



## Connecting the North: Updates from the field

Report on the Forum for the

### Northern Australia Research Network

Held at Flinders University, Darwin

20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018

[narnforum@gmail.com](mailto:narnforum@gmail.com)

#### Introduction:

This report outlines the 2<sup>nd</sup> forum of the Northern Australia Research Network (NARN). In partnership with Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA), NARN is a cross-jurisdictional collaborative network that conducts research to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Northern Australia.

#### Aim of the NARN Forum:

To bring people together to advance research in the area of Functioning, Disability and Health to inform delivery of rehabilitation and lifestyle services in regional, rural and remote Northern Australia.

The forum provided the opportunity to connect stories of health service delivery, to create, rekindle and support partnerships that seek to advance this area of health and wellbeing in Northern Australia.

#### Objectives of the NARN forum:

1. Provide an update on progress made by NARN
2. Share current research in the area of Function Disability and Health across northern Australia
3. Determine future research directions for NARN
4. Determine future funding, governance and sustainability for NARN

#### Forum Participants

Stakeholders from Northern Australia participated in-person or via Zoom video-conferencing and included:

- Secretariat of IAHA and members of IAHA
- Allied health (AH) researchers from universities and health services
- AH managers and clinicians from state and territory health services
- Regional managers for Primary Health Networks
- AH research students – PhD, Masters, Honours

