Dear colleagues, collaborators and friends,

It's an exciting time for the Communicate Study Partnership, with recent achievements reflecting the dedication of our growing team and the strength of collaboration across the Northern Territory.

We're proud to share new Ask the Specialist podcast episodes featuring Arrernte, Warlpiri and Yolŋu voices on palliative and end-of-life care. These stories offer more than guidance – they are an opportunity for reflection, conversation, and meaningful change in healthcare practice.

With the support of a new NHMRC Health Services Research Grant, we're entering a new phase of participatory projects that respond to health system and community priorities across the NT. One exciting element of this work includes expanding into Central Australia, with new activity in Alice Springs Hospital. The team has already travelled extensively across regions this year, reconnecting with partners and laying the groundwork for this next chapter. Read below about the new positions available with our team.

We also acknowledge the transition of Associate Professor Vicki Kerrigan to Swinburne University. While we're sad she's no longer based in Darwin, we're grateful for her continued collaboration and the enduring impact of her leadership and vision.

A warm welcome to Nicole Nobbs, our new Project Officer in Gove, and sincere thanks to our newly formed Indigenous Reference Group for the guidance they are already providing.

Finally, we look forward to coming together in August 2025 for the First Nations Health Communication Symposium—a space to reflect, share, and strengthen our collective efforts for change.

Warm regards,
Professor Anna Ralph
Program lead, Communicate Study Partnership



NHMRC GNT2008544 and MRFF RARUR000143
HREC 22-4297

📣 New episodes of *Ask the Specialist*







L-R: Joanne Sweeney (Senior Educator and Training Facilitator), Elah Yunupingu (Research Officer) Nathan Warren (Alice Springs Hospital Safety and Quality Nurse), Ken Lechleitner (Alice Springs Hospital Communications Specialist), Maddison Sims (Project Manager), Patrick Torres (Alice Springs Hospital Aboriginal Cultural Coordinator), Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman (Djalkiri Manapanami), Nicole Nobbs (Gove District Hospital Project Officer)

Our award-winning podcast 'Ask the Specialist: Stories to Inspire Better Healthcare' is back with 3 new episodes! In these episodes Arrernte, Warlpiri and Yolŋu Specialists respond to questions from health professionals across the Northern Territory about palliative and end-of-life care.

If you haven't already had a listen, look up these episodes to hear Specialists Rarrtjiwuy Melanie Herdman, Sabella Kngwarraye Turner, Jimmy Langdon, and Amelia Kngwarraye Turner share their knowledge and provide practical guidance to support culturally safe palliative care for First Nations peoples across NT hospitals. Now available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

On April 14th 2025, the new episodes were officially launched with information stalls at Darwin, Alice Springs and Gove District Hospitals. Thanks to everyone who stopped by to learn more and have a listen.

These new episodes were made possible thanks to the contributions of cohosts Kelly Clark and Christine Sanderson, the Specialists, and producer Caddie Brain – all supported by the expertise & guidance of Vicki Kerrigan and project management by Anna Lucas. Thanks to Djalkiri Foundation, Purple House and NT Health for supporting the episodes. Vicki Kerrigan was the recipient of a **Harry Christian Giese Research into Action Award** which provided a financial contribution towards podcast development for which the team has been very grateful.



📣 New grant

We are thrilled to receive additional funding to support the Communicate Study Partnership. Under the NHMRC Health Services Research scheme, our new grant led by Chief Investigator Vicki Kerrigan, provides an opportunity to develop new participatory projects. These will address priority health system and community concerns of relevance to First Nations health and our region, beyond the current Top End focus, as follows:

1. Ask the Specialist podcast in Central Australia: an anti-racism resource for healthcare providers
2. Cultural safety at end of life: to improve access to palliative care & end of life choices
3. HealthStories: Capturing authentic patient experiences
4. A culturally safe workplace for First Nations health staff: to improve retention of professionals in health services
5. A Health Communication Centre roadmap towards improved two-way health communication

📣 Upcoming event



First Nations Health Communication Symposium

Stories that matter: reflecting and collaborating for change

EOI Open: presentations, panels & Information stalls

21 & 22 August 2025 - Larrakia Country, Darwin

Hosted by the Communicate Study Partnership, Menzies School of Health Research

In partnership with NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT · Aboriginal Interpreter Service · Djalkiri · CHARLES DARWIN UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

The Communicate Study Partnership is hosting the biennial First Nations Health Communication Symposium on Thursday 21 and Friday 22 August 2025. The theme for this year is:

Stories that matter: reflecting and collaborating for change.

This event brings together First Nations leaders, health professionals, researchers, interpreters and community advocates, to share research, lived experiences, and best practices to advance strategies for delivering culturally safe care.

Expressions of interest are being sought for presentations, panels and information stalls. Download the EOI form from our event website below and send to communicatestudypartnership@menzies.edu.au by Friday 16 May 2025.

