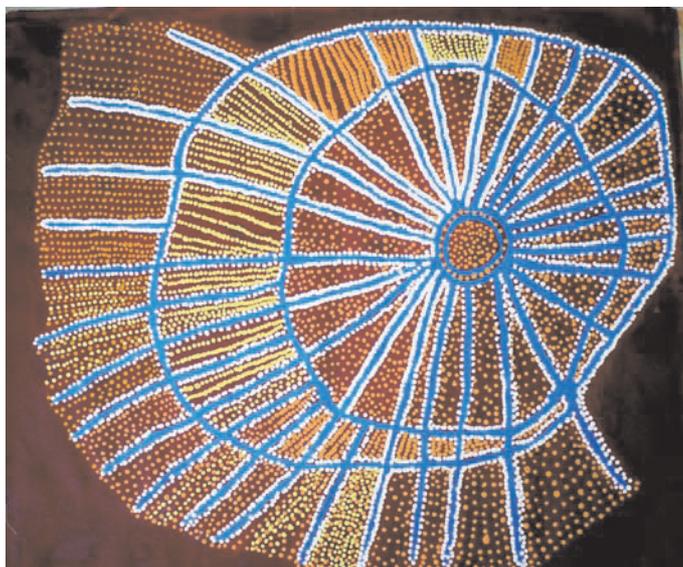


WORKFORCE DREAMING

- 493** Our doctors making a difference — *Editorial*
Peter O'Mara
Why we need more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander doctors.
- 495** The challenges of remote area medical education — *Editorial*
Louis G Peachey, Kristin E McBain-Rigg
Is a totally safe environment for students going bush desirable or achievable?
- 497** Safeguard or mollycoddle? An exploratory study describing potentially harmful incidents during medical student placements in Aboriginal communities in Central Australia — *Research*
Ameeta Patel, Peter Underwood, Hung The Nguyen, Margaret Vigants
What can students, supervisors and medical educators learn from distressing incidents?

TALKING POLICY

- 501** How can Australia do better for Indigenous health? — *Editorial*
Peter W Tait
What governments would do if they were really serious about "Closing the Gap".
- 503** Increasing alcohol restrictions and rates of serious injury in four remote Australian Indigenous communities — *Research*
Stephen A Margolis, Valmae A Ypinazar, Reinhold Muller, Alan Clough
Are imposed alcohol bans having the desired effect?



Shorly Robertson

SHALOM GAMARADA NGIYANI YANA ART EXHIBITION

Featured throughout this issue are paintings from the Shalom Gamarada Ngiyani Yana Art Exhibition. The sale of these artworks by acclaimed Aboriginal artists supports the Shalom Gamarada Indigenous Scholarship Program at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), a collaboration between Shalom College (a residential college at the UNSW) and the Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit, School of Public Health and Community Medicine at UNSW. For more information about the exhibition and sale, and the scholarship program, see the Shalom Gamarada website: <http://www.shalomgamarada.org>
See pages: 489, 490, 491, 494, 539, 542, 559

- 507** Alcohol restrictions in Indigenous communities: necessary but not sufficient — *Commentary*
Peter HN d'Abbs
Reducing alcohol harms: thinking beyond supply reduction.
- 508** Alcohol restrictions in Indigenous communities: an effective strategy if Indigenous-led — *Commentary*
Dennis A Gray, Edward T Wilkes
Reducing alcohol harms: does the end justify the means?
- 509** Research, information and consent for the Australian Health Survey: a separate standard for Indigenous people?
Wendy E Hoy — *Viewpoint*
Will the Indigenous wave of the upcoming Australian Health Survey lead to research disadvantage for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
- 511** Indigenous participation in the Australian Health Survey: a response — *Viewpoint*
Paul L Jelfs
A reply from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and its advisors.

