



# MOORDITJ MARP NEWSLETTER

AUG 2025

3<sup>RD</sup> EDITION

## In this edition

*Previously the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Newsletter. In Noongar language Moorditj Marp translates to Strong Skin.*

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We are grateful to work across many unceded lands throughout Australia, and in particular, to work on Noongar Boodjar with the Moorditj Marp program. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, waters, and skies on which we are privileged to live, work, and play. We recognise their deep and continuing connection to Country and culture, and we honour the generations of care and guardianship that have sustained these lands for tens of thousands of years, allowing us to enjoy them today.



Photos: Aunty Dale Tilbrook (top) and Uncle Noel Nannup (bottom)



We pay our deepest respect to Elders past and present, and we give thanks for the strength, wisdom, and contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in supporting strong skin for all children and families. We extend a special thank you to Uncle Noel Nannup and Aunty Dale Tilbrook for their continued Eldership and guidance on the Moorditj Marp program.



# KOOLUNGAR MOORDITJ HEALTHY SKIN RECAP AND WRAP UP

**As the Koolungar (Children) Moorditj (Strong) Healthy Skin project officially wraps up, the journey is far from over.**

*The work continues to grow in new and exciting ways, and we're proud to look back and reflect on everything that we have achieved together.*

This project was the first of its kind, a community-led effort to better understand the skin health needs of Aboriginal children living in urban areas of Western Australia. It filled a big gap where there was very little knowledge, and it was guided by Elder researchers, Aboriginal Community Advisory Group members, and a strong Aboriginal workforce. Working in partnership with Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service and South West Aboriginal Medical Service, the project generated important insights into skin disease prevalence and translated this into real support for families.

**22** culturally appropriate clinical factsheets were created and results contributed to updates in the **National Healthy Skin Guidelines**, both available online for anyone to download and use. Thanks to strong advocacy, ongoing funding was secured to continue the dermatology clinics at both Aboriginal Medical Services. These clinics offer specialist skin care in culturally safe settings and have expanded to support care for adults, benefiting the whole community.

In addition to the clinics, 3-week long community skin screening weeks were held at ACCHO sites, where nearly 250 koolungar received a skin check, opportunistic same day treatment if needed, skin health education and a goodie bag filled with products to support skin health. The project created engaging health promotion messaging and resources to support and empower children and their families on skin health, including the **Moorditj Skin Means Moorditj Health** music video, which has been watched more than

1300 times, and the **Kaal Tackles Eczema** children's storybook, with more than 1500 hard copies distributed across the Noongar nation. Additionally, a suite of smaller health education resources centred around the **'6-Steps for Moorditj Skin'** messages were created, and all these resources continue to be shared at community events. The results were delivered to families and broader community members through summary pages and highlights and updates shared through engaging newsletters. The findings and collaborative work were presented at several national and international conferences as well as through co-authored publications in leading journals.

We learnt more about Noongar culture from leaders on Whadjuk and Wardandi Boodjar through cultural awareness training.

Through strong Aboriginal governance and collaboration, the project laid the groundwork for more inclusive, effective, and culturally informed skin health

strategies, and built the research capacity of Aboriginal researchers, Aboriginal clinicians and Aboriginal Health Practitioners. It's a great example of what can happen when true collaboration and community is at the heart of the work.

We're incredibly grateful to our supporters, Telethon 7 Trust, WCVID Aboriginal Capacity Building, WA Department of Health Funding, and to CeraVe and Priceline for donating skin care goodies. A huge thank you to the teams at Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service, South West Aboriginal Medical Service, the Elders, the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group, and everyone who helped make this project such a great success.

And lastly, a massive congratulations to Dr Bernadette Ricciardo who has recently completed her PhD based on this work. Dr Ricciardo continues to lead the ACCHO dermatology clinics, and her incredible achievement is a reflection of the strength and impact of this truly **moorditj project**.



**But this isn't the end, our partnerships are growing stronger, and the work is far from over. New projects are already underway, shaped by what community members have said matters most. You'll find more details about these below.**

# MOORDITJ MARP (STRONG SKIN): EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTHY SKIN STORYBOOKS

## CURRENTLY SEEKING PARTICIPANTS!

The Moorditj Marp (Strong Skin) Storybook Evaluation and Development Project is one of the key initiatives that emerged from the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin project. Building on the success of Kaal Tackles Eczema—the first eczema storybook for Aboriginal children—this new project focuses on evaluating the impact, effectiveness and importance of culturally relevant and community driven health promotion resources. The Moorditj Marp project continues the strengths-based, community-led approach that has been central to this work.

***This project is looking for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families with a child with eczema to be involved!***



Families who consent to participate are asked to read Kaal Tackles Eczema to their child/ren 2 times a week for 4 weeks, then complete a short survey online or yarning session with an Aboriginal team member to let us know if the storybook helped their families understand more about eczema, if it changed any of their skin care routines and if they or their child related to the characters and storyline. Families receive a full-size skin care product, tote bag and \$50 voucher from either Coles or Woolworths.



**If you want to participate and share your invaluable insights, recruitment will be open until December 2025! Please check out more about the project, how to sign up and share with your networks here:**  
<https://infectiousdiseases.thekids.org.au/our-research/vaccine-trials-group/current-studies/moorditj-marp/> or scan this QR code

This project is part of a broader effort to ensure Aboriginal children and families have access to health education that is not only informative but also empowering and grounded in their own lived experiences. It is a meaningful step toward embedding Aboriginal voices in health promotion and improving outcomes through storytelling and cultural connection. This project will generate new evidence to inform guidelines to support other researchers and health promotion practice in developing culturally responsive and community led health promotion resources.