Registration will open in June. The event will be hosted at Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin, with a satellite virtual hub in Alice Springs at Flinders University. Alice Springs attendees will be able to join as a group to watch live-streamed presentations & engage through interactive virtual participation.

https://www.menzies.edu.au/page/News_and_Events/Events__Seminars/Current/First_Nations_Health_Communication_Symposium_Workshops/

Intercultural Communication Training



Caption: Patricia Paterson (Communicating for Safety Coordinator) delivering intercultural communication training to Infectious Disease staff

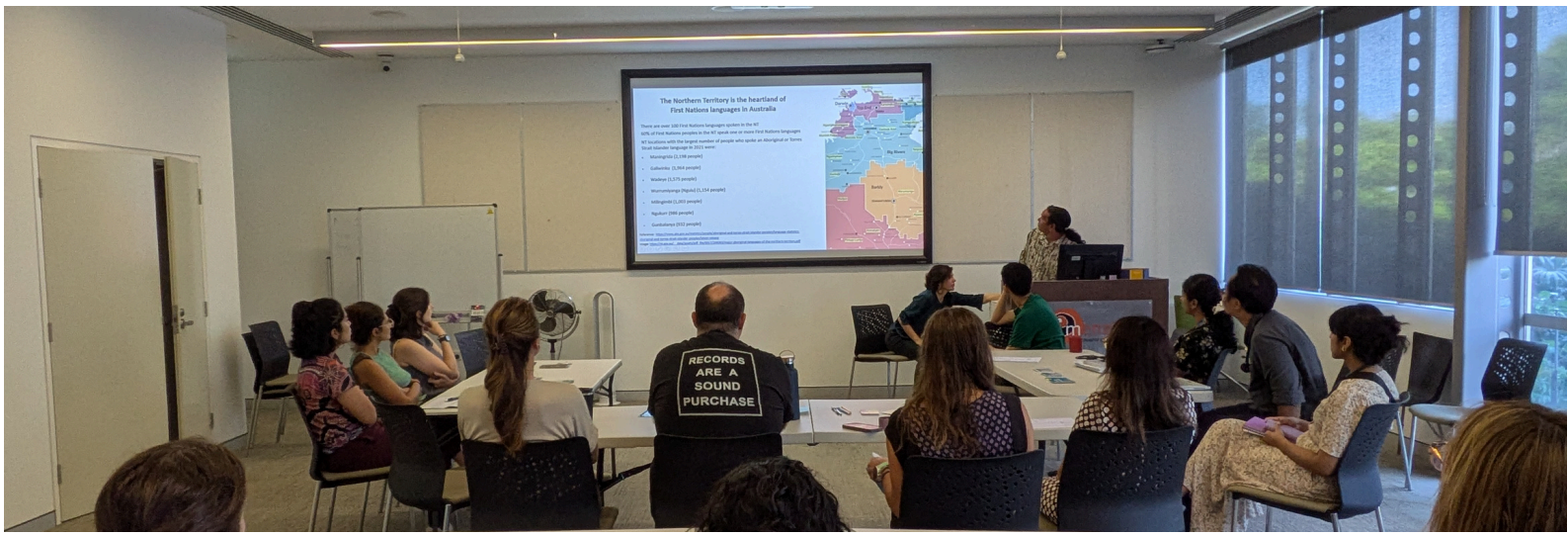
Our intercultural communication training is now available! This training is designed to strengthen culturally safe and respectful communication between healthcare providers and First Nations peoples who are accessing NT health services. Through interactive workshops, storytelling, and real-life case studies, participants build their confidence and understanding of working with First Nations peoples in hospital settings.

Training topics include:

- Communicating with patients and families
- Cultural Safety
- How to be an anti-racist healthcare practitioner
- Informed consent
- Practicing patient-centred care
- Working with interpreters

A summary of the training topics is found on our website: https://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Research/Projects/Primary_health_care/The_Communicate_study/

To find out more or request a quote for training, please contact: communicatestudypartnership@menzies.edu.au



Caption: Elah Yunupingu (Research Officer) delivering intercultural communication training to Infectious Disease staff

Cultural Safety Champions

Our Cultural Safety Champions Community of Practice comprises doctors, nurses, and other health professionals interested in improving cultural safety. Clinicians are supported by a social media chat group and provided monthly seminars, which aim to deepen understanding of culturally safe care, challenge unconscious bias, and equip clinicians with practical strategies to better support First Nations peoples in clinical settings.

Big thanks to presenters so far this year. Jess Murray presented ''Developing pregnancy education that is culturally safe, relevant, and accessible for First Nations women across the Top End, and Professor Yin Paradies presented ''Decolonising cultural safety''.

You can find our Cultural Safety Champions seminars on the Menzies YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzN0H6PlQL2-J2AAFkrL0-oyzC3m9Bo_p

Email us if you would like to be sent a calendar invite for future seminars.

Indigenous Reference Group

Our Indigenous Reference Group is now officially established! The IRG will play an important role in shaping the activities of our project.

Our first meeting was held on March 21st and we had some great discussions surrounding current and future activities that will help shape the development and implementation of our project, and work towards providing culturally safe care for First Nations peoples in NT hospitals.

There are fifteen members working across multiple disciplines in and outside of health, each bringing a wealth of knowledge, lived experience, and professional insight to the IRG.