CLOSING THE GAP

- 512** Social determinants and the health of Indigenous Australians — *Editorial*
Michael Marmot
Salient international work on disadvantage can be applied to a peculiarly Australian problem.
- 514** Glycaemia and albuminuria as predictors of coronary heart disease in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults: a north Queensland cohort — *Research*
Robyn A McDermott, Brad McCulloch, Ming Li
Do these and other novel factors contribute independently to excess cardiovascular risk in Indigenous Australians?



Lydia Balbal



Lydia Balbal

DR ROSS INGRAM MEMORIAL COMPETITION

- 539** Alfie the tooth fairy (an animation) — *Winning artwork*
Alison Dimer
The importance of keeping tooth fairies healthy.
- 540** Strong body, strong mind, strong culture — *Runner-up artwork*
Luke B Mallie
- 540** Talking about hepatitis — *Runner-up artwork*
Peter C Waples-Crowe
- 541** Mental illness or spiritual illness: what should we call it? — *Winning essay*
Lindy L Moffatt
A mother's insights into her son's mental illness.
- 543** Closing gaps, maintaining cadence and removing trampolines: a personal reflection on 20 years in health — *Runner-up essay*
Darren C Garvey
Cycling, self-care and closing the gap.

BODY MIND MATTERS

- 546** Racism as a determinant of social and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal Australian youth — *Research*
Naomi C Priest, Yin C Paradies, Wendy Gunthorpe, Sheree J Cairney, Sue M Sayers
How does the experience of racism affect young people in the vulnerable adolescent years?

- 519** Sepsis in the tropical Top End of Australia's Northern Territory: disease burden and impact on Indigenous Australians — *Research*

Joshua S Davis, Allen C Cheng, Mark McMillan, Alex B Humphrey, Dianne P Stephens, Nicholas M Anstey

What is the magnitude of this problem, what are the outcomes, and how might the high burden be avoided?

- 525** Epidemiology of syphilis in Australia: moving toward elimination of infectious syphilis from remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities? — *Research*

James S Ward, Rebecca J Guy, Snehal P Akre, Melanie G Middleton, Carolien M Giele, Jiunn Y Su, Craig A Davis, Handan Wand, Janet B Knox, Patricia S Fagan, Basil Donovan, John M Kaldor, Darren B Russell

National notification data reveal an Indigenous "good news" story.

- 530** Reducing the burden of cancer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians: time for a coordinated, collaborative, priority-driven, Indigenous-led research program — *Viewpoint*

Gail Garvey, Joan Cunningham, Patricia C Valery, John Condon, David Roder, Ross Bailie, Jennifer Martin, Ian Olver

Moves are afoot to ensure that Indigenous Australians enjoy the same opportunities for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and palliation as other Australians.

- 532** The Lowitja Institute: building a national strategic research agenda to improve the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples — *Research enterprise*

Kerry Arabena, David Moodie

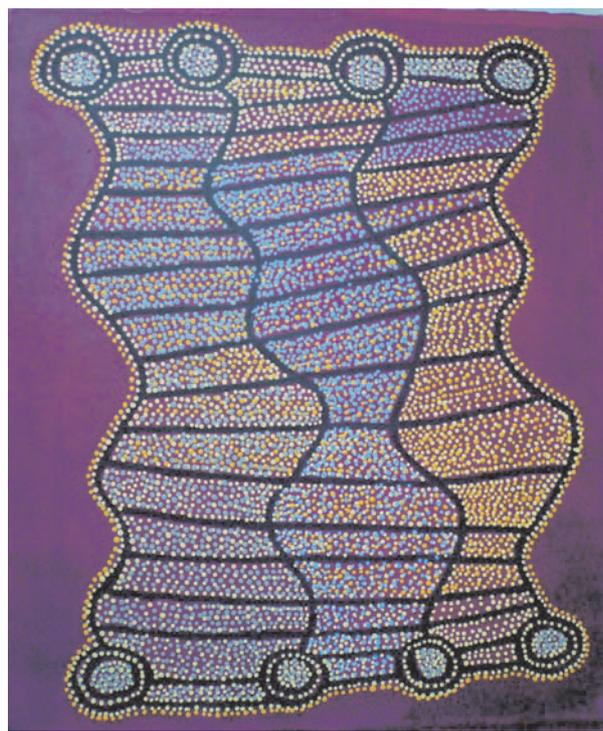
Indigenous health research by the people for the people.