This project is a proud collaboration between The Kids, Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service, South West Aboriginal Medical Service, Cancer Council WA, CAHS and FSH.

Generously funded by MRFF, with donated skincare products by CeraVe. This study is ethically approved by the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee REF1340.



So far, 23 families have taken part in the project and we are so grateful for their participation and contributions towards this work. The findings of this project will not only showcase how important it is for Aboriginal families to be represented in skin health education and promotion resources, but will also guide the development of a suite of storybooks – each focusing on a different skin condition. This was a priority identified by community, and the Aboriginal Community Steering Group are already in the early stages of developing these new storybooks, aiming for a launch in 2026 – keep an eye out further updates!



# NGANGK NGABALA NGOONDA (SUN SAFETY) OF YOUNG MOB OF WA

CURRENTLY SEEKING PARTICIPANTS!

## CURRENTLY SEEKING PARTICIPANTS!

In Noongar language Ngangk Ngabala Ngoonda translates to Sun Safety. This project is especially important because, while Aboriginal people are less likely to develop skin cancer compared to other Australians, they often experience worse outcomes when they do.

*That's why we are coming together—as researchers, clinicians, Elders and community members (including young people), and partner organisations—to strengthen sun safety knowledge, practices, and skin cancer risk awareness among Aboriginal children and young people in Western Australia to prevent and improve health outcomes into the future.*



By raising awareness, we can help prevent skin cancer, ensure skin cancer is picked up earlier and treated sooner, leading to better health outcomes now and into the future.



### To address this, we have several objectives:

- 1 We will systematically review the consistency of current recommendations for sun protection in children and young people – completed and detailed below!
- 2 We will find out and evaluate what resources are currently available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people when it comes to sun safety or skin cancer awareness – starting soon!
- 3 We hope to better understand current knowledges and practices of young mob. **LOOKING FOR YOUNG MOB TO PARTICIPATE!** We're inviting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and young people aged 6–25 years living in WA to complete a short survey about sun safety. There are no right or wrong answers – we're just keen to understand what young mob already know and do when it comes to sun protection. Guardian consent is required for participants under the age of 18.  
Participants will receive a \$20 gift voucher, a sunscreen, strong skin hat and tote bag. To find out more or how to sign up please visit: <https://infectiousdiseases.thekids.org.au/our-research/vaccine-trials-group/current-studies/ngangk-ngabala-ngoonda/> or scan this QR code  
Recruitment will be open until the end of September 2025. Participation in this survey will directly shape resources to support and empower children and young people and their families.
- 4 We will use the knowledge gained from the first three objectives to develop community-led, culturally relevant and targeted health promotion resources to prevent sunburn and raise skin cancer awareness
- 5 We will evaluate the resources we develop to make sure they are suitable!



Providing evidence-based prevention and early intervention initiatives for Aboriginal families and communities will support knowledge gain and skills to make positive SunSmart choices, ultimately, reducing the disparity in skin cancer health outcomes for Aboriginal people

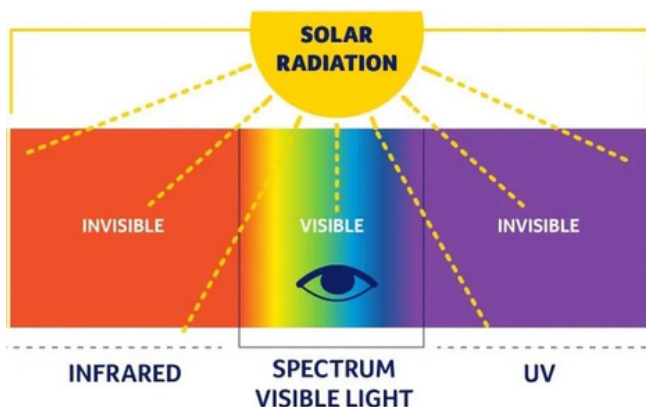
# NGANGK NGABALA NGOONDA (SUN SAFETY) OF YOUNG MOB OF WA SYSTEMATIC REVIEW RESULTS!



## JUNIOR RESEARCHERS TACKLING SUN SAFETY

The findings highlight the urgent need for more inclusive, consistent, and evidence-based sun safety guidelines that reflect the needs of all children. This work lays a strong foundation for future research and advocacy to ensure every child, regardless of skin tone, is protected from the harmful effects of UV radiation.

This piece is also a significant step forward in Dr Heather-Lynn Kessarar's journey through the Australasian College of Dermatologists training, as she works toward becoming WA's first Aboriginal Dermatologist – an incredible achievement in the making!



What is UV radiation? | Cancer Council NSW

## Congratulations to Dr Heather-Lynn Kessarar and Dr Dasmesh Sron for completing Objective 1 of the Ngangk Ngabala Ngoonda project!

This milestone involved conducting a systematic review to assess the consistency of current recommendations for sun protection in children and young people (CYP), with a particular focus on those with skin of colour (SOC).

Their review analysed 15 international guidelines and found that while most agree on the importance of sun protection, such as using sunscreen, wearing protective clothing, and avoiding peak UV hours, there is significant variation in the specific advice provided. This includes differences in recommended SPF levels, sunscreen application methods, and types of protective garments. Alarming, the review also revealed a lack of tailored guidance for CYP with SOC, despite evidence showing they often experience delayed diagnoses and worse outcomes from skin cancer.



