

ACAH 25

ACADEMY OF CHILD &
ADOLESCENT HEALTH



Newsletter June 2025



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Academy of Child and Adolescent Health



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ACAH
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ACAH2025 Darwin Conference Update

Building Brighter Futures

The Board recently made the difficult decision to postpone the ACAH2025 Conference. This was to give more time for you to register and plan your travel. We will update you with the new dates ASAP. The conference is shaping up to be an exciting and interesting programme, that will realise the vision and passion of the organising committee.

Please read more later in this newsletter.



Chair's Welcome

It is with great pleasure that I write to you as the new Chair of the ACAH Board. Having only joined the Board in December 2024 I am very grateful to other Board directors for helping me get to know ACAH.

Firstly, I must thank outgoing Co-Chair Ash Quadir, you can read more in this newsletter. You will also meet some of the people active in the ACAH.

To briefly introduce myself- I am a Community Child Health Consultant (Developmental Paediatrician) in Sydney Local Health District. I was RACP President and Chair Board 2022-2024 and was on the Board for 6 years.

The ACAH is WE not just us - you are the foundation and how we achieve **our purpose:**

TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF EVERY NEWBORN, CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY REACH THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL.

What can you do to promote the health of children and young people?

- ***Renew your membership*** <https://acah.org.au/membership/apply-for-or-renew-membership>
- ***Join the ACAH*** <https://acah.org.au/membership/apply-for-or-renew-membership>
- ***Email us*** about what you want to see from or do with the ACAH-admin@acah.org.au

Please enjoy this newsletter and stay tuned for more about the ACAH.

Jacqueline Small, Chair Board.



Dr Ash (Second from the right above)

Gratitude and applause:

The Board thanks our outgoing Co-Chair Ashfaqe Quadir

The Board bids a fond farewell to our immediate past Co-Chair Dr Ashfaqe Quadir ("Ash") as we warmly welcome Dr Jacqueline Small as the incoming Chair and Stephanie Dowden as the Deputy Chair.

Ash has been an incredible asset to ACAH from the time he joined, to Co-convening the amazing ACAH 2023 Conference in Melbourne ("A voice for children") and organising our Primary care Webinars, all of which were so well received.

His passion for mentorship and supporting medical students and trainees has been a hallmark of his time at ACAH with the Australian Medical Student Association Webinars, representing ACAH at the AMSA Global Health Conference, bedside and practical skills workshop medical student teaching as a Senior Lecturer with the University of Sydney as well as establishing and promoting our prevocational committee.

We were very glad that he joined the ACAH Board and later took up the position as Co-Chair with Stephanie Dowden (Nurse Practitioner; Western Australia). He has worked tirelessly during his time at ACAH and somehow also finds time to work as a General Paediatrician in western Sydney.

We are very excited that Ash is heading off to Canada to pursue his passion for Paediatric Intensive Care as a Fellow at Sick Kids Toronto. We look forward to welcoming Ash back to the Academy when he returns to Australia and wish him all the best with his PhD.

Has Gunasekera, Board Director and Treasurer.

THANK YOU



ACAH Primary Care Workshop

A Paediatric Update



Date: 17th July 2025 5:30pm-8:30pm

ACAH is an organisation focusing on advocating for the health needs of newborns, children and adolescents in a cooperative, collegiate environment. To further this, we are presenting our second paediatric workshop targeted to primary care clinicians passionate about child health around Australia.

Our workshop focuses on challenging child health topics in primary care, and some of the long-term issues that often our primary care colleagues are called on to co-manage whilst waiting for their patients/clients to survive the wait times for public paediatric clinics. We want to answer your burning questions, so we will be basing our Q&A on what you want to hear!