#### NARN Mailing List

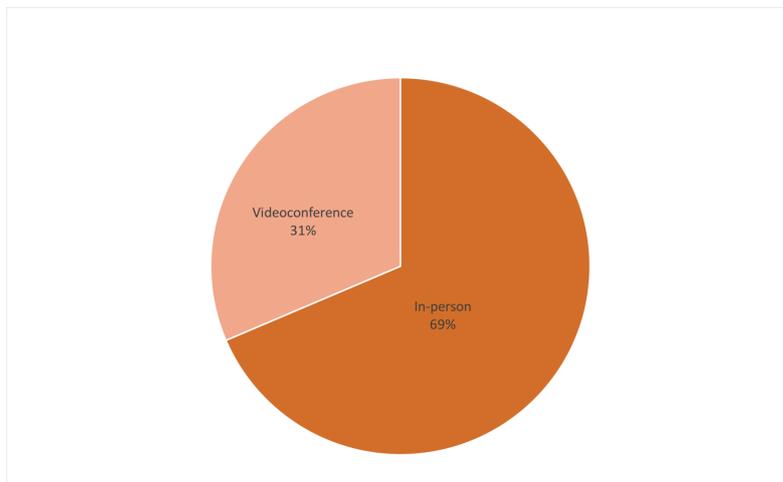
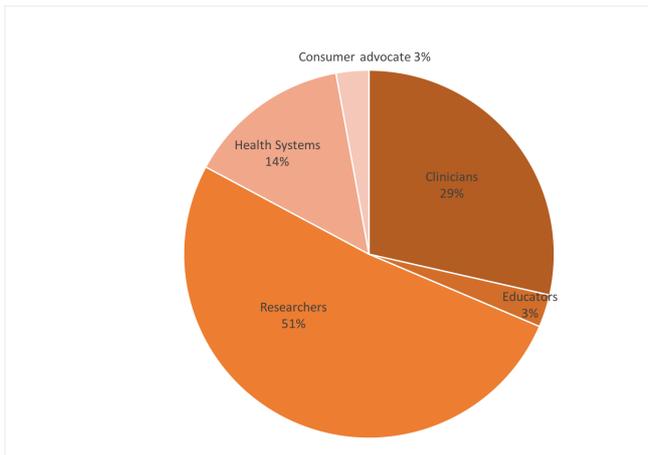
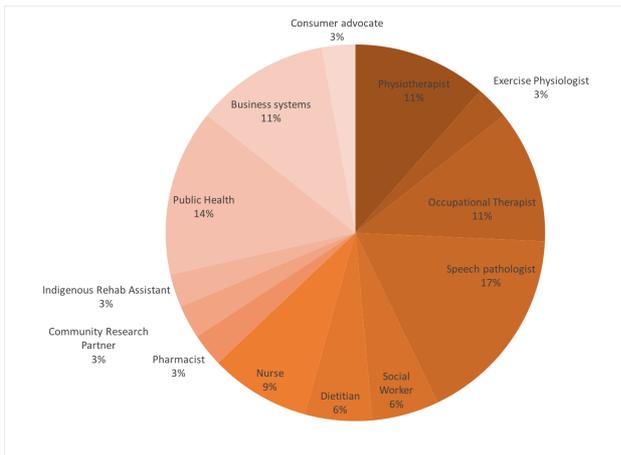
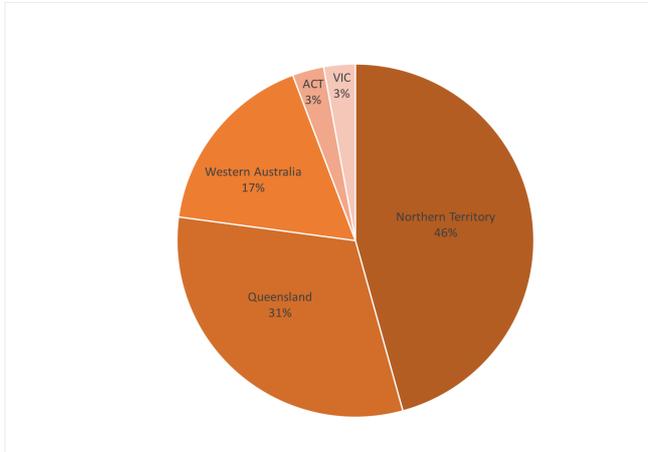
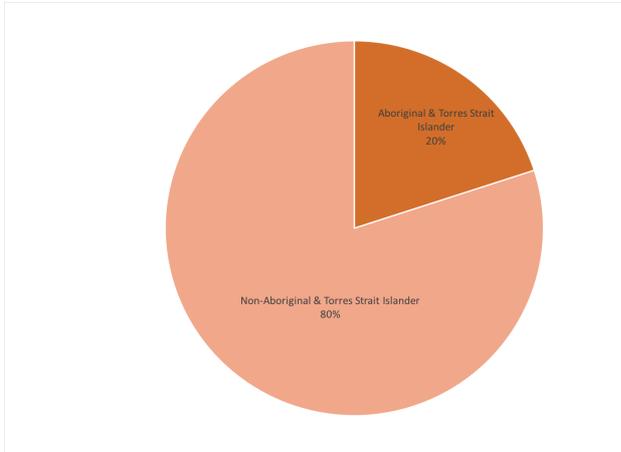
Stakeholders from across northern Australia who could not attend were able to follow us on:

Website <https://www.narn-research.com>, and Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/narn.research/>

Twitter [https://twitter.com/narn\\_research](https://twitter.com/narn_research)

Anyone who would like to be included on the NARN mailing list, email [narnforum@gmail.com](mailto:narnforum@gmail.com)

## Forum Participants



## **NARN Forum Program & content:**

The program consisted of two half days – Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. This format was chosen to accommodate travel requirements before and after the forum.

### **Day 1 – Tuesday afternoon:**

- Welcome to Country by Tony Lee and Welcome to Flinders University by Monica Barolits-McCabe.
- Introductions by participants for those attending in-person and via zoom.
- Update for NARN 2016- 2017 provided by NARN Chairpersons – Ruth Barker and Kylie Stothers.
- Update on NARN Working Group activities by representatives from each working group.
- Group activity- reflection on NARN vision, mission and governance that has emerged over 2016 - 2017.

### **Day 1 reflections by participants in the group work session**

Vision of NARN – health equity for a good life for people of northern Australia

Participants agreed that the vision sums up the purpose of NARN and of each of the research working groups. Participants suggested that the vision could be narrowed and needed to include ‘research’.