This project is generously supported by Annie Frida Minna Adams Charitable Trust, The Norman H Johns Trust, Perpetual Foundation - The FW & CF Penberthy Endowment and Cancer Council WA. This project is a proud collaboration between The Kids, South West Aboriginal Medical Service, Cancer Council WA and Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service. This study is ethically approved by the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee REF1381.



# MEET THE MOORDITJ MARP ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY STEERING GROUP (ACSG)



Strong Aboriginal governance is at the heart of our research, helping ensure that projects are meaningful and deliver real, lasting benefits for community. Back in early 2022, dedicated community members joined the Healthy Skin team to help guide the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin Project. Since then, the work has grown, and so has the group. Originally known as the Aboriginal Community Advisory Group, they are now the Moorditj Marp (Strong Skin) Aboriginal Community Steering Group. This new name better reflects their leadership, direction, and the important role they play in shaping healthy skin and ARF prevention research. The ACSG is a key part of our Aboriginal Governance structure. They help ensure our research is culturally safe, respectful, and aligned with community values. Their guidance supports every stage of the work, from co-design and development to implementation and evaluation. We're so grateful to walk alongside these incredible members, who bring invaluable cultural knowledge, community insight and lived experience. Their voices are helping drive real change and ensure that the work we do continues to make a positive impact.





# MEET THE MOORDITJ MARP ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY STEERING GROUP (ACSG)

## MEET Kasharla Emmerton-Smith

Kasharla was born on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and has strong family connections to the Smith, Hansen, Wallam, and Parfit families. She is deeply passionate about improving the lives of young Indigenous people through cultural sharing and community engagement. In 2023, Kasharla was a member of the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Youth Steering Group, contributing her voice to important conversations about youth wellbeing. She currently serves on the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee, where she works to enhance the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Kasharla also supports efforts to educate Indigenous families on maintaining good skin health and keeping their mob strong and healthy as a member of the steering group.



## MEET Annette Garlett

Annette is a proud Wilman and Wardandi woman from Noongar country, with strong family and cultural ties to the communities of Pingelly, Burekup, Waterloo, and Bunbury. She is connected to the Collard, Hill, Abraham, Bennell, Hume, Parfitt, and Winmar/Hare families. Growing up in a large family, Annette developed a deep interest in child health, shaped by her lived experience with skin and health conditions that affected many children around her. This personal insight drives her passion for supporting families and communities to better understand and care for their health and wellbeing, particularly in the area of childhood illnesses. Annette is actively involved in cultural heritage projects and serves on various community committees. Her work reflects a strong commitment to preserving Noongar culture and empowering her community through knowledge, care, and connection.



## MEET De'Karla-Maree Kickett

De'Karla-Maree Kickett is a proud Noongar woman, born and raised in Perth. Being the big sister of 5 and many younger cousins she always wanted to help and was the big sister to all—inspiring her aspiration to become a paediatrician one day. It is her dream to help others and to put a smile on their faces and make them feel better. Deeply committed to giving back, she always makes time to support young people in need. A bubbly, friendly and smiley face, De'Karla-Maree worked in customer service/people facing roles since she was 15 yrs old. Currently working as a customer service Team leader/Trainer and as an Aboriginal Tour guide for the family business, she brings a strong passion in helping people, educating, and sharing knowledge and culture. De-Karla-Maree is an active member of the Aboriginal Community Steering Group, where she supports work to improve skin health outcomes for Aboriginal children and their families.



## MEET Kristy Jetta

Kristy is a proud Wardandi woman, born and raised in the southwest city of Bunbury. She belongs to the Jetta, Wallam, Humphries, and Little moort (families), with deep connections across Noongar boodjar. Kristy is passionate about nurturing strong koolangka (children) within her community through education, sport, and language. With diverse career experiences, Kristy's true passion lies in empowering the next generation to be healthy, proud, and culturally strong. Her role as a co-author of Kaal Tackles Eczema sparked a stronger commitment to raising awareness around children's health and safety, placing these issues at the forefront of her community work. Kristy is highly motivated by her nieces and nephews, who inspire her every day to help build a future where young people are informed, confident, and connected to culture.





# MEET THE MOORDITJ MARP ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY STEERING GROUP (ACSG)

## MEET Joanne Hill

Joanne is a proud Noongar and Ngadju woman, belonging to the Thorne, Michael, Hume, Hart, Dimer, Wilson, Rogers, and Boxer families, with strong cultural ties across the southern regions of Western Australia and South Australia. With over 25 years of dedicated service to the South West Indigenous and broader communities, Joanne has been instrumental in driving meaningful economic and social outcomes. Her work reflects a lifelong commitment to community empowerment and sustainable development. A devoted mother of three, Joanne is passionate about children's health and promoting healthy lifestyles, championing initiatives that support the wellbeing of future generations.



## MEET Larissa Jones

Larissa Jones is a Whadjuk, Ballardong Noongar woman from Boorloo (Perth), Western Australia and is an Aboriginal Researcher on the Ngulluk Moort, Ngulluk Boodja, Ngulluk Wirin (Our Family, Our Country, Our Spirit) Out-of-Home Care Study with The Kids Research Institute Australia, and she is a mother of two teenage daughters. Larissa is passionate about and has extensive experience in Elder and community led qualitative studies using Aboriginal participatory action research methods that centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. Her research interests include the use of co-design, strength-based approaches for providing culturally safe and responsive environments that benefit the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and community. As well as being a researcher, Larissa is a member of two Aboriginal community advisory groups, the Social and Emotional Wellbeing through the Arts (SEW-Art) group and the Moorditj Marp (Strong Skin) Aboriginal Community Steering Group to share her knowledge and lived experiences; especially in the Moorditj Marp group as she suffered from skin conditions as a child, as does one of her teenage daughters.



