

ACA^YH

ACADEMY OF CHILD &
ADOLESCENT HEALTH



Newsletter November 2025



<https://acah.org.au/>



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Academy of Child and Adolescent Health



academycah



@AcademyCAH



ACAH26

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

23 - 25 APRIL 2026 | DARWIN CONVENTION CENTRE

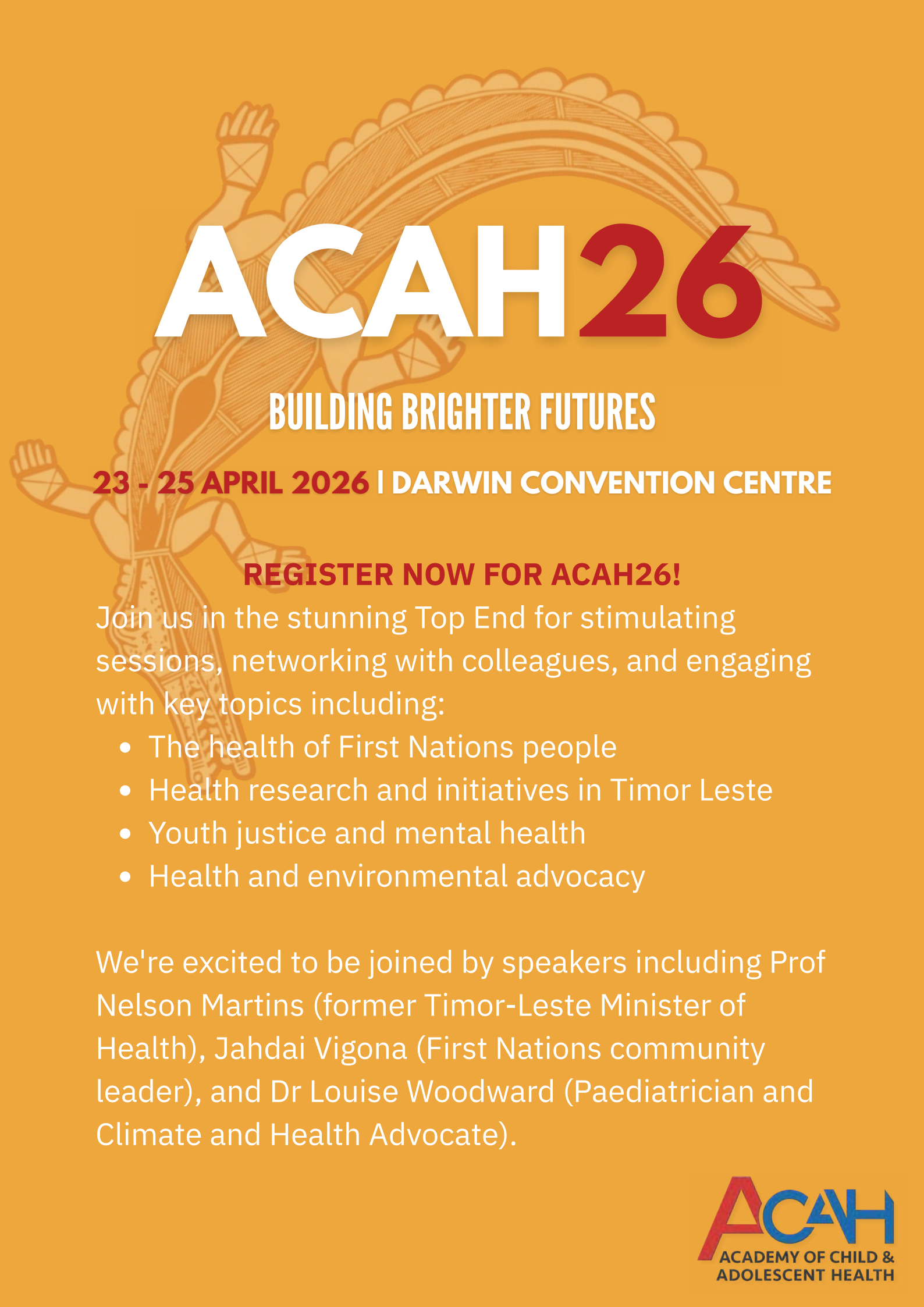
Announcing

Our paediatrics conference is back!
ACAH26 is a multidisciplinary
conference for those
passionate about
child and adolescent health