#### Mission of Network

- collaborative research, build Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers, embed AH researchers in broader health arena. Preference was to focus on:

- People of northern Australia rather than exclusively, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Function disability and health rather than allied health services.
- Acute and community health rather than community health alone
- Health and research in partnerships, not silos, so collaboration flows seamlessly

#### Values

NARN values overlap with existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values for research. Consensus was to add ‘collaboration and team work’, ‘strength-based practice’ and ‘innovation’ to existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values.

#### Governance

NARN governance is to be determined, as GNARTN (original governance structure) no longer exists.

- Priority to link with and draw strength and sustainability from existing research networks across northern Australia that are already focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.
- HOT North is in Northern Australia space, emphasizes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, has strong research capacity, a secretariat, financial backing, supportive of novice and early career researchers and inclusive and flexible in our dealings with them. Points to consider:
  - HOT North is specifically funded for research on the health of body systems (i.e. Skin health, respiratory health) or disease types (i.e. antimicrobial resistance, vector-borne disease, chronic disease) while NARN’s research focus is on service delivery.
  - NARN risks losing focus on service delivery, functioning disability and AH membership.

#### Partnership with IAHA

Participants felt this partnership is a priority, recognising and acknowledging the cultural and diverse needs, beliefs, practices and authority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in northern Australia.

- Essential in building capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander allied health researchers in northern Australia, in terms of volume, research skills and experience and research leadership.
- Gives NARN a link to an advocacy body with a national voice and helps maintain an allied health focus.
- Need to ‘take care’ not to discourage involvement by non-Indigenous allied health clinicians and researchers and non-allied health who will play a vital role in capacity building in northern Australia.
- To build and reflect the partnership we need to embed IAHA cultural responsiveness framework and mentorships for IAHA members into all research projects.
- Consistent and ongoing funding needed to sustain NARN and the partnership with IAHA.

### Targets

- Monthly online meetings for community researchers to grow projects and online community
- Facilitate training for academic researchers by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers on collaborating with community
- Future forums to include consumers e.g. people with disabilities, students, community co-researchers

### Working groups

Clear support for the 'focus areas' yet participants had difficulty engaging with them. Question is whether focus areas are principles of research that need to thread through all NARN research.

- Community engagement – need community researchers forum, recognize as drivers, community voice
- Person-centred healthcare – aim of all service delivery
- Skilled and responsive workforce – is the workforce referring to clinicians / health workers or researchers
- Evidence-informed practice – researchers support clinicians to deliver EBP in a person-centred way
- Evidence-informed investment - evaluate existing efforts /programs

We need mechanisms to help clinicians access data and resources already out there (grey literature)

### Leadership of Network:

Network to be co-chaired by Kylie Stothers (IAHA) and Ruth Barker (University Researcher) and leadership group expanded to include:

- Kylie Stothers from IAHA representing IAHA, social work and NT.
- Ruth Barker from JCU representing University Researchers, Physiotherapy and Queensland
- Renae Moore from Top End Health representing state health, speech pathology and NT
- Andrew McGaw from WAPHA representing PHNs, Business Systems and Western Australia
- Anne McKenzie from Consumer and Community Health Research Network representing WA consumers
- Jennifer Carr, JCU PhD student conducting research in NT representing PhD students across the north

### **Day 2 – Wednesday morning**

- 'Updates from the field' with presentations on projects underway across northern Australia.
  - Walking and moving around for Aboriginal people with MJD - Jen Carr, Joyce Lalara MJDF NT, JCU
  - Communication disorders after stroke 'The Wangi Project': - Natalie Ciccone, ECU, WA
  - Healthy Communities Project - Tiffany Williams, Apunipima Cape York Health Service, Qld
  - Older persons student-led services Napranum, Cape York – Alice Cairns – JCU Weipa
  - Setting up a clinical research unit – Robyn Aitken, Director Top End Health Service Research, NT
  - R&R Indigenous Allied Health Workforce Development Project -Donna-Marie Towney, IAHA
- HOT North Program Manager – Kevin Williams - presented on HOT North (Health of The North)  
HOT North is an NHMRC funded project that aims to strengthen partnerships with research institutions in the Northern Territory, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia by undertaking a research agenda that will help close the gap in Indigenous health disadvantage, protect the north from emerging infectious threats and engage regional neighbours.
- Emergence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers - Kylie Stothers with Karla Canuto
- Group session – vision for NARN in 10 years time

