



**Aboriginal
Health Council
of Western Australia**

Makuru 2026

AHCWA Newsletter

Makuru

June – July

**Noongar Season
of Fertility**

June on Whadjuk Noongar Boodja means Makuru; the coldest season of the year. Here's some of what we've been up to this season:



AHCWA Welcomes Two New Executive Managers

AHCWA is excited to announce the appointment of two new Executive Managers. Their diverse expertise and commitment to Aboriginal health will strengthen our organisation as we work alongside our Member Services to deliver positive change for Aboriginal communities across Western Australia.



Jodie Green Executive Manager Commissioning & Procurement

AHCWA welcomes Jodie Green as our new Executive Manager Commissioning and Procurement. In this newly established role, Jodie will lead the development of AHCWA's commissioning and procurement function, ensuring funding and services are planned and delivered in line with Member priorities and community needs.

Melanie Howard

Executive Manager Workforce Development & Training

AHCWA is pleased to welcome Melanie Howard as our new Executive Manager Workforce Development and Training. Melanie will provide strategic leadership across workforce development, training pathways, VET reform and AHCWA's Registered Training Organisation, supporting capability building across the ACCHS and First Nations training sectors.



\$1 M Awarded to END RHD WA Partnership



AHCWA, WA Country Health Service, and The Kids Research Institute Australia have been awarded a \$1 million Future Health Research and Innovation Fund Spotlight Program grant to develop a coordinated, state-wide action plan through the new END RHD WA partnership.

Acute rheumatic fever and RHD continue to disproportionately impact Aboriginal people, despite being preventable and manageable with culturally safe care. This investment will help reach a future free from RHD.

[Read More Here](#)

ACHWA Launches New Health Heroes Campaign



Introducing [Captain Check-Up](#), [Shield Sista](#), and [Aunty Lookout](#)—AHCWA's new community champions, powered by Indigiverse. Our deadly characters have hit the road via bus; tell us where you've spotted them for your chance to win in a fun competition!

How to play:

1. Find a Health Hero bus in Perth, Geraldton, or Bunbury
2. Snap a photo with it
3. Share it on your social media and tag @ahcwa_hq and @theindigiverse to receive three entries, or send your photo via DM or email to Zoe.Sullivan@ahcwa.org to receive one entry
4. Every different bus = an additional entry
5. Once you've entered, you'll be asked to complete a short survey and select which major prize you'd like to go into the draw to win

Prizes up for grabs:

Captain Checkup Prize: iPad A16

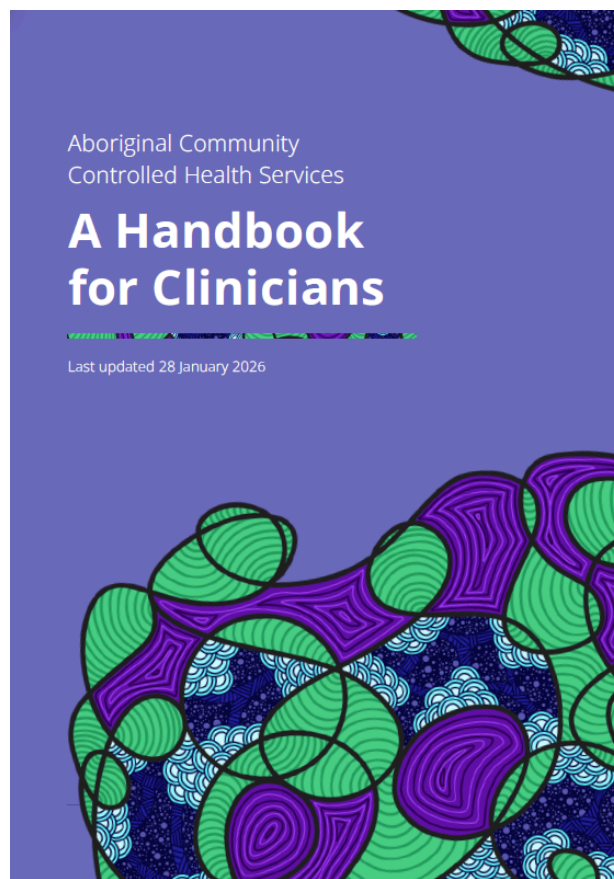
Shield Sista Prize: Nintendo Switch

Aunty Lookout Prize: \$500 Baby Bunting gift voucher

Health Heroes Prizes: 10 x \$50 gift cards

Competition closes 27 September 2026. Read the terms and conditions [here](#).

ACCHS Clinicians' Handbook Now Available



AHCWA and NACCHO have developed a new practical handbook for clinicians working in Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services. A go-to guide for navigating the Sector with confidence to deliver culturally safe, holistic care from day one. A fillable version for national use is also available for download and adaptation. Download the ACCHS Clinicians' Handbook [here](#).

Introducing the WA ACCHS Social & Emotional Wellbeing Sector Conference 2026



This September, the first annual WAACCHS Social & Emotional Wellbeing Sector Conference 2026 brings together Aboriginal SEWB practitioners, program leads, cultural leaders and sector partners to mark the close of the WAACCHS SEWB Pilot Program and explore future opportunities for community-led SEWB service delivery across WA.

Dates: Wednesday 30 September – Thursday 1 October 2026

Venue: Pan Pacific Perth

Important: Attendance at this event is by invitation only.

Find out more about our SEWB program [here](#).