- 535** Indigenous child health checks: the view from the city — *Letter*

Justin J Coleman, Geoffrey K Spurling, Deborah A Askew, Noel E Hayman

- 537** Use of eye care services by Indigenous Australian adults — *Letter*

Anna-Lena M R Arnold, Lucy Busija, Jill E Keeffe, Hugh R Taylor



Shorty Robertson



Lydia Balbal



Lydia Balbal

- 551** The transformative potential of young motherhood for disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Townsville, Australia — *Research*

Sarah L Larkins, R Priscilla Page, Kathryn S Panaretto, Melvina Mitchell, Valerie Alberts, Suzanne McGinty, P Craig Veitch

A nuanced exploration of early parenthood: is it always a bad thing?

- 556** Maternal smoking and smoking in the household during pregnancy and postpartum: findings from an Indigenous cohort in the Northern Territory — *Research*

Vanessa Johnston, David P Thomas, Joseph McDonnell, Ross M Andrews

In a population with high background smoking rates, what opportunities for intervention are afforded by the birth of a child?

Cover image: The winner of the Dr Ross Ingram Memorial Competition for best original artwork is an animation from the Western Desert Kidney Health Project, *Allie the tooth fairy* (see page 539).

Editor's Choice

Questions and answers in Indigenous health

Research into the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has often been accused of being too observational and deficit-focused, with a dearth of interventional studies. Ten years ago, when the *MJA* editors were reviewing the Journal's coverage of the topic, we even considered putting a moratorium on publishing the many observational studies that were crossing our desks.

In the past few years, the concept of closing the gap in life expectancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians has galvanised thinking in the area. Coming as it did from Indigenous leaders, and rapidly gaining widespread support, this movement has provided a much needed focus for all Australians. But as time has moved on, it has become increasingly obvious that we need to better understand the contributors to the gap in order to close it.

In this issue, for instance, McDermott and colleagues are able to show, after following a cohort of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults for over 7 years, that the non-traditional risk factors of glycaemia and proteinuria make a significant contribution to the excess cardiovascular risk seen in Indigenous Australians (*page 514*). This has important implications for screening and treatment. Looking beyond conventional causes of morbidity, Priest and colleagues quantify the devastating effect of racism on the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal adolescents (*page 546*). Larkins and colleagues use mixed methods to tease out some of the issues for disadvantaged young Indigenous people with high rates of teen pregnancy (*page 551*). Neither of the latter two studies suggests any simple avenue for medical intervention, but the findings should strengthen our resolve, as a nation, to identify and overcome the root causes of the health gap.

We asked Professor Sir Michael Marmot, who chaired the World Health Organization's Commission on Social Determinants of Health, to comment on how the Commission's findings might be applied to the health of Australia's first peoples (*page 512*). He identified two classes of influence that help explain the poor health of Indigenous Australians: social disadvantage, and marginalisation within Australian society.

Both the need to understand the contributors to the health gap and Marmot's observation that people who are marginalised and disempowered cannot enjoy good health underscore an important principle: Indigenous Australians should have the opportunity to lead and guide research into their own health and any proposed interventions. The ongoing work of the newly formed Lowitja Institute (previously the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health), described by Arabena and Moodie on *page 532*, is vital in this respect. The Institute's Indigenous leadership, and its charter to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices have strong input at each step of the research process, will give the best chance of asking the right questions and getting the right answers.

We do need more high-quality interventional research in Indigenous health but, with many of the answers already obtained from research into other populations, we know that without addressing disadvantage and marginalisation, we will at best be tinkering around the edges. There is now a need to explore the best ways of applying what we know to the many and varied circumstances of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and for this, we need Indigenous Australians firmly in the driving seat.

Ruth M Armstrong

Deputy Editor, *Medical Journal of Australia*
medjaust@ampco.com.au