### **Day 2 reflections by participants in the group work session – Vision for NARN in 10 years time**

NARN will make a difference for future generations by:

- contributing to policy changes that ensure future generations can make informed decisions.
- conducting research that is meaningful to help people live well with good care close to home
- advocating for equity

NARN will be recognized as a peak research body by:

- conducting robust research that translates to better health outcomes
- advocating to government about the value of research in allied health and by clinician researchers.
- mentoring clinician researchers to research their services – without having to enrol at university

- creating a big picture research context that people can belong to and be respectful in.
- building a track record so that funders come to NARN requesting that they conduct research
- attracting funding - the big \$\$ to make things happen

NARN will build a new generation of researchers particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers by:

- supporting/mentoring emerging researchers and ensuring they are skilled to undertake research.
- valuing, supporting and building capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-based researchers
- building capacity amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to conduct their own research about themselves
- restructuring research education pathways (flexible learning) to build a strong body of AH researchers

NARN will be addressing regional needs through a collaborative approach by:

- building on existing research and connecting with local experts
- identifying and linking with existing systems and structures across northern Australia
- establishing a NARN expert panel of community-based researchers to inform research methodology

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be doing their own research with NARN's assistance by:

- engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their communities and providing them with education and support to conduct research in their own community to allow them the opportunities to deliver their own health services their way.

NARN will demonstrate the value /good work of allied health by

- embedding AHPS within broader research arena
- demonstrating AHPs doing their own research
- showcasing great research and the outcomes achieved
- gaining sustainable funding for AH research in line with nursing and medical research funding

NARN will be part of what IAHA do

- Forum linked to IAHA events and IAHA central in all NARN activities.

NARN will bring people together, facilitate connections, create a vision that people can belong by:

- exercising the power of bringing people together for positive change
- sharing knowledge – cross cultural for better research / health outcomes
- bringing together a wide variety of perspectives e.g. research organisations, funders, local community expert, research colleagues, research connections to services
- connecting researchers, services and health service users to country, song and story.
- Online research community (e.g. single share point, social media) to see what research has been done before and learn from others rather than reinvent the wheel
- ensuring local experts are funded to guide research in their community
- song and story country connected for healing
- mentoring and building a positive, supported research community
- partnering with existing organisations e.g. academic health centres - to achieve even better outcomes.

NARN will take a strengths-based approach by:

- focusing on positives - what good things are already happening that NARN can support, build on and grow from for the future - like value, grow, live well, good care, promote, positive, together, sharing, outcomes, stories, advocate, equity, connect, healing, showcase, experts, partners.
- advocating for the value and importance of health and research for communities' and people's wellbeing - being a voice to create awareness of the good work that is already happening in research and allied health services and improving the future through action and change based on positives.
- providing community with a positive experience of research so that they want to engage in research

## **Leadership Meeting following NARN Forum**

### **Brief review of forum**

- Successful forum with strong participation from attendees
- Recommendations for future forums
  - o Full day rather than two ½ days
  - o Activity sessions in the middle sessions so able to sum up at the end of the forum
  - o VC participation successful however need commitment for VC attendees to attend full forum
  - o Consider charging fee to facilitate commitment and offer formal PD
  - o Scholarships to attend e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community research partners
  - o Continue to hold forum in Darwin and back onto another relevant conference e.g. IAHA in 2019

### **Recommendations made and subsequently completed:**

NARN strategy documents revised to reflect participant views (in progress)

Formal proposal to HOT North requesting broadening of scope to include Function, Disability and Health

#### Grant Applications

Successful application made for a HOT North Pilot Project – Talking after stroke

Successful application made for a HOT North Indigenous Development and Training Award

Application pending for a HOT North Pilot Project – Strengthening older persons' services in East Arnhem