DARWIN, LARRAKIA COUNTRY

With a theme of **Building Brighter Futures**, we are bringing together a brilliant range of speakers to discuss issues that affect young people and their health. Topics will span across perinatal medicine, childhood & adolescent health, and population health & advocates, with a focus on First Nations voices and community led solutions.

There will also be research presentations and prizes, so submit your abstracts now!



ACAH26

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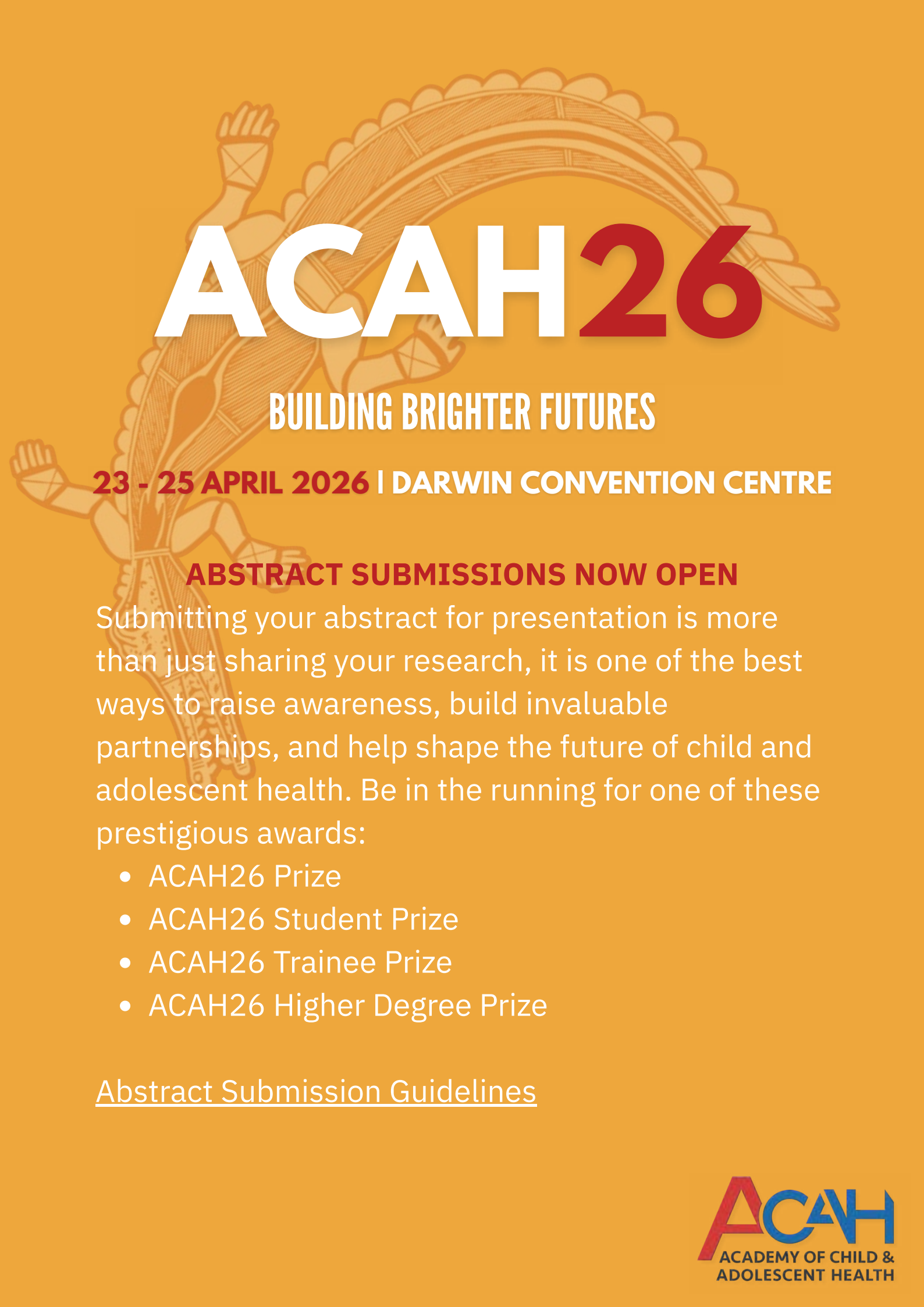
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REGISTER NOW FOR ACAH26!