In this virtual workshop, we'll cover:

5:30 - 6:00: Common rashes in paediatrics

6:00 - 6:30: Paediatric Respiratory Infection + Vaccination update - RSV + Flu + COVID + Mycoplasma

6:30 - 7:00: Adolescent medicine for the Primary Care Practitioner

7:00 - 7:30: Paediatric travel medicine (malaria prophylaxis, mosquito prevention, common vaccinations)

7:30 - 8:30: Panel Discussion: Common cases in Paediatrics

Get your tickets here:

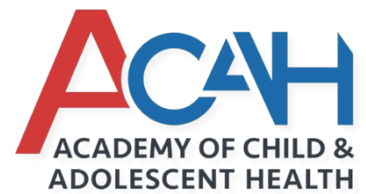
<https://events.humanitix.com/acah-primary-care-workshop-a-paediatric-update>

This session aims to continue a conversation, to create networks, to refresh and renew knowledge, and to reinvigorate you for your work with children and adolescents. We look forward to seeing you there.

Anysha Walia, Trainee and Board Director.

What is the Academy?

The Academy of Child and Adolescent Health (ACAHA) promotes the health and wellbeing of every newborn, child and young person



History of the ACAHA

ACAHA was incorporated in December 2016 and launched by Professor Quentin Bryce, former Governor General of Australia, in March 2018.

ACAHA was established with funding support from the Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP), but is separate from, and has a different function to, the RACP. ACAHA is a home for all healthcare professionals, across disciplines and across the region.

Board membership spans Australia and spans disciplines. There has been a groundswell of goodwill and support from the child and adolescent health communities across the region.

The Academy aims to achieve this by serving as:

1

A leading organisation for child and adolescent healthcare professionals in our region to network and collaborate.

2

A vehicle for mentoring opportunities and research links as well as for best practice education and training.

3

An innovative platform for healthcare professionals to advocate for the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents in our region.

ACTION TO REDUCE HEALTH INEQUALITIES MUST START BEFORE BIRTH AND BE FOLLOWED THROUGH THE LIFE OF THE CHILD. ONLY THEN CAN THE CLOSE LINKS BETWEEN EARLY DISADVANTAGE AND POOR OUT COME THROUGHOUT LIFE BE BROKEN. FOR THIS REASON, GIVING EVERY CHILD THE BEST START IN LIFE IS OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION (MARMOT, 2010)

Who is the ACAH?

Reflections from our Members and Directors

Simone Sherriff - Wotjobaluk woman, Research Fellow at the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at Sydney University and ACAH Board Director

As an Aboriginal mother of two young sons, an aunty and a researcher working in the child and maternal health space I see ACAH as a pivotal network of likeminded health and medical professionals who are passionate about ensuring we leave a healthy legacy for our future generations. ACAH can lead the way in advocating and ensuring our children and young people's voices are heard and privileged in the health and medical space.

I see the ACAH network continuing to grow and provide a platform for our emerging leaders in the health and medical space to share important learnings that are innovative and value a diversity of knowledges to shape the health and wellbeing for our next generations.



Dr Devin Deo - Paediatric Trainee The Children's Hospital at Westmead, Sydney ACAH Member



I see the ACAH as the umbrella body for various health care workers ranging from consultants to paediatric trainees to medical students with an interest in paediatrics as well as nurses who specialise in paediatrics and allied health staff. We are a group of diverse individuals with different backgrounds and experiences, all united as one body, with a shared goal of promoting the health and well-being of every newborn, child and young person.

As a united organization we are not only the voice for change but also possess the drive and commitment to carry out real, meaningful positive change, exchanging ideas and sharing experiences.

Looking to the future, I am particularly excited as a paediatric trainee to see ACAH continue to expand its membership in welcoming more paediatric trainees and medical students who are potential trainees. They represent the next generation of paediatricians who will bring enthusiasm, energy, and passion that will continue to shape and build the future of the ACAH.

Kim Oates AO - Consultant Paediatrician, ACAH Board Director, Sydney

When you join the Academy of Child and Adolescent Health you will join colleagues who have scientific minds and compassionate hearts. This is a powerful combination as we to move towards our aim of promoting the health and wellbeing of every newborn, child and young person in order that they may meet their maximum potential.