#### Presentations

HOT North Scientific Symposium - Darwin

HOT North Teaching Workshop - Thursday Island

'Are you remotely interested' conference – Mount Isa

SARRAH conference – Darwin

NARN newsletter to be distributed quarterly (first edition September 2018)

### **Acknowledgements:**

- Flinders University for providing the venue, videoconferencing facilities and IT support free-of-charge.
- Northern Australian Universities and Health Services that supported participants to attend.
- Forum working parties
  - o Sarah Hanks, Rebecca Amery, Renae Moore, Leigh Moore, Kelly Paterson, Susan Witt
  - o Jennifer Chamberlain-Salaun, Jennifer Carr, Kylie Stothers, Ruth Barker, Andy McMcGaw

### **Appendices**

1. Forum evaluation
2. List of Forum Participants
3. Forum Program

## Appendix 1: Forum Evaluation

Northern Australia Research Network Forum 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March  
Flinders University, Darwin

### Forum Evaluation

An evaluation survey was distributed to Forum participants via Survey Monkey.  
Responses were received from 50% (18 out of 35) of participants.

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#### 1. What was the best part of the Forum?

- Planning ahead - hearing, discussing, collaborating, on our future direction over next 10 years
- Networking - meeting others with shared interests, growing of ideas with people from across north; learning from others with different skills - clinicians, educators, researchers, business
- Hearing of great projects, and hearing about practice-based research
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in numbers and with a strong voice in the forum
- Knowing NARN exists, clarifying the NARN role
- Online as well as in-person participation

#### 2. What sessions would you like to see included in future Forums?

- Research priorities presented by representatives of organisations e.g. Universities, community
- Individual project outcomes presented by researchers from different backgrounds and perspectives so that we hear a variety of perspectives / voices in an accessible and comfortable way
- NARN activities throughout year e.g. working groups – why, what, when and how
- NARN activities in the future – sharing development of the vision
- Researchers sharing their story about their pathway into research – e.g. how I got started.
- Engagement of local Aboriginal people to do their own research.
- Opportunity for remote community-based researchers to participate / network with each other
- Potential research projects and opportunities for people to undertake / participate in research.
- Research skills and tips from the field, lessons learnt – concurrent session for more or less experienced
- CPD around research e.g. dissemination of findings, specific topic streams e.g. nutrition
- More interactive sessions
- Formalized networking opportunities to share ideas, spark research opportunities

#### 3. For you to remain involved and interested in NARN, what would you need to see happen?

- Research collaboration opportunities
- Pathways for new researchers to get a taste of research i.e. include clinicians in research
- Research projects badged as NARN that are easier to do as NARN rather than to do on your own
- Research initiatives so can be a more active NARN participant.
- Regular communication
  - expectations and feedback from ERG.
  - research support;
  - on-line or regular updates/messages about activities, opportunities to contribute.
  - regular (monthly or quarterly) newsletter with updates, articles of interest
- Formal networking opportunities to engage with researchers and hear what they are doing.
- Model for sustainability of the group
- This sounds more like a forum for Allied Health Professionals but I am happy to be on the peripheries of this. It is terrific to know that it exists.