Join us in the stunning Top End for stimulating sessions, networking with colleagues, and engaging with key topics including:

- The health of First Nations people
- Health research and initiatives in Timor Leste
- Youth justice and mental health
- Health and environmental advocacy

We're excited to be joined by speakers including Prof Nelson Martins (former Timor-Leste Minister of Health), Jahdai Vigona (First Nations community leader), and Dr Louise Woodward (Paediatrician and Climate and Health Advocate).



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ABSTRACT SUBMISSIONS NOW OPEN

Submitting your abstract for presentation is more than just sharing your research, it is one of the best ways to raise awareness, build invaluable partnerships, and help shape the future of child and adolescent health. Be in the running for one of these prestigious awards:

- ACAH26 Prize
- ACAH26 Student Prize
- ACAH26 Trainee Prize
- ACAH26 Higher Degree Prize

[Abstract Submission Guidelines](#)



ACAH26

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WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS?

1. Register for the ACAH2026 Conference: Early bird tickets from \$350 (discounts for ACAH members and special offers for new members who join and register).
2. Book discounted accommodation via this portal: Rooms are limited. Book in early and save on your stay!
3. Submit abstracts for presentation here: Present your latest work on a national stage and connect with peers.

Interested in sponsoring ACAH26? See our [prospectus here](#) for a full breakdown of partnership opportunities.

Welcome to our November Newsletter, the first produced by our lovely Dr Lily Chen, member of the ACAH Prevocational Committee. The ACAH Board is extremely grateful to our talented early career members who are a vital part of the engine room of the ACAH.

Data is a pivotal component of driving change and effective advocacy. In 2009, Australia became the first country in the world to collect data with the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) on the wholistic early development of children starting school (<https://www.aedc.gov.au>).

Disturbingly, the 2024 data shows that there are fewer children developmentally on track across 5 domains and increased number of children developmentally vulnerable on 1 or more and 2 or more domains.

The ACAH is continuing to drive change to promote the health and wellbeing of all children and young people through advocacy, professional development and building networks and we welcome you to be a part of our activities. Here are some highlights:

- **ACAH2026** conference in Darwin 23-25 April 2026 *Building Brighter Futures* featuring an impressive line up of speakers and plenty of opportunity for you to present your research (<https://acah.org.au/events/acah26-darwin/>).
- Webinar 18 November 2025 featuring **Dr Monique Ryan MP** discussing the rising youth gambling (<https://acah.org.au/events/>).
- Webinar 25 February 2026 featuring **RCPCH President Dr Steve Turner** and **Dr Peter Lachman** as part of a panel to discuss improving safe care by reducing error traps (<https://acah.org.au/events/>).

The Board celebrates the achievements of our members, including **Professor Elizabeth Elliott** who will lead Centre of Research Excellence in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorder, and our wider paediatric community including **Professor Susan Sawyer**, recently awarded Fellowship Australian Academy Health and Medical Sciences.

