

## **Sharing wisdom around Qualitative Research with Aboriginal Communities**

On November 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> the Kulunga Aboriginal Research Development Unit (KARDU) and the Centre of Research Excellence in Ear and Hearing Health of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Children (CRE\_ICHEAR), hosted a workshop entitled “Qualitative Research with Aboriginal Communities: Methodologies, Experiences and Challenges”.

The workshop was organised by Heather d’Antoine, Associate Director of Aboriginal Programs; Division Leader, Education and Research Support at the Menzies School of Health Research, Associate Prof Deborah Lehmann, Head of Ear Health at the Institute, Dr Penny Abbott, Senior Lecturer at Western Sydney University and Ms Isabelle Adams, KARDU Unit Coordinator.

The aim was to gather researchers with varying levels of experience and interest in the type of qualitative research that is appropriate and positive for Aboriginal people in order to present and explore the epistemology, ontology, methodologies, methods and ethics related to contemporary qualitative enquiry.

In particular, this workshop was designed for senior and emerging Aboriginal researchers to guide participants on how and when to use qualitative research to help strengthen a program of research aimed, as always, at improving the lives of Aboriginal people.

There were 36 participants, 21 of whom were Aboriginal. Participants included members of the following Centres of Research Excellence (CREs): CRE\_ICHEAR, END RHD CRE: Developing an endgame for rheumatic END RHD, Reducing the Effects of Antenatal Alcohol on Child Health (REAACH) and Aboriginal Chronic Disease Knowledge Translation Exchange (CREATE). Senior and junior researchers came from universities and institutions in Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia, ACT, Northern Territory and Western Australia.

The workshop was a resounding success. Participants were delighted to engage with and learn from experienced Aboriginal researchers; to have a ‘safe space’ to share experiences and discuss ways of using and improving qualitative research practices; and to work better together as research colleagues.

There was a unanimous desire to repeat such workshops on a regular basis nationally and as an ongoing activity within our own Institute.

Thank you to the organisers, to the people at the Institute who assisted in so many ways and to all the participants whose contributions made the workshop a success.

Deborah Lehmann