**Appendix 2a: List of Forum Participants who attended in-person.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>From</b>
Adrian Miller	Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership Charles Darwin University, Darwin.	NT
Andrew McGaw	Regional Coordination Manager Western Australian Primary Health Alliance, Broome.	WA
Anne Lowell	Associate Professor and Principal Research Fellow Charles Darwin University, Darwin.	NT
Donna-Maree Towney	Project Officer - Remote and Rural Indigenous Allied Health Workforce Development Project (RIHAP) Indigenous Allied Health Australia, Canberra.	ACT
Emily Armstrong	Speech Pathologist and PhD Student Charles Darwin University, Darwin.	NT
Emma Greaves	Occupational Therapist Catholic Education Diocese, Darwin.	NT
Heather D'Antoine	Associate Director, Aboriginal Programs Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin.	NT
Jennifer Carr	Physiotherapist and PhD Student – MJD Foundation, James Cook University, Cairns.	Qld
Jennifer Chamberlain-Salaun	Research Coordinator Northern Australia Research Network	VIC
Joanna Fitzgerald	Speech Pathologist Catholic Education Diocese of Darwin	NT
Karla Canuto	Research Coordinator, Apunipima Cape York Health Council	Qld
Kelly Paterson	Physiotherapist Royal Darwin Hospital	NT
Kevin Williams	Program Manager HOT North Menzies School of Health Research, Darwin.	NT
Kylie Stothers	Workforce Development Officer Indigenous Allied Health Australia, Katherine.	NT
Elaine Lawurrpa Maypilama	Honorary Research Fellow Charles Darwin University, Darwin.	NT
Leigh Moore	Lecturer Nursing and Allied Health Flinders University, Darwin.	NT
Marayah Taylor	Indigenous Rehab Assistant – Alliance Rehab Social Work student, James Cook University, Townsville.	Qld
Natalie Ciccone	Associate Dean (Allied Health), Edith Cowan University, Perth.	WA
Rebecca Amery	Speech Pathologist and PhD Student –MJD Foundation Charles Darwin University, Darwin.	NT
Rena Moore	Executive Director of Allied Health Top End Health Service, Darwin.	NT
Robyn Aitken	Director Collaborative Academic Health Science Research Top End Health Service, Darwin.	NT
Ruth Barker	Associate Professor–Rehabilitation James Cook University - Cairns	Qld
Susan Witt	Occupational Therapist Royal Darwin Hospital, Darwin.	NT

**Appendix 2b: List of Forum Participants who attended via videoconference or Zoom.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>From</b>
Amy Brown	Research Fellow - Townsville Cancer Centre Townsville Hospital and Health Service, Townsville.	QLD
Anne McKenzie	Head – Consumer and Community Health Research Network, The University of Western Australia, Perth.	WA
Desiree LaGrappe	Research Officer and Manager Community Services. Machado Joseph Foundation, Darwin.	NT
Isabelle Skinner	Senior Research Fellow, Mt Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health, James Cook University	Qld
Lorraine Sager	Manager, Rehabilitation Services Top End Health Service, Darwin.	NT
Lydia O’Meara	Honours student – BA Med Sc (Nutrition) and research assistant Central Queensland University, Cairns.	Qld
Robyn Glynn	Director of Allied Health - North, Torres and Cape Hospital and Health Service, Thursday Island.	Qld
Robyn Powell	Allied Health Manager, Boab Health Services, Broome.	WA
Sabina Knight	Director, Mt Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health James Cook University, Mt Isa.	Qld
Sarah Jackson	Physiotherapist, PhD student, Mt Isa Centre for Rural and Remote Health. James Cook University, Mt Isa.	Qld
Tiffany Williams	Healthy Communities Project Manager Apunipima Cape York Health Council, Cairns.	Qld

## Appendix 3: Forum Program

### 2018 Northern Australia Research Network Forum - Functioning, Disability and Health

**WHERE:** John Hargrave Room, Flinders University at Royal Darwin Hospital.

**WHEN:** Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March **TIME:** 11:00 – 17:30

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 08:00 – 13:00

**Social Media:** Don't forget to Tweet! #narnforum2018

- Stay connected and follow us - we'll post updates throughout the forum on the website <https://www.narn-research.com>, as well as on facebook <https://www.facebook.com/narn.research/> and twitter [https://twitter.com/narn\\_research](https://twitter.com/narn_research) - Or email us at narnforum@gmail.com