Keep reading for more updates and join or renew your membership here (<https://acah.org.au/membership/apply-for-or-renew-membership/>). Please reach out to us if you would like to make some suggestions.

Jacqueline Small, Chair ACAH Board.

Act for Children

Every child deserves to thrive

ACAHA is proud to be a part of the Act for Children Alliance which demands that child safety and wellbeing become a national priority, calling for the following key actions:

1. Appointing a Cabinet Minister for Children
2. Making child wellbeing a standing priority of National Cabinet
3. Developing and implementing a National Plan for Child Wellbeing
4. Enshrining children's rights in law through a National Children's Act

Recent updates:

The Act for Children Steering group has agreed to divide into two new groups:

1. Act for Children Campaign Strategy Group - led by Adam Valvasori
 - Continue the work of growing the membership.
 - Develop a funding strategy.
 - Develop an 'influence' strategy, including members of Parliaments and other key figures.
2. Act for Children Ideas Group
 - Develop brief policy summaries, with a focus on the numerous reports and research papers coming out each month, to highlight the key issues and policy reform principles emerging across selected reports. These would be designed for policy decision-makers and MP's.
 - To continue to host webinars with leaders in Australia and internationally, and online panel discussions and debates.
 - And to develop other ways to get evidence-based policy ideas into the hands of decision-makers.

Fake News: Paracetamol, vaccinations and Autism

How clinicians can combat misinformation



Thanks to our amazing Panel for this quick turnaround ACAH Webinar in response to the misinformation spread from the White House in September. The Academy is able to rapidly respond to hot topic issues and bring together the right people to provide clinicians across Disciplines in Child and Adolescent Health with the toolkit needed to address the problem at hand.

Professor Nick Wood set the scene with his presentation on vaccination coverage, the evident dip in recent years as well as in timeliness of delivery and the passive and active adverse events surveillance in Australia. Despite free availability of Flu vaccine, we don't see any uptick in Flu vaccine coverage. Many may not have been aware that as well as the passive healthcare professional reporting of adverse events, the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance (NCIRS) leads a collaboration to actively seek adverse outcomes through cohort event monitoring (the 'AusVaxSafety' Program). Nick then addressed, head-on, some of the common myths, such as the risk of:

- *Mercury (Thiomersal): there is no vaccine on the Australian schedule containing Thiomersal.*
- *Aluminium: much more aluminium is delivered to babies in the first 6 months in artificial formulas (particularly soy) than in vaccinations.*
- *Multiple vaccines are harmful: there is no benefit splitting vaccinations as then the child has to have a needlestick more often.*

Fake News: Paracetamol, vaccinations and Autism

How clinicians can combat misinformation

- *Vaccine paradox (more hospitalised patients had been vaccinated than not): most people were vaccinated so they are overrepresented, but the actual hospitalisation rate was 5 times higher among unvaccinated.*
- *Link to Autism: a study of 2.5 million children in Sweden showed the child exposed to Paracetamol had no different Autism rate than their unexposed sibling. It is likely any associations between paracetamol use in pregnancy and Autism are from the reason the paracetamol was used (infection or pain) being linked to Autism.*

Professor Margie Danchin then highlighted the practical approaches to address this misinformation, and disinformation (the deliberate use of lies for a political agenda). The Illusory Truth Effect is the constant repetition of “fake news” to increase the semblance it is true. Promoters of disinformation pretend they have the answers, whereas we have a duty to be honest and only state what is within the evidence envelope. The real world adverse impact of linking paracetamol with Autism is leaving pregnant women at risk of choosing less safe options, or being asked by their Autistic children whether they took paracetamol during the pregnancy, when parents are already riddled with unjustified guilt or enduring pain or fever, which is already clearly associated with an increased risk of Autism. What can we do?

