of our 20 year history. The 20th anniversary film includes archival footage of Foundation Director Neil Thomson. <http://www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/about/about-us-info/our-history>



20th anniversary timelines

Produced by HealthInfoNet as part of the 20th anniversary, were a series of timelines. The projects timeline lists the many and varied projects we have been involved in over the past two decades. The publications timeline highlights our publications which form part of our translational research products in the knowledge exchange space. Lastly there is a brief timeline of major milestones and general information about the 20 year journey of the HealthInfoNet.



Review of the harmful use of alcohol among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

The Australian Indigenous Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre has published a new *Review of the harmful use of alcohol amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people*. The latest review written by one of our collaborating centres, the National Drug Research Institute, Curtin University with renowned authority Professor Dennis Gray as lead author, is a vital new addition to our suite of knowledge exchange resources. It makes the large body of evidence available in a succinct, evidence based summary. This delivers considerable benefit to a time poor workforce striving to keep up to date in a world where the sheer weight of new information can often seem overwhelming. I am delighted to release this important new resource to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander AOD sector. <http://aodknowledgecentre.net.au/aodkc/alcohol/reviews/alcohol-review>.

In the review the authors explore the harmful effects of alcohol use in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander context examining: patterns of use; health impacts; underlying causal factors; policies and interventions to address these impacts; and ways to further reduce harm. While individuals can make healthy decisions about their alcohol use, their choices are framed by the social conditions of their lives. The better news is that healthy public policies, which address the early years, education, employment and social support, as well as specific interventions around substance misuse, can make a significant difference.



Supporting the workforce: PATSIMS workshops

A series of 'hands on' Preventing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Maternal smoking (PATSIMS) workshops were held to train users in how to access and make the most of the resources in this section. Workshops were held in Queensland, NT and WA.



HealthInfoNet Cafes and presentations

We continued to promote all our resources and portals at conferences around the country in the form of HealthInfoNet cafes, workshops and presentations.

August:

- Inserts were included at the PHCRIS and DANA conferences

September:

- Café at the SNAICC conference



- Café and presentation at ADMA/CDN, ECU research week
- Café at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Environmental Health Conferences.
- Inserts were included at the Nursing/Midwifery NSW conference.

October:

- Cafes at the Cranapulus and CATSINaM conference

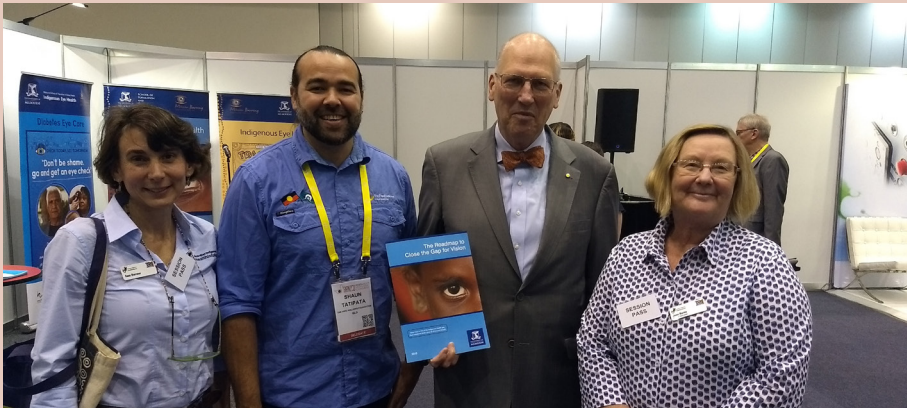


- Café and presentation at the Indigenous Educational Symposium
- Panel presentation at the Indigenous Data sovereignty symposium.
- Inserts were included in the Global Alcohol Policy conference.

November:

- Café and presentation at the IAHA
- Presentation at the NHMRC Symposium
- Inserts were included in the ATCA and DAA conferences.