## MEET Leah Wearne

Leah is a proud Warnman woman of the Martu Nation, with connections to the Noongar community through her father, who was taken to Roelands Mission in 1935. After living and working across various parts of Australia, Leah returned to Western Australia in 2009 to start a family. She currently works as a Care Finder at Advocare WA, where she supports vulnerable older people in navigating aged care services, a role she finds deeply fulfilling. Leah is actively involved in several community and advocacy groups, including Advocare's Aboriginal Reflect RAP Working Group, the Australind Primary School Board, the Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Corporation, the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship of Australia, the Catholic Education WA Aboriginal Community Committee, the Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) National ATSI Committee, and the First Nations National Aged Care Codesign Group. Leah is a passionate advocate for First Nations voices and led the Bunbury Yes23 events in support of the Voice to Parliament. She is currently working toward becoming a Justice of the Peace to further support her community. Her previous involvement with the Healthy Skin App Community Advisory Group has led to her current role in this Steering Group. As a mother of three children with varying skin concerns, Leah brings both personal experience and professional dedication to raising awareness about common skin conditions to empower Aboriginal communities.



## MEET Delys Walton nee Michael

Delys is a proud Wilman Noongar woman from the Michael and Thorne families, born in Williams and raised on Wandering Mission. A retired education assistant and Noongar language teacher, Delys has dedicated her life to supporting children through learning, believing that knowledge is key to better health outcomes and stronger futures. Her passion for art and language continues to shape her community involvement. Delys serves on the local school board, contributes to the Aboriginal Language Corporation board, and provides valuable cultural and educational insight as a member on the Moorditj Marp Aboriginal Community Steering Group.



## MEET Sally Smith

Sally (also known as Thelma) was born on Whadjuk boodjar and has strong family connections to the Parfitt, Hansen, Wallam, and Smith families. A devoted mother of six and a loving carer for extended family members, Sally finds great joy in supporting those around her. She is deeply passionate about finding solutions to issues affecting Aboriginal families and is committed to ensuring that local knowledge and lived experience are embedded in research that gives back to the community. Sally joined the original Healthy Skin Advisory Group back in early 2022 to help guide research in a way that is culturally informed and community-driven.

As someone whose family has lived with ongoing skin conditions, Sally brings valuable insight and personal experience to her role. Her involvement in the research team allows her to learn, share, and contribute to projects that aim to improve health outcomes and create lasting impact for future generations.



## MEET Natasha Kickett

Natasha (Tash) is a proud Kariyarra/Bunuba woman, raised in Port Hedland and now living in Perth with her husband and three children. As the youngest of six in a large, close-knit family, Tash's life has always been grounded in strong cultural identity and deep family ties. A qualified social worker and co-founder of Kaarla Baabpa Consulting, Tash brings extensive experience across child protection, cultural consultancy, and policy development. She is deeply passionate about improving outcomes for Aboriginal children and families, with a particular focus on areas such as child health, cultural identity, and skin systems. Her work is guided by a belief in community-led, culturally grounded approaches. Tash is driven by a strong sense of purpose and connection to community. In every role she takes on, she works to ensure that Aboriginal voices are heard, respected, and central to creating lasting, meaningful change.



## MEET Kyle Kallenberg

Kyle is a proud Noongar man, devoted father and family man, with professional experience across both the education and health sectors. Deeply connected to his community, Kyle is passionate about driving positive change and achieving meaningful outcomes for the people he serves.



# 6

## WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION DECLARES SKIN DISEASE A GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH PRIORITY

In May 2025, a historic resolution was passed at the World Health Assembly in Geneva, officially declaring skin diseases a global public health priority. This is a major milestone that shines a light on something we've long known, skin conditions are not just medical issues, they affect how people feel, how they're treated, and how they live. Skin diseases are among the most visible health conditions, often leading to stigma, discrimination, and emotional distress. But skin also tells a story—early signs of many illnesses show up on the skin, making it a powerful tool for early detection and care.

For us at the Healthy Skin Team, this global recognition strengthens and validates our work. It supports our commitment to working alongside communities in ways that are respectful, inclusive, and culturally grounded. It also opens up new opportunities for support, partnerships, and action—helping us continue to make sure everyone has access to the knowledge, resources, and care they need to keep their skin healthy and their confidence strong.

The recent decision by the World Health Organization (WHO) to recognize skin diseases as a global public health priority marks a pivotal moment for the field of dermatological health. This action, endorsed at the 78th World Health Assembly in May 2025, acknowledges the significant burden of skin conditions worldwide and calls for integrated, equity-focused strategies to improve skin health across all populations.



World Health Organization



For the Healthy Skin Team, this global recognition further validates and strengthens our mission. It aligns with our commitment to advancing skin health through culturally responsive, community-led initiatives and reinforces the urgency of our work in prevention, education, and access to care—particularly in underserved and Indigenous communities. This momentum opens new avenues for collaboration, funding, and policy influence, positioning our efforts within a broader, globally endorsed framework for action.