Session	Time	Room	DAY 1 – Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> March	Facilitator
1	11:00 – 11:45	John Hargrave Room	Welcome to country - Mr Tony Lee, Elder on Campus, Flinders NT	Kylie Stothers, IAHA
			Welcome to Flinders - Ms Monica Barolits-McCabe, Manager Flinders NT	Renae Moore, Top End Health
			Introduction to delegates	Rebecca Amery, CDU
			Overview of social media for forum	Jennifer Carr, JCU
1	11:45 – 12:30	John Hargrave Room	Northern Australia Research Network - where have we come from, where are we going? - NARN Strategy 2017- 2018 - NARN partnership with IAHA - NARN members - consumers. clinicians, managers, PHN, strategists, researchers - NARN Funding - Expert Research Advisory Group - Research Working Groups	Ruth Barker, JCU, Qld Kylie Stothers, IAHA, NT Andy McGaw, WAPHA, WA Renae Moore, Top End Health NT Jennifer Chamberlain-Salaun, VIC Jennifer Carr Qld
	12.30 – 12.45		SHORT BREAK	
2	12.45 – 13.10	John Hargrave Room	Working Group– Community Engagement – Anne Lowell and Kylie Stothers	Jennifer Chamberlain-Salaun, JCU
	13.10 – 13.35		Working Group– People-Centred Healthcare - Ruth Barker, JCU, Qld	
	13:35 – 14:35		LUNCH	
3	14.35 – 15:00	John Hargrave Room	Working Group– Skilled and Responsive Workforce – Ruth Barker on behalf of group	Jennifer Chamberlain-Salaun, JCU
	15:00 – 15:25		Working Group– Evidence-Informed Practice – Natalie Ciccone, ECU, WA	
	15:25 – 15:50		Working Group– Evidence-Informed Investment – Andy McGaw, WAPHA, WA	
	15:50– 16:05		AFTERNOON TEA	
4	16:05 – 16:20	John Hargrave	Working Groups - identify your strengths and contributions	Kylie Stothers, IAHA, NT Jennifer Chamberlain-Salaun, JCU
5	16:20 – 16:50	Meeting room	Group work / interactive activity	
6	16:50 – 17:20	John Hargrave	Feedback from Groups	Renae Moore, Top End Health NT
	17:20 – 17:30		Day 1 - Wrap up and dinner plans	

**18.30** Dinner at Hanuman's Restaurant, 93 Mitchell St, Darwin City. <http://gravitydesignwebsites.com/#homePage>

Session	Time	Room	DAY 2 – Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> March	Facilitator
7	08:30 – 08:40	John Hargrave Room	Welcome to day 2	Leigh Moore, Flinders NT
	08:40 – 09:45		Updates from the field (5 slides x 5 minutes – plus 5 mins of discussion) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking and moving around for Aboriginal people with MJD - Jennifer Carr, MJDF NT, JCU</li> <li>• The Wangi Project: communication disorders after stroke - Natalie Ciccone, ECU, WA</li> <li>• Healthy Communities Project - Tiffany Williams, Apunipima Cape York Health Service, Qld</li> <li>• Student-led services in Napranum, Cape York – Ruth Barker for Alice Cairns – JCU Weipa</li> <li>• Setting up a clinical research unit – Robyn Aitken, Director Top End Health Service Research, NT</li> <li>• R&amp;R Indigenous Allied Health Workforce Development Project -Donna-Marie Towney, IAHA</li> </ul>	Andy McGaw, WAPHA, WA
	09.45 – 10.00	John Hargrave Room	Hot North – research across the north - Kevin Williams, CEO for Hot North	Renae Moore, Top End Health NT
			Emergence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers - Kylie Stothers, Karla Canuto	Kylie Stothers, IAHA.
	10:00 – 10:15		<b>SHORT BREAK</b>	
8	10:15 – 12.00	John Hargrave Room	What do you want NARN to look like in 10 years? How will we get there? Introduction → group work → feedback to all delegates.	Jennifer Chamberlain-Salaun, JCU
	12:00 – 13:00		Day 2 - Wrap up – NARN moving forward. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NARN Strategy 2018- 2019</li> <li>- NARN partnerships/amalgamations</li> <li>- NARN Working Group membership /plans /targets</li> <li>- NARN Leadership Group membership/plans/targets</li> <li>- NARN Expert Research Advisory Group membership</li> <li>- NARN members /plans/targets</li> </ul>	Kylie Stothers – IAHA, NARN Chair Ruth Barker – JCU, NARN Chair
			<b>CLOSE OF FORUM</b>	Renae Moore, Top End Health,NT

Thank you to our sponsors