Staff news



Welcome to Nicole Nobbs!

Nicole has started as our Project Officer at Gove District Hospital and is working towards implementing and evaluating activities in Nhulunbuy. Nic is a Registered Nurse who has been living and working on Yolŋu country in the Northern Territory for several years. She has had a highly mobile nursing career, spanning nearly 20 years, working in diverse healthcare roles across many communities in Australia and overseas in the UK. Since commencing, Nic has worked towards re-engaging with the restructured AIS team since the machinery of government changes, recommenced Health Education sessions for AIS and NT Health First Nations staff, undertaken qualitative data collection, and assisted with the final development of the intercultural communication training package, with the first module to be rolled out on 28th April 2025.

We also congratulate Vicki Kerrigan who has been awarded a new role as Associate Professor in the department of Media and Communication at Swinburne University. While that sadly means she's no longer based in Darwin, she maintains an appointment at Menzies and will continue her active role with the Communicate Study Partnership, alongside new teaching responsibilities.

Positions available

We have two new positions available with our team! We are excited to share that the Communicate Study Partnership is currently recruiting for two dynamic roles:

Researcher and **First Nations Research Assistant**

These positions offer a unique opportunity to contribute to impactful work focused on improving healthcare communication and outcomes for First Nations peoples.

Please share amongst your networks or get in contact with any questions:
https://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Careers/

Presentations

- Anna Ralph and Tiana Alley delivered to the Top End Aboriginal Health Research Alliance (TEAHRA) Board on Feb 28th.
- Anna Lucas presented to Northern Territory Primary Health Network (NTPHN) on the Health Communication Centre on Feb 10th.
- Joanne Sweeney and Anna Lucas delivered to the RDH Standard 6 committee on Feb 6th.

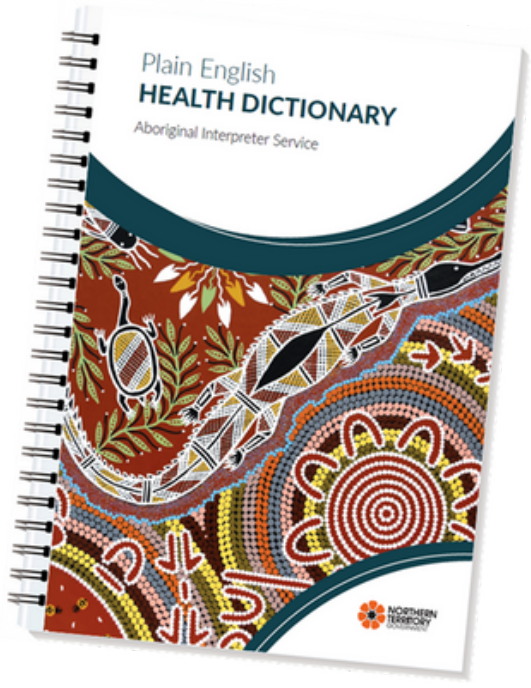
Evaluation of the Plain English Health Dictionary

In collaboration with the NT Aboriginal Interpreter Service, the Communicate Study Partnership is undertaking an evaluation of the Plain English Health Dictionary.

Have you used this resource in the NT healthcare sector?
Take the survey before 30 April and contact the team to go into the draw to win a hard copy dictionary!

Your feedback will help inform us of the Dictionary's impact on cultural safety through effective intercultural communication and use of Plain English, and also identify updates for future editions.

For any questions about this project, or more information please contact:
madelyn.hay@menzies.edu.au



Publications

“If They Help Us, We Can Help Them”: First Nations Peoples Identify Intercultural Health Communication Problems and Solutions in Hospital in Northern Australia | Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities

Defining narrative change: a case study of the decolonising podcast Ask the Specialist: Larrakia, Tiwi and Yolŋu stories to inspire better healthcare (tandfonline.com)

Evaluating the impact of ‘Ask the Specialist Plus’: a training program for improving cultural safety and communication in hospital-based healthcare | BMC Health Services Research | Full Text (biomedcentral.com)

Improving outcomes for hospitalised First Nations peoples though greater cultural safety and better communication: the Communicate Study Partnership study protocol | Implementation Science | Full Text (biomedcentral.com)

Does improved interpreter uptake reduce self-discharge rates in hospitalized patients? A successful hospital intervention explained - PubMed (nih.gov)

"The talking bit of medicine, that's the most important bit": doctors and Aboriginal interpreters collaborate to transform culturally competent hospital care - PubMed (nih.gov)

From "stuck" to satisfied: Aboriginal people's experience of culturally safe care with interpreters in a Northern Territory hospital - PubMed (nih.gov)

Aboriginal patient and interpreter perspectives on the delivery of culturally safe hospital-based care - PubMed (nih.gov)

Improving communication with Aboriginal hospital inpatients: a quasi-experimental interventional study - PubMed (nih.gov)

"How can I do more?" Cultural awareness training for hospital-based healthcare providers working with high Aboriginal caseload - PubMed (nih.gov)

Low uptake of Aboriginal interpreters in healthcare: exploration of current use in Australia's Northern Territory - PubMed (nih.gov)

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