Reference: <https://www.who.int/news/item/24-05-2025-seventy-eighth-world-health-assembly---daily-update--24-may-2025>



## Moorditj Marp (strong skin) – SHARE Initiative

Through a collaborative process with Aboriginal Elders and community involvement, we have designed an inpatient Aboriginal Health Practitioner (AHP)-led, research-service Skin Health Assessment & Research Evaluation (SHARE) Initiative for Aboriginal CYP admitted to PCH. Opportunistic, culturally sensitive skin checks and strengths-based skin health education (yarning style) will be delivered by an AHP to consenting children and families. Where needed, inpatient consultation with a specialist dermatologist will follow, ensuring accurate diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up is provided to improve symptoms and quality of life; along with reduced infection and prevention of potentially serious downstream health complications.

Families will also be invited to take part in follow-up surveys to share their experiences and help the team understand how skin conditions affect their child's wellbeing and family life. Healthcare workers will be surveyed before and after the project to see how their knowledge and practices change. All of this will help ensure the service is respectful, useful, and culturally safe.

Beyond the hospital walls, SHARE is expected to have a lasting impact. It will demonstrate the value of Aboriginal Health Practitioner-led models of care in the hospital (where they are very new), models that are grounded in cultural knowledge, community trust, and holistic support. By embedding AHPs in specialist hospital teams, SHARE aims to improve access, equity, and outcomes for Aboriginal children. The project will also build the skills and leadership of Aboriginal health workers, strengthen partnerships with community, and provide a blueprint for expanding culturally safe care across other hospitals and health services in WA and beyond.

Congratulations to Dr Bernadette Ricciardo who has received a Raine Fellowship to support this initiative. *This project is currently under review by the Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee.*



## Head Lice Project

Head lice also known as 'nits' are very common among Australian children. Breaks in the scalp due to the itchiness can allow infection by bacteria such as Group A Streptococcus (GAS), if untreated, they can develop into life-threatening conditions.



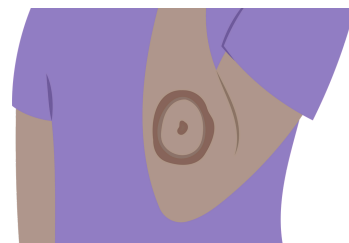
Aboriginal communities in Western Australia have told us they want a simple, fast-acting treatment for head lice without embarrassing their kids like the topical lotions they use now. We want to run a clinical trial in the future to compare the topical permethrin (currently the first-line treatment for head lice in Australia), with oral ivermectin (currently used to treat scabies in Australia), giving families an alternative and practical treatment option.

The aim of this project is to consult community members and healthcare providers about how they would feel about participating in this clinical trial, what Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) should be included in the trial, and how the trial should be run. The research will be inclusive and collaborative to reimagine study data collection in head lice trials, to be more encompassing than the current primary outcome of cure of infestation at 14 days. Congratulations to Dr Ingrid Amgarth-Duff on securing a WCVID Seed Funding Grant to support kicking off this work!

## Chewable Chocolate Terbinafine Tablet Project

Tinea also known as ringworm, is a common, itchy skin infection. When creams don't work, especially for scalp or nail infections, the best treatment is oral terbinafine. Unfortunately, the current tablet is bitter which makes it difficult for kids to take consistently.

To address this, we've developed a chocolate-flavoured chewable version of terbinafine. Chocolate's fat content helps mask the bitterness, and our pilot study has shown promise. We're now preparing for an adult bioavailability study to confirm the new formulation works as effectively as the original. While this study involves adults, it's crucial we keep children's needs at the centre, and that includes involving caregivers and community members from the start.



## The Healthy Skin App

The Healthy Skin App is designed to be a user-friendly, accessible resource that empowers families with knowledge and tools to support skin health and management. It was developed in response to valuable community feedback from the **SToP Trial** (See, Treat, Prevent Skin Sores and Scabies) and the Koolungar Moorditj Healthy Skin projects, the app reflects the voices and insights of this feedback as well as the guidance from more than 20 community members who participated in design workshops held on Wardandi and Whadjukboodjar. The app is in final stages of development and will soon be ready to launch. Stay tuned for launch details!

**Taleah Ugle****Agnes Low****Brooke Garlett**

### **Taleah Ugle - joins the team as Aboriginal Research Assistant**

Taleah is a proud Noongar woman with connections to Minang, Goreng and Ballardong country. She is in her final year of her Undergraduate degree in Anatomy and Human Biology and Indigenous knowledge, history and heritage at the University of Western Australia. Taleah had participated in two internships here at the Kids Research Institute prior to being appointed the Aboriginal Research Assistant role part time in the Healthy Skin Team. Her role encompasses many aspects of the research and is primarily dedicated to the Moorditj Marp and Ngangk Ngabala Ngoonda projects. She is excited to be more involved and build her track record in research especially research impacting Aboriginal communities.

### **Agnes Low - Project Officer Role**

Agnes was born and raised in Malaysia, and has lived on 3 different continents over the past 15 years. She worked for HSBC Bank Malaysia before taking a career break – initially to move to Perth for her husband's postgraduate studies, and later to start and nurture a family. In 2023, Agnes joined the Healthy Skin & ARF Prevention Team full time as Asha's Executive Officer. As the team continues to grow, we are delighted that Agnes—bringing deep knowledge, positive energy, and strong management skills—has transitioned into a Project Officer role this year and will be supporting the Moorditj Marp projects.