Here are three things I love about ACAH:

1. We are multidisciplinary, open not just to paediatricians, but also to nurses and allied health professionals who work primarily with children. We learn so much when we meet likeminded people from different disciplines.
2. Our conferences are amongst the best conferences I have ever attended, intimate, friendly, educational and fun.
3. We are a young organisation, growing, optimistic and making a difference to the lives of the next generation.



HOW CAN ANYONE RESIST A COMBINATION LIKE THAT? BECOME A MEMBER, JOIN US, ENJOY OUR ACTIVITIES AND HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Sam Harkus - Audiologist and ACAH Board Director, Sydney



As an audiologist working in and with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities, I see the destructive effects of large factors, outside the sphere of influence of audiology and health, on the ear health and hearing of children and young people. The impacts of this are wide and often life-long, affecting communication skills, behaviour, and attention, learning, and causing worry for family. Sometimes the condition is life-threatening; almost always it is quality of life-threatening.

I see ACAH as an organisation that is well-positioned to advocate for these big, macro-level factors that impact in serious ways on the health, wellbeing and life opportunities of children. Although formed by paediatricians, ACAH is open all health and allied health practitioners looking for an avenue to advocate and get educated about these things. I hope you will think seriously about joining us. As well, watch out for our 2026 Darwin conference program - it is inspiring. Get in early if it interests you - we are little and there's only room for 100 attendees.



ACAHAH25

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

DARWIN CONVENTION CENTRE



Conference:

The conference will be held in the beautiful Top End of Australia in Darwin on Larrakia Country. The program will explore the journey of children and adolescents in the Top End, Australia and beyond – encompassing the neonatal period, early childhood, schooling, and adolescence, culminating in a focus on population health and environmental health.

Plenary sessions, workshops and panel discussions will centre on the health of First Nations peoples, health and population research and initiatives in Timor-Leste, youth justice and mental health and environmental advocacy. We aim to also address the unique challenges pertinent to working in the Northern Territory.

This is a conference for health professionals, trainees and students working in child and adolescent health, and those with an interest in Indigenous health, improving outcomes for remote community children, youth justice and environmental advocacy. This conference will bring together like-minded professionals, trainees and students from around the country, from allied health, nursing and medical backgrounds, to further educate, connect and empower those passionate about improving child health.

Additionally, delegates will have the opportunity to present their own research enabling sharing of contemporary knowledge in child health from all around Australia.

Delegates will explore the best that Darwin has to offer, including excursions to the local sunset markets and other key features of Darwin.

About the artist:

Isaiah Naguurgurba is an Markawo artist and screen printer who was a founding member of Injalak Arts and Crafts in Oenpelli, a remote community in western Arnhem Land. Isaiah sought inspiration for his paintings from djang, meaning stories, events, and places of deep importance. For Isaiah, painting the world around him was of utmost importance – because to him, to paint your Country is to highlight where you come from. This artwork, Kinga, saltwater crocodile, is a traditional cultural expression. It was released on Canva in collaboration with Balarinji, alongside artwork of two other renowned artists and Elders, to increase recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, design and art. Royalties go directly to the artist and Isaiah's family have given permission for his name and artwork to be shared.



Program:

Our program, including the release of speakers is under development. This will encompass keynote talks from speakers from the Northern Territory and Timor-Leste, and a range of workshops and panel-based sessions tackling the issues that face children and young people in the Top End and beyond. Please keep an eye on our Instagram (@academycan) for the most up to date program information.

Research Presentations

Fledgling and long-term research professionals have an opportunity at ACAH2025 to present contemporary research via a poster or oral presentation. Topics can pertain to any aspect of child and adolescent health, and submissions are invited from consultants, trainees, allied health workers and students.

Submission information is available [here](#) (click on link)

- Don't miss an opportunity to present to a receptive and collegiate audience!