- *Prebunking: warning people before they encounter misinformation*

Fake News: Paracetamol, vaccinations and Autism

How clinicians can combat misinformation

- *Debunking: Try the “Truth Sandwich”:*
 - a. clearly state the truth - *Vaccines don't cause Autism*
 - b. provide factual correction - *Studies with millions of kids show no link*
 - c. explain the myth's origin - *This came from a discredited study with faked data*
 - d. restate the truth - *Vaccines are safe and effective*

Some of the most effective strategies are community engagement (e.g., with Aboriginal elders) and the use of games (e.g., 'cranky uncle'). For more information, check out the www.skai.org.au (Sharing Knowledge about Immunisation).

Thank you again Nick and Margie for sharing your precious time and for the lively audience engagement. If you missed this, make sure you join ACAH for free access to all our Webinars!



Nick Wood

- Professor (Uni Syd)
- A/Director of the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance
- Paediatrician (Children's Hospital Westmead)



Margie Danchin

- Professor and A/Dean International (Uni Melb)
- Member of the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation
- Group Leader of the Vaccine Update and Clinical Trials Group (Murdoch Children's Research Institute)
- Paediatrician (Royal Children's Hospital)

Don't forget to keep an eye out for other upcoming Webinars



Do children gamble? They do. Why do they do it?

19

Nov 2025

Wednesday, Nov 19th, 2025 | 6:30 - 7.30 pm AEDT

Youth gambling is a rising public health issue driven by advertising, accessibility and weak regulation. Join Dr Monique Ryan MP as we unpack the evidence, explore policy challenges, and discuss practical strategies to protect young people from gambling harm.

<https://events.humanitix.com/acah-gambling-webinar-featuring-dr-monique-ryan>

Even paediatricians make mistakes: Improving child health by avoiding error traps.

25

Feb 2026

Wednesday, Feb 25th, 2026 | 7 - 8 pm AEDT

Providing quality and safe health care is providing the right care, in the right place at the right time is particularly important for children. International experts in paediatrics and child health will address quality and safety in paediatric healthcare.

<https://events.humanitix.com/even-paediatricians-make-mistakes-improving-child-health-by-avoiding-error-traps>



Do children gamble? They do. Why do they do it?

ACAHA 2025 WEBINAR SERIES

Join our webinar with Dr Monique Ryan, Federal MP and paediatric neurologist to learn about what we as child advocates can do.

WEDNESDAY 19th NOVEMBER 6:30PM-7:30PM AEDT

Featuring guest speaker

Dr Monique Ryan MP

Federal Member for Kooyong | Paediatric Neurologist

Webinar chair

Prof Kim Oates AO

Emeritus Professor USYD | ACAHA Board Director

Panellists

Prof Nitin Kapur

*Past President, Paediatrics & Child Health RACP |
Paediatric Respiratory Physician*

Dr Anysha Walia

Paediatric Trainee | ACAHA Board Director



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).

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 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.

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.



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 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.



Dr Devin Deo

Devin is a Paediatric Trainee at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, NSW. He completed his undergraduate medical degree from The University of Newcastle in 2020, before completing his internship in rural Taree. He is currently the President of the Kids Resident Medical Officer Association at Westmead Kids and also a member of the Clinical Council of the Sydney Children's Hospital Network. Devin also serves as the Hospital Representative for Westmead Kids in the Australian Medical Association NSW Doctors-In-Training Committee.



Peter Barclay

Peter is the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Director of Pharmacy. Having worked as a Hospital Pharmacist for over 40 years, Peter is passionate about enabling access to appropriate medications for children and families and removing barriers that exist in the health system. Actively engaged in the provision of precision medicines including gene therapies for children at SCHN. Peter is experienced using pharmacy technology to deliver patient safety and business efficiency. He has been a strong advocate for the role of Hospital Pharmacists as clinicians, advocates for patient safety, efficient pharmaceutical procurers and key stakeholders in medication related clinical governance.



THANK YOU TO OUR OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS



Dr Nitin Kapur



Dr Jenny Proimos



Dr Paul Bauert



Stephanie Dowden