### **Brooke Garlett - Internship and Research Assistant Role**

Brooke is a proud Whadjuk Noongar Woman currently in her final year at the University of Western Australia studying a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Psychological Behavioural Sciences and Indigenous Knowledge, History and Heritage. “Over the last four weeks I have been lucky enough to intern with the Healthy Skin team at The Kids. During my internship I worked closely with the Urban Skin team as well as the SNAP team, where I learned so many new and exciting things! Collaborating with such a dedicated and passionate group gave me valuable insight into culturally responsive healthcare practices. I appreciated the opportunity to contribute to meaningful projects, such as developing educational resources, helping at recruitment events, designing kids' activities and participating in community outreach days. We were privileged enough to be invited by Derbarl Yerrigan Aboriginal Health Services to participate in an outreach day at their clinic where we held a free back-to-school skin screening for the Aboriginal community. This was a highlight for me as I was able to actively contribute back to the community. Projects and events such as these underscore the team's commitment to culturally responsive, community-centered care and the importance of giving people autonomy in their decisions. The team's dedication to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal children is so inspiring and aligns with my interest in advocating for culturally safe healthcare practices that are accessible for all Aboriginal people. I could not have asked for a better team to spend these last 4 weeks with!” Brooke now works with Healthy Skin Team as a Aboriginal Research Assistant!



# TEAM UPDATES



**Lisa Weise**



**Lisa Pigliafiori**



**Dr Tracy McRae**

## **Lisa Weise – New Program Manager**

As the Program Manager, Lisa provides managerial oversight and coordinates the growing portfolio of research projects in the field of skin health and infectious diseases, including in remote and urban Aboriginal communities in WA. Lisa has over 20 years of experience working for non-profit organisations in project management, governance, strategy and community engagement. She has a passion for empowering people.

## **Lisa Pigliafiori - Aboriginal Health Project Officer**

Lisa is a proud Murri from Queensland and is a descendant of the Erubam Le People in the Torres Strait and has family connections to Wuthathi people from Lockhart River in Far North Queensland. Lisa has a clinical background and Project Management experience working on several health projects in remote and urban Indigenous communities in QLD and SA and previously worked for Menzies School of Health Research coordinating a Diabetes in Pregnancy Qualitative Study for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women who have experienced Type 2 and or GDM in pregnancy. Lisa joined the Healthy Skin and ARF prevention team in March this year as the Aboriginal Health Project Officer on the [SNAP trial](#), in her role she will be supporting community engagement for Moorditj Marp projects – say hello and have yarn if you see her at events!

## **Dr Tracy McRae**

McRae has recently completed her PhD focusing on community-led health promotion initiatives embedded within the See, Treat, Prevent (SToP) Trial. She has worked extensively on community engagement with Aboriginal communities in the Kimberley and Pilbara regions of WA to ensure Aboriginal peoples' voices are centralised throughout the research process. Having published 7 first-author manuscripts, her work, underpinned by Constructivism prioritises Aboriginal worldviews within a biomedical framework to support equitable health outcomes. She encourages two-way learning approaches to ensure Aboriginal and medical knowledges intersect for a holistic approach to health and wellbeing for Aboriginal people. Tracy is supporting the Moorditj Marp team across all areas of the research projects.



### Discovery Centre Collaboration



The Healthy Skin team collaborated with The Kids Discovery Centre for a Sun Safety themed activation. At the heart of this initiative is the 'Ngangk Ngabala Ngoonda' project aiming to strengthen the sun safety knowledge of Aboriginal children and young people in Western Australia while identifying their unique needs for sun protection. Kids were able to dive into hands-on activities at the Discovery Centre by rolling the dice and choosing the most sun safe clothing for adorable cutout characters. There was also a chance to win one of five bottles of sunscreen in a fun competition—perfect for keeping summer skin safe! Some amazing volunteers were at the table, sharing their favourite ways to keep sun safe and even taking the activity around Perth Children's Hospital (PCH), spreading awareness and fun in outpatient areas. The purpose of this collaboration was to engage young people in sun safe practices. From rolling dice and dressing up dolls, children were able to learn why it is so important to be sun safe, and how to safely enjoy a sunny day. Let's make sun safety second nature for our young mob in WA!



### International Clinical Trials Day 2025



International Clinical Trials Day 2025 was observed on May 20. The themes for 2025 were "Rethinking Clinical Trials: Inclusivity in Practice" and "Powered by Purpose". This day commemorates the birth of modern clinical trials and highlights the importance of clinical research in improving patient outcomes. Members of the Healthy Skin team joined Kaal and his moort (family) at the Clinical Trials Day stall on ground floor at Perth Children's Hospital.

Taleah, Lisa P and Jacinta yarned with young mob about how important strong skin is for overall health and wellbeing, shared skin health resources with families and supported participants in completing the Ngangk Ngabala Ngoonda survey at the Binar Basketball Carnival Health Embassy event in Australind in April 2025.



### Binar Basketball Carnival Health Embassy

### Welcome Baby to Country event at Armadale Champion Centre



Taleah, Lisa P and Jacinta recently joined The Kids Ear Health team in Armadale at the Champion Centre Welcome Baby to Country event.

### Lowitja Institute's 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference

Taleah, Lisa P, Hannah and Jacinta got to listen and learn from some powerful Aboriginal health research leaders on Kurna country in June at the recent Lowitja Institute's 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference.





# EVENTS AND ENGAGEMENT



Our team joined Derbarl's Healthy Skin Check day in February 2025, where kids enjoyed fun and engaging skin health activities while learning about the importance of healthy skin and receiving a skin check!



**Derbarl's Healthy Skin Check Day**

## National Reconciliation Week 2024



Ingrid joined the Perth Children's Hospital (PCH) team, including Kyle from the ACSI, during NRW 2024 to share resources with families on ground floor at PCH.