Launch of the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision



Sam Burrow, Shaun Tatipata, Hugh Taylor, Jane Burns - Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision launch

We were invited to attend the launch of the 2017 Annual update on the implementation of the Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision at the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) Annual Congress in Perth in October.

The event marked the sixth update of the Roadmap and provided an opportunity to acknowledge the great work being undertaken by all the organisations working in Indigenous eye health. A number of significant milestones have been reached through the collective efforts of the many stakeholders in the Indigenous eye health sector. Sixty-seven per cent of 138 activities outlined in the Roadmap recommendations have now been completed and 16 out of 42 recommendations have been fully implemented. Melbourne Laureate

Professor Hugh R Taylor AC of Indigenous Eye Health said that real progress is being made to improve Indigenous eye health outcomes across Australia but we need to maintain progress to reach parity in eye health outcomes with the rest of the Australian population by 2020.

We also invited a few guests from the launch to our offices and took them through the latest digital resources on our eye health section. Visitors included Shaun Tatipata one of our Consultants, based at the Fred Hollows Foundation, Sharon Manhire also from Fred Hollows, Lisa Penrose, optometrist at Institute for Urban Indigenous Health, Carla Northam, CEO, and Sarah Davies, Policy and Advocacy Adviser, Vision 2020 Australia and Mitchell D Anjou (another HealthInfoNet Consultant) from the University of Melbourne (not pictured).



Roadmap to Close the Gap for Vision attendees visit the HealthInfoNet

HealthInfoNet win ECU Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Award



To finish the year on a high in our 20th celebration year, we were acknowledged by ECU and won the 'Inspirational team' award at the 2017 ECU Vice-Chancellor's Staff Excellence Awards. The Awards recognise and reward ECU staff who exemplify the University's values of Integrity, Respect, Rational Inquiry and Personal Excellence. We were commended for delivering 20 years of high quality research outcomes at ECU and being recognised worldwide for our contribution in helping to close the gap in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. We were also commended for our contributions to ECU and for our professional and committed staff.

It is a great honour to be part of this wonderful team and I congratulate all our staff for the work they do every single day honouring the ECU values of integrity, rational enquiry, respect and personal excellence. While our work is not motivated by the thought of accolades it is very gratifying to receive the recognition of peers and colleagues. In accepting the award I also want to also acknowledge the role of the wider HealthInfoNet team of supporters, funders, advisory boards members, consultants, partners and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities throughout Australia who motivate and inspire us to be the best that we can be.

HealthInfoNet supports anti-racism campaign

The *Racism. It Stops with Me* campaign is part of the National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy, which was launched in August 2012, and is led by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Edith Cowan University (ECU) is a proud supporter of the campaign.

The HealthInfoNet, part of ECU, has been at the forefront of providing the evidence base to inform and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector for over 20 years. We provide an extensive range of resources to assist users to better understand the social and cultural determinants of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health including the often devastating impact of racism, discrimination and marginalisation in all forms. We are also a strong supporter of efforts to shift the narrative from a deficit perspective to a strengths based understanding of the many cultural health protective factors. All HealthInfoNet staff have undertaken cultural awareness training and we have a strong commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander capacity building and workforce development. We strongly support the Racism. It Stops With Me campaign in our day to day work and actions.



Uncle Mick Adams with Hon Wayne Martin AC Chief Justice of WA, David Walker and Patrick Churnside of Ngarliyarndu Bindirri Aboriginal Corporation Roebourne at the 'Sons of Fathers' Family Violence & Sexual Abuse Conference in Newman.

Primary research news



Dr Uncle Mick attended the June Oscar NARRM Oration at Melbourne picture here with June Oscar OA, Professor Marcia Langton and Lenny Papertalk.

Dr Uncle Mick Adams, our Senior Research Fellow, is working on several research projects. Research partnerships with key organisations include Edith Cowan University, Menzies School of Research, Curtin University NDRI and NIRAKN (QUT).