Share your Ngalla Bidi Bursary #sockselfie



Thank you to all the generous supporters of our Ngalla Bidi Bursary Fund who purchased our Ngalla Bidi socks, donated, and supported our campaign. Every dollar raised helps provide scholarships to Aboriginal medical students to attend PRIDoC, creating pathways for the next generation of Indigenous doctors. **Thanks to the generosity of our Sector and supporters, we have already raised \$53,000!**

If you would like to donate, head to our website [here](#) or purchase your own socks by visiting the AHCWA office. Don't forget to tag us in your **#sockselfie** on social media! **Keep an eye out for bursary applications coming soon.**

Ear Health | Simon Says: Let's Talk About Speech Therapy & Newborn Screening



The latest animation in the Simon Says series is now available on YouTube. Click play to watch it now.

The new Simon Says booklet, *Hear Their Future, Support Your Baby's Future with a Newborn Hearing Test*, is also now available [here](#). This resource delivers a strong message to communities about the importance of ensuring every newborn has a hearing test soon after birth, supporting early detection and better ear health outcomes for babies and families.

Get Diphtheria Outta Here: Health Promotion Resources

 A green-themed health promotion resource titled 'Get Diphtheria Outta Here!'. It is divided into three main sections: 'How is Diphtheria spread?', 'Prevention', and a large illustration on the right.

- How is Diphtheria spread?**
 - Without treatment, infected people can spread diphtheria to others for more than four weeks from when their symptoms first start.
 - Diphtheria is spread by infected droplets from coughs or sneezes. (Illustration: A person coughing into their elbow.)
 - Diphtheria can be spread skin to skin, from contact with an infected ulcer or sore. (Illustration: A person with a skin sore.)
 - You can get sick by touching dirty sheets, towels, clothes, or household items. (Illustration: A bottle of disinfectant.)
- Prevention**
 - Vaccination is the best protection against diphtheria.
 - The diphtheria vaccine has been around for more than 100 years! It is safe and free for everyone.
 - Children get protected from their childhood needles – make sure kids are up to date with vaccines.
 - Adults need a booster every five to 10 years.
 - Where diphtheria is spreading, people may be recommended to have an extra booster if they haven't had one in the last 12 months.
 - Check if your family is safe and up-to-date with immunisations. Contact your health service. (Illustration: A person with a bandage on their arm.)
- Get Diphtheria Outta Here!**
 - Skin sores or sore throat? See your clinic. (Illustration: Two people, one with a skin sore and one with a sore throat.)

 At the bottom, it says 'Good hygiene habits help keep mob healthy' and features logos for the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia, the Department of Health, and QAIHC.

AHCWA is expressing urgent concern regarding the resurgence diphtheria in regional Western Australia. We have developed resources to assist with preparing and responding to diphtheria in your ACCHS.

Resources

Kimberley Ear Health Education Forum





Credit: Wayne Quilliam Photography

Kimberley Ear Health Forum

Free event

Save the date
– Broome

Two sessions available:
THURSDAY 20 AUGUST 2026 (Mob only session)
FRIDAY 21 AUGUST 2026
8.30am–4.30pm, followed by a Networking Sundowner.

About the sessions

These education sessions are presented by Kimberley Health Professionals Network on behalf of the Kimberley Ear Health Coordinating Panel (a subgroup of the Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum) and Rural Health West.

We invite all health professionals who are interested in ear and hearing health to attend.

Professor Kelvin Kong AM is a proud Worimi man truly delighted to be spending time in the Kimberley — a region he has held close to his heart for decades through ongoing outreach work.

Kelvin is an experienced Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgeon (an ENT specialist), and his career reflects a commitment to healing and learning across many areas — including clinical research, medical education, general medicine and surgery, paediatrics, health policy, and Indigenous education.

Dr Jafri Kuthubutheen is the WA Country Health Service ENT Clinical Lead for the Kimberley Region. He is a Clinical Professor with the University of Western Australia and works as a Consultant Otolaryngology and ENT surgeon at the Perth Children's Hospital and Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital.

For further information regarding this forum please email: sara.hennessy@ruralhw.com.au

Rural Health West is proud to deliver this community education initiative through funding from the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.



Professor Kelvin Kong
ENT Clinician



Dr Jafri Kuthubutheen
ENT Clinician

Immunisation | Upcoming AHCWA Webinars

IMMformation Webinar

RSV vaccination for older people

Dates: Wednesday 22 July 2026 11.00am to 12.00pm AWST
Thursday 23 July 2026 4.00pm to 5.00pm AWST

In partnership with Benchmark Group, AHCWA is hosting two information webinars that explore the new Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccination program for older adults.

The sessions are delivered live and will provide an overview of RSV disease burden in older Australians, key clinical considerations, addressing common questions, and integrating RSV vaccination into routine preventive care.

Follow the QR code to access the Benchmark Group Webinar Series flyer and to register for the event.



Thank You to Our 2026 WA ACCHS Conference Sponsors

We are proud to recognise sponsors of this year's WA ACCHS Conference on 20-21 May, and Aboriginal Youth Conference on 18 May 2026. Their commitment to our Sector helps us bring together the brightest minds and boldest ideas, and facilitate the most impactful conversations. Thank you to all our sponsors for your leadership and dedication to advancing the work we do.

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Employment Opportunities at AHCWA

AHCWA is currently advertising for new positions, including:

- [Sexual Health and BBV Program Officer](#)

Find the full list of AHCWA's current vacancies [here](#).

AHCWA Courses and Training Programs

Actively responding to the needs of our Member Services, AHCWA offers a series of courses and training opportunities.

The following courses and training opportunities are currently available:

- [Ear Health Training](#)
- [Immunisation Training](#)
- [The Birds and the BBVs](#)
- [Young Leaders Training](#)

- [Eldercare Support Program](#)

Call **(08) 9227 1631** to book or click [here](#) to find out more.

Compliments & Suggestions

Do you have feedback you'd like to share with us? Compliments, suggestions, and complaints can be submitted directly to our Quality and Compliance Officer [here](#), or through the feedback tab on the contact section of our website [here](#).

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of Western Australia**

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