We joined the South West Aboriginal Medical Service NAIDOC Family Fun Day 2024 – where the FIRST Moorditj Marp participant was recruited!



**NAIDOC 2024**

## Ongoing Derbarl and SWAMS Pop-Up Stalls!



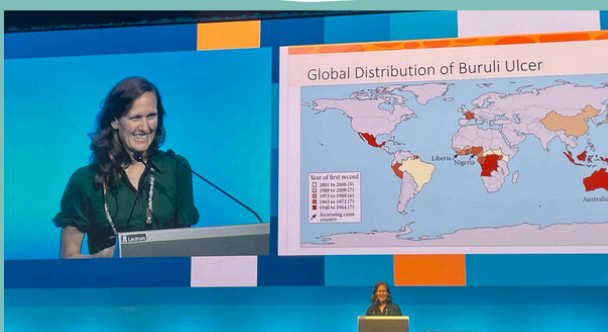
Our team regularly set a pop-up stall in the waiting areas of Derbarl Yerrigan Health Service (East Perth Clinic) and the South West Aboriginal Medical Service (Forrest Ave Clinic) – if you see us there, come and have a yarn!

## On Country with Uncle Noel



Jacinta had the privilege of slowing down, listening and learning more about the Noongar culture and stories of the land.





**Practical application of Aboriginal Health Research Standards in Dermatology [oral presentation].**

Australasian College of Dermatologists 56th Annual Scientific Meeting, May 2024, Perth.

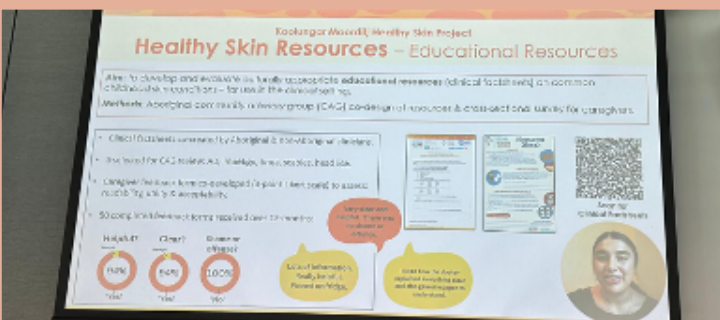
**Eczema in urban-living Aboriginal children: learnings and resources from the Koolungar (children) Moorditj (strong) Healthy Skin project [oral presentation].**

Australasian College of Dermatologists 56th Annual Scientific Meeting, May 2024, Perth.



**Moorditj Marp: 'Strong Skin for Strong Aboriginal children and families' [oral presentation].**

15th World Congress of Paediatric Dermatology, April 2025, Buenos Aires Argentina



**Eczema in urban-living Aboriginal Children: community-led skin healthy research informing a health promotion resource [oral presentation].**

CAHS Research Symposium, Nov 2024, Perth Children's Hospital.



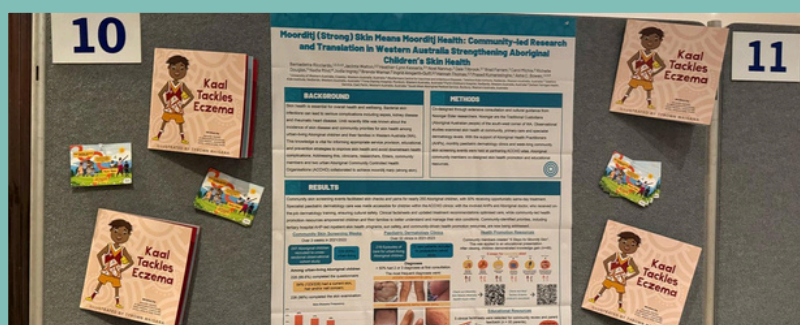
**Moorditj (Strong) Skin Means Moorditj Health: Community-led Research and Translation in Western Australia Strengthening Aboriginal Children's Skin Health. [poster presentation].**

International Meeting on Indigenous Child Health, March 2025, Winnipeg Manitoba.



**Moorditj Marp (Strong Skin): strengthening skin health outcomes through community driven research and translation initiatives [poster presentation].**

The Lancefield International Symposium on Streptococci and Streptococcal Diseases, June 2025, Brisbane Australia. (upcoming)



**Perth Dermatology Research Collaborative (PDRC) - The Kids Joint Academic Session**

Dr. Dasmesh Sron presented the Ngangk Ngabala Ngoonda systematic review at the Perth Dermatology Research Collaborative - The Kids Joint Academic Session in March 2025.

The Healthy Skin team co-organises this event with PDRC twice a year, providing an opportunity for dermatologists, physicians, dermatology trainees, basic science researchers, young doctors, and medical students to come together for collaborative learning and knowledge-sharing.



Skin health of urban-living Aboriginal children attending a primary care Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation clinic. Published in the *Australian Journal of General Practice*.

[Read Manuscript](#)

COMING SOON! The Koolungar (children) Moorditj (strong) Healthy Skin Project Part I: conducting First Nations research in pediatric dermatology. Under review as part 1 of a 2-part series in the international journal, *Pediatric Dermatology*.

[Available Soon](#)

COMING SOON! The Koolungar (children) Moorditj (strong) Healthy Skin Project Part II: skin health in urban-living Australian Aboriginal children. Under review as part 2 of a 2-part series in the international journal, *Pediatric Dermatology*.

[Available Soon](#)

COMING SOON! Recommendations for sun protection in children and young people: A systematic review of guidelines and consensus statements. Under review.