He has also recently written in the *Medical Journal of Australia* about *Men's health in Australia: Where to now?* as well as several book chapters including *Understanding inequities in men's health in Australia: What do we know?* *Indigenous postgraduate education: an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander standpoint. Indigenous postgraduate education: Intercultural perspectives Respecting and honoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders in Social Work Practice. Radicals in Australian Social Work: Stories of Lifelong Activism.*

He has also been involved in the NT Indigenous Male Research Strategy Think Tank, Lowitja's Valuing Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Males Advisory Group, NACCHO ochre day workshop and the University of Melbourne - An Evaluation Framework to Improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Cultural tour with ECU Elder



Some of our staff went on a cultural day with Dr Noel Nannup as part of their ongoing professional development. The tour was part of the City Of Belmont Reconciliation Action Plan and a large diverse group of people interested in finding out more about Aboriginal culture attended. Dr Nannup is a respected Noongar Elder and is the ECU's Lead Elder-in-Residence on the Mount Lawley campus where our offices are located. He also advises as ECU's Cultural Ambassador. Noel is a gifted story teller, cultural guide, instructor and mentor. Noel established the Swan River Tour in 2009, Rottneest Island Tour in 2008 and Kings Park Tour in 2004. Ongoing cultural training for our staff is an important part of our work.

Eye health update

We have been invited to join the Project Reference Group for the national Provision of Eye Health Equipment and Training Program funded by the Australian Government Department of Health. The program is led by the Brien Holden Vision Institute Foundation and the Australian College of Optometry, and is being implemented by a consortium of five organisations. Its objective is to support increased early detection of diabetic retinopathy by providing retinal cameras and training for primary health care staff delivering eye care for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people. The program will run until June 2019.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty Symposium

In October I attended a Data Sovereignty Symposium at the University of Melbourne. The event, attended by experts in this important field from around Australia and the world was truly inspirational. I am in the process of talking to Professor Marcia Langton of the University of Melbourne, co-host of the event with AIATSIS, about the possibility of developing a Data Sovereignty Warriors page on the HealthInfoNet resource to showcase the work of some remarkable grassroots activists that have been developing local level data on the health and wellbeing of their communities. Data Sovereignty is a massively important topic and one that we must get to grips with as part of our ongoing development as a premiere resource for data dissemination and knowledge exchange in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The screenshot shows a web page titled 'Indigenous Data Sovereignty' under the 'Melbourne School of Population and Global Health' header. It includes a navigation menu, a search bar, and a 'RESEARCH GROUP' section for 'Indigenous Studies'. The main content area features a 'PROJECT DETAILS' section with a graphic of hands in various colors. The title is 'Indigenous Data Sovereignty Symposium: THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA SOVEREIGNTY FOR COMMUNITIES'. Below this, it states the event was held on 11 and 12 October 2017 at the Parkville campus, partnering with AIATSIS. A list of five specific aims of the symposium is provided, focusing on network development, awareness, data management, and specific strategies for data use.

Staff focus

I'd like to introduce our two library technicians, Lawrence Rutherford and Graham Barker who are responsible for growing and maintaining what has become Australia's most comprehensive collection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health information. The library was the brainchild of Foundation Director, Professor Neil Thomson, whose vision was to provide a central repository of

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health information. They save the health workforce considerable time by providing up to date information – tracking down new publications as soon as they are published – sometimes adding these within minutes of publication. Working behind the scenes for 10 and 9