Conference Venue: Darwin Conference Centre

Overlooking Darwin's iconic waterfront, Darwin Conference Centre is the Top End's premium conference venue. The venue is wheelchair-user friendly, easily accessible and located close to Darwin City Centre. DCC will also be playing host to the annual Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, providing delegates with an opportunity to peruse and purchase local Top End art as a lasting souvenir from your trip.

Dietary Requirements

The venue will also provide catering, and all tickets include morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea in addition to coffee and tea throughout the day. Please identify any dietary requirements at the time of booking. If dietary requirements are not declared, unfortunately we cannot guarantee there will be available food.

Streaming

We also have a digital option for those unable to attend in person. This will **not** include workshops, but links/recordings will be emailed out closer to the time of the conference.

- Please select "Online Streaming" when choosing your ticket type.

Marissa Loh and Monica Parker, Co-Chairs- ACAH2025 Conference Organisation

Meet the Board



Dr Jacqueline Small, Chair

Jacki is a Community Child Health Consultant in SLHD and has over 27 years experience in multidisciplinary teams for children with developmental disabilities. She was RACP President/Board Chair 2022-2024 and President Australian Association Developmental Disability Medicine (2015-2020).

Stephanie Dowden, Deputy Chair

Stephanie is a Nurse Practitioner based in Perth and has worked for over 25 years in child health in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand and UK. She has experience as a Director and is passionate about equitable and evidence based child health.



Dr Has Gunasekera, Treasurer

Has is a Clinical Academic and Professor of Paediatric Priority Populations at CHW and University of Sydney. He is engaged in research with ACCHOs and worked in Health Assessment for Refugee Kids clinic for over two decades.

Dr Paul Bauert OAM, Secretary

Paul is a Paediatrician in Royal Darwin Hospital. He won the RACP Rural Medal in 2008 and twice won the AMA President's Medal for passionate and persistent advocacy for improvements in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.



Sam Harkus

Sam is an audiologist based in Gadigal, Sydney NSW. Her work has predominantly focussed on equitable and earlier access to ear health and hearing care for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Meet the Board

Dr Kim Oates AO

Kim is a paediatrician who trained across 3 countries and was the first holder of University of Sydney's Chair of Paediatrics and Child Health (1985-1997) and subsequently, CE from 1997-2006. Kim retains his international reputation as an expert in child abuse and neglect and as a teacher of medical students.



Dr Jenny Proimos

Jenny has served the ACAH as a Board Director since it was established. She has also been Board Chair and Treasurer. She is a consultant adolescent physician and previously was the Principal Medical Adviser in the Victorian Department of Education and Training and President of Paediatrics and Child Health Division, RACP, from 2008-2010.



Simone Sherriff

Simone is a Wotjobaluk woman who lives and works on Wiradjuri country and is a Research Fellow at the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at Sydney University. Simone has extensive experience working in the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector in NSW and has worked with Aboriginal community organisations for the last 15 years on health research and the implementation of services around key priority areas for communities. Simone's research interests are around food security, breastfeeding, and child health.



Dr Anysha Walia

Anysha is a paediatric trainee in Victoria and was shortlisted as Intern of the year in 2022. She has been active in the ACAH since she was a medical student and was co-convenor of ACAH2023. She is a volunteer for Water Well project and involved in refugee health research.



Unless courageous actions are taken now, the future for adolescents looks bleak.

The Commission estimates that by 2100, 1.8 billion adolescents will live in a world that is about 2.8°C warmer than in pre-industrial times; large numbers of adolescents will face food insecurity, economic challenges, and armed conflicts; and by 2030, a third of adolescents living in high-income countries, Latin America, and the Middle East will be living with overweight or obesity.

Is there any cause for optimism? A longer-term hope emanates from young people themselves.

A wake up call: The second commission on adolescent health. Lancet 2025.



ACAHA 2023 CONFERENCE MOMENTS

*A look back at the wonderful
moments at the ACAHA 2023
Conference*



Newsletter
Produced by
Dr Devin Deo