[Available Soon](#)

### Think of The Kids – Institute Rebrand

Some of you may have already seen at the end of August 2024 the institute rebranded to The Kids Research Institute Australia you can read more about this here: [Launching The Kids](#)

### Launch of the Reconciliation Action Plan

The Kids Research Institute Australia is proud to launch its Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) during National Reconciliation Week 2025 “Bridging Now to Next”. The RAP strengthens The Kids’ longstanding commitment to improving health equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families, with clear deliverables and timelines to affect real change.

Visit: [Walking together for Reconciliation](#) for more details and to view the full RAP.

### New Strategic Plan!

At The Kids Research Institute Australia our vision is simple – happy healthy KIDS.

Our purpose is to find solutions to improve the health and happiness of children and young people everywhere. Our new 10-year Strategic Plan, RESEARCH REIMAGINED, sets out our vision for even greater impact. A key driver in the plan is that we not only do research, but as an organisation we take responsibility for supporting our research to deliver impactful outcomes.

Visit: [Vision and Strategy](#) for more details and to view to the full plan.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Standards

Firmly aligned to both the RAP and Research Reimagined Strategic plan, the second edition of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Standards has recently been launched. The Institute's Standards for the Conduct of Aboriginal Health Research outline our ways of working with Aboriginal communities and peoples, and helps us to understand what actions and activities are needed to genuinely listen and respond to communities priorities, uplift Aboriginal governance, and build community capacity while undertaking impactful and meaningful research.

Visit: [Aboriginal Research Standards](#) for more details and the full standards.

Led by The Kids Research Institute Australia and Aboriginal health organisations in close partnership with nine Aboriginal communities in Western Australia's Kimberley region, the five-year SToP Trial set out to identify the best possible methods to See, Treat and Prevent painful skin sores and scabies.

Left untreated, skin infections can cause life-threatening illnesses including rheumatic heart disease (RHD), sepsis and kidney disease – all of which disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

The results demonstrated that improved detection through skin surveillance in schools played the biggest role in achieving our outcome – having a strong focus on regular skin checks, communicating these results to the school, clinic and families, and really elevating skin health as a priority were the key factors we were able to identify in the SToP Trial.

Researchers worked closely with community members and local health services – including Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services, Nirumbuk Environmental Health Services, and the WA Country Health Service – to complete skin check-ups and yarn about the best approaches for local treatment and sharing prevention messages.

We completed 3,084 skin checks over the four-year period and covered over 45,000 kms travelling to 81 community visits in order to gain a full picture of how skin infections affect kids and their families

We really wanted to empower the children to prioritise their own health, so in addition to skin checks and efforts to improve treatment we embedded a number of interactive projects for the kids to get involved in.

This included a hip-hop video filmed on the Dampier Peninsula that shared healthy skin messages in the children's own words, co-designing workshop materials in the classroom, and developing healthy skin story books featuring language, photos and artwork created by the students.

Together, these resources create a legacy that combines western medicine and traditional cultural knowledge that will help communities maintain healthy skin.



**GATHERING CIRCLES, PAINTED BY BARDI MAN LUKE RICHES (2020), TELLS THE STORY OF THE STOP TRIAL.**

## RESOURCES

**WHAT IS  
THE STOP  
TRIAL?**



**THE STOP  
TRIAL  
COMMUNITY**



**RESOURCE  
HUB**



Trimodal skin health programme for childhood impetigo control in remote Western Australia (SToP): a cluster randomised, stepped-wedge trial

[Read Manuscript](#)

Multi-methods process evaluation of the SToP (See, Treat, Prevent) trial: a cluster randomised, stepped wedge trial to support healthy skin

[Read Manuscript](#)

Culturally supported health promotion to See, Treat, Prevent (SToP) skin infections in Aboriginal children living in the Kimberley region of Western Australia: a qualitative analysis

[Read Manuscript](#)

HipHop2SToP a community-led health promotion initiative empowering Aboriginal youth in the Kimberley region of Western Australia: a process evaluation

[Read Manuscript](#)

'Beyond core business': A qualitative review of activities supporting environmental health within remote Western Australian schools

[Read Manuscript](#)

Yarning with a remote Aboriginal community about the next steps for achieving healthy skin

[Read Manuscript](#)





We, The Healthy Skin Team, believe every child and young person deserves strong healthy skin through science, community driven action, and a focus on health equity, especially for Aboriginal kids.

We work to prevent skin infections and their serious impacts.

## **STRONG SKIN, STRONG KIDS, STRONG COMMUNITIES.**

If you would like to reach out to the Healthy Skin team, please contact [StrongSkin@thekids.org.au](mailto:StrongSkin@thekids.org.au) or visit our webpage: [www.thekids.org.au/healthy-skin](http://www.thekids.org.au/healthy-skin)

Images throughout this newsletter have been used with permission, thank you to all the koolugnar (children) and families for supporting our work.

Thank you to [Kelli Savietto](#) for the graphic design template.

Artwork by Luke Riches, Bardi man from Ardyaloon, Dampier Peninsula. Artwork story: Gathering Circles tells the story of the The SToP (See, Treat, Prevent) Skin Sores and Scabies Trial. The circles represent the nine Aboriginal communities working with the SToP Trial.

#### **Citation:**

Walton J, Ugle T, Garlett B, Tilbrook D, Nannup N, Ricciardo B, Amgarth-Duff I, McRae T, Low A, Shim M, Kessar HL, Burgess R, Bowen AC. Moorditj Marp Newsletter. Issue No. 3. Perth: The Kids Research Institute; 2025 Aug.