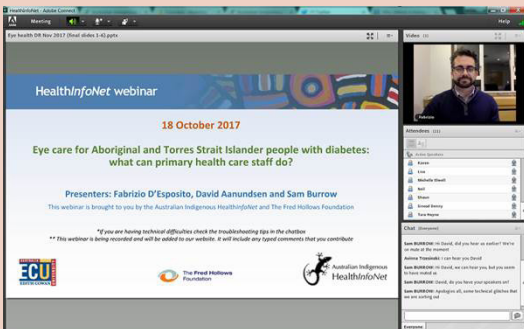
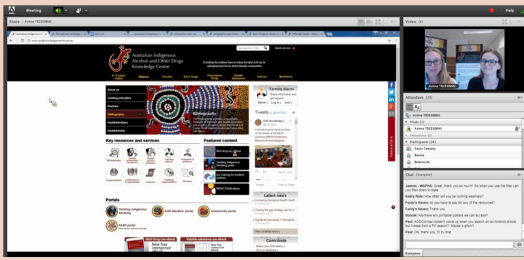
years respectively, they diligently search each day for new material - whatever form it takes; online or print, audio-visual, infographic, eBook, video, and from wherever in the world it is published. The HealthInfoNet library is a virtual library with approximately 35,000 items in electronic form in its catalogue. Their day includes combing through exhaustive collections of RSS feeds and email alerts and extends to more specialised searches which include research repositories, journal and other databases, conference presentations, grey literature, educational videos, obscure small websites ... no potential source is left unsearched.

Applying international cataloguing standards to database records, they take pride in the accuracy of details recorded. They also maintain the quality control of the library contents and the ongoing challenge of broken links to documents and websites which move or disappear.

This screenshot shows the 'Bibliography' search interface on the HealthInfoNet website. It features a search bar at the top, a sidebar with navigation options like 'Home', 'About', 'Funders', and 'Contact', and a main search area with various filters. The filters include 'Title (exact text)', 'Author', 'Keyword', 'Publication date', 'Document type', 'Health topic', and 'State'. The 'Document type' filter is expanded, showing options like 'Journal article', 'Report', 'Book', 'Booklet', 'Brochure', 'Catalogue', 'Checklist', 'Comic', 'Dictionary', and 'Ebook book'.

This screenshot shows the 'Health practice resources' search interface on the HealthInfoNet website. It features a search bar at the top, a sidebar with navigation options, and a main search area with various filters. The filters include 'Resource type' and 'Health topic'. The 'Resource type' filter is expanded, showing options like 'Administrative guidelines', 'Other guidelines', 'Practice guidelines', 'Toolkits', 'Manual', and 'Other resources'. The 'Health topic' filter is also expanded, showing options like 'Alcohol', 'Binge', 'Cancer', 'Cultural ways', 'COVID', 'Dementia', 'Diabetes', and 'Disability'.

HealthInfoNet webinars: informing the workforce



The Australian Indigenous Alcohol and Other Drugs Knowledge Centre recently hosted two free webinars.

The first webinar demonstrated how to find the latest resources developed over the last year for those working in alcohol and other drug use and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health. The webinar highlighted some of the key resources such as eBooks, animated infographics, HealthInfoBytes, AODconnect app and the AOD policy timeline.

The second was a webinar dedicated to FASD and featured guest presenter Dr Raewyn Mutch from the Telethon Kids Institute. The webinar theme was *Prevalence of FASD among youth under the care*

of Juvenile Justice in Western Australia: how shall we work together to close this gap?

You can view AOD webinar recordings here <http://aodknowledgecentre.net.au/webinars>

There was also an eye health webinar on 8th November which featured the Fred Hollows Foundation staff.

The webinar was titled *Eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes: what can primary health care staff do?* Dr Fabrizio D'Esposito, Research Advisor at The Fred Hollows Foundation, spoke from London about key priorities and new approaches for addressing diabetic retinopathy among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

This webinar will be available on the eye health section.

Poster win at the 13th Annual ADMA and 21st Chronic Diseases Network NT Conference held in Darwin, 11-12 September.

The HealthInfoNet and the Fred Hollows Foundation won the poster prize at the above conference. The poster, titled 'New online resources to support eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes', provides information about a series of multimedia resources that have been designed to support primary health care providers to tackle diabetic retinopathy. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes and tend to develop it at a younger age than non-Indigenous people, placing them at increased risk of developing vision loss and blindness from diabetic retinopathy (DR). The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet and the Fred

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

New online resources to support eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes

Samantha Burrow, David Aarons* 1 Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, Edith Cowan University, Perth, WA, Australia 2 Indigenous Australia Program, The Fred Hollows Foundation, Darwin, NT, Australia

Why is diabetic retinopathy (DR) a problem?

DR is a serious eye problem that can lead to vision loss and blindness among people with diabetes (International Diabetes Federation et al., 2015).

Compared with non-Indigenous adults with diabetes, **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults with diabetes are twice as likely to have vision impairment from DR*** (Foster et al., 2015).

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes don't receive recommended annual eye checks (Aarons et al., 2016; Tennant et al., 2016).

2x

1/2 don't receive yearly retinal examinations

1/4 have never had one

What's the good news?

Almost all severe vision loss and blindness from DR can be prevented if people with diabetes receive recommended eye checks (including retinal examinations) and treatment (Tennant et al., 2016).

New initiatives promise to increase eye checks, leading to early detection of DR and improvements in the eye health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people:

- MBS Item 12325 is now available for primary health care clinics to conduct yearly eye checks for DR using a retinal camera.
- equipment and training is being rolled out to support clinics to conduct these yearly eye checks.

MBS Item 12325

Why are resources about DR needed?

Increasing the uptake of retinal screening promises improvements in eye health. Succinct, evidence-based, readily accessible resources about DR and retinal screening can support health educators and primary health care providers to:

- deliver health training and health education initiatives
- implement evidence-based health practice.

Who collaborated to develop the new DR resources?

Since 2016, the Indigenous Australia Program (IAP) at the Fred Hollows Foundation (the Foundation) has funded a collaborative project to expand content on the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet (HealthInfoNet) website. The collaboration includes the creation of new and more accessible knowledge products about eye health. These products are available online to support the eye health workforce.

The HealthInfoNet is a research unit with **20 years of experience in knowledge synthesis and exchange** about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

The Foundation works through direct partnerships with local service providers to address gaps in the current eye health system.

Together, these organisations are sharing skills and knowledge to develop new, evidence-based, online resources to support the delivery of eye care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes.

What resources have been developed?

The new DR resources are available online in multiple formats to meet the varied information needs of primary health care providers and educators across the country. They include:

- key factsheet
- static infographic
- PowerPoint presentation
- short video (4 mins)

What are some of the key messages?

Primary health care staff can help their patients avoid severe vision loss from DR by:

- supporting them to manage their diabetes
- conducting or referring them for yearly eye checks (including retinal examinations)
- referring them for specialist care if needed
- supporting them to complete treatment

Where can you find the DR resources?

The DR resources are available on the HealthInfoNet's eye health web resource.

The HealthInfoNet's eye health web resource makes both accessing and sharing information so much easier. Having the confidence to know we are using the latest available evidence on which to base our project is really valuable!

Sally Adams-Burton, Manager of the Indigenous Australia Program at the Fred Hollows Foundation

How can the Eye health web resource help you?

The Eye health web resource (www.eyehhealth.org.au) is an online collection of information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander eye health that helps busy health professionals keep up-to-date with the latest information, resources and research.

The Eye health web resource also supports information-sharing and knowledge exchange by providing:

- online news items, monthly newsletters and a Twitter account (www.twitter.com/aihye)
- a mailing place (www.yourmailing.org.au/group/12) to help the eye health workforce across Australia connect via the web.

How are the DR resources being used?

The DR resources will form part of new training initiatives for primary health care staff providing eye care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with diabetes. This currently includes training provided as part of the Australian Government's rollout of retinal camera to primary health care clinics.

What's next?

The HealthInfoNet and the Foundation will continue to develop innovative online resources to support the delivery of eye care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Future resources will include: webinars, audio files and an eBook.

The Fred Hollows Foundation

Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet

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Hollows Foundation are collaborating to co-design and develop evidence-based online resources to support local service providers to implement these initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patients. The poster outlines

the collaborative development of the evidence-based online resources, the key messages for primary health care providers delivering diabetic eye care and how innovative online resources can support health practice.