

ACA^YH

ACADEMY OF CHILD &
ADOLESCENT HEALTH



Newsletter April 2026



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Academy of Child and Adolescent Health

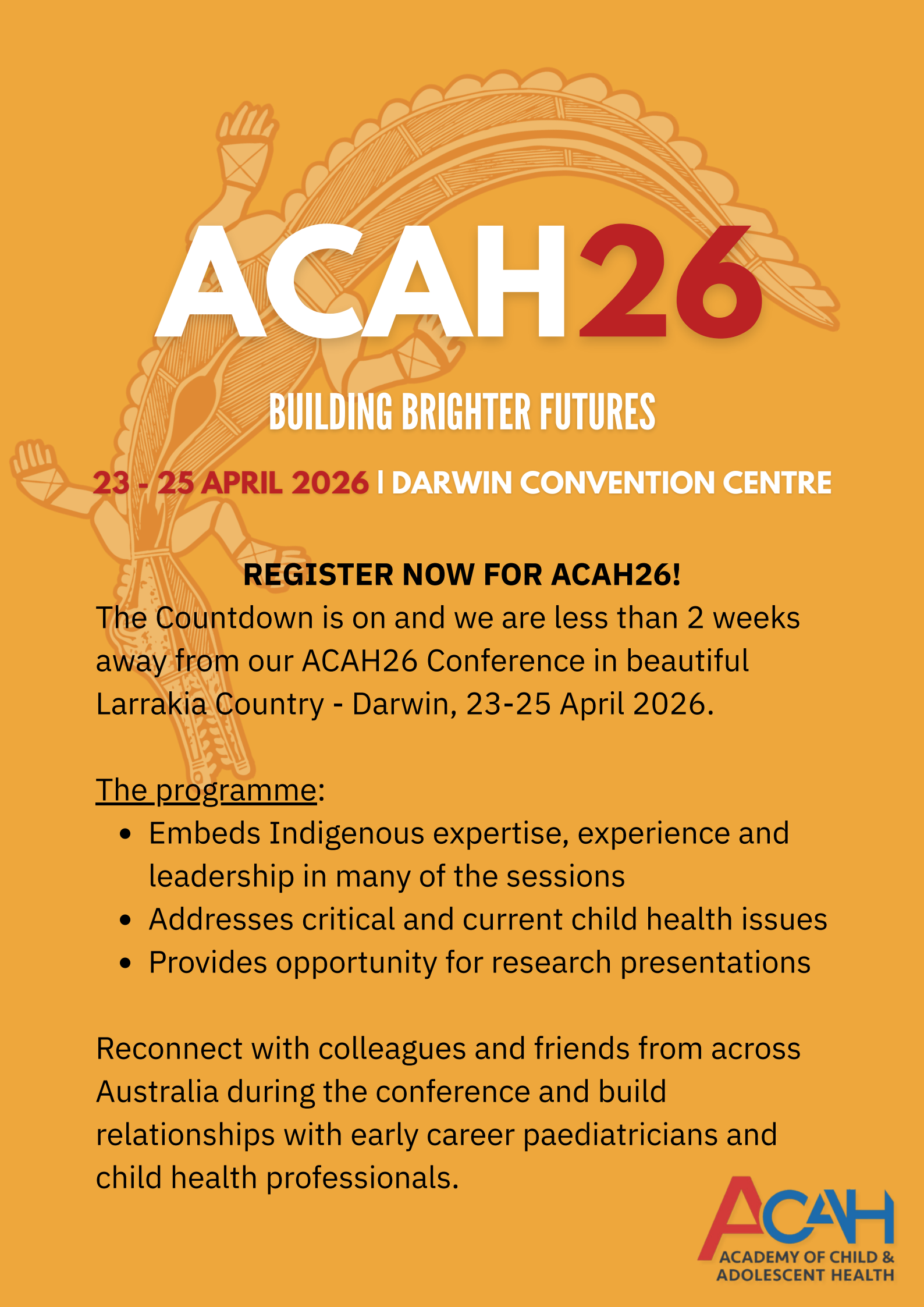


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@AcademyCAH

Dr Lily Chen
Newsletter producer



ACAH26

BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

23 - 25 APRIL 2026 | DARWIN CONVENTION CENTRE

REGISTER NOW FOR ACAH26!

The Countdown is on and we are less than 2 weeks away from our ACAH26 Conference in beautiful Larrakia Country - Darwin, 23-25 April 2026.

The programme:

- Embeds Indigenous expertise, experience and leadership in many of the sessions
- Addresses critical and current child health issues
- Provides opportunity for research presentations

Reconnect with colleagues and friends from across Australia during the conference and build relationships with early career paediatricians and child health professionals.



ACAH26

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WHAT ARE YOUR NEXT STEPS?

1. Register for the ACAH2026 Conference (single day tickets available)
2. Sign up for the ACAH26 Mentoring Session as a mentor or mentee (25 April)
3. Register to join us for our Conference Cocktail Evening at the Darwin Trailer Boat Club (24 April)
4. Join us for welcome drinks and dinner over Sunset at the Ski Club (23 April)
5. Wrap up the conference with Farewell Drinks at Dock One Bar, Waterfront (25 April)
6. Spend time visiting the beautiful country around Darwin or beyond



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

Destination Partner



Bronze Partners



Exhibitors



As Chair of the ACAH Board, I invite you to read this newsletter and join us in some of the events and activities that are planned for 2026. These events feature some of the most influential paediatric and child health professionals in Australia and address some of the critical issues we are facing.

I particularly want to acknowledge A Professor Elisabeth Murphy, PSM, NSW Ministry of Health Child Health Advisor, and ACAH Member, who is retiring. She has made phenomenal contributions to improving child health in Australia throughout her career. On the occasion of her retirement, we are celebrating her career with a feature webinar on First 2000 Days Framework. Professors Sue Woolfenden and Sharon Goldfeld, also leading figures in child health, will also be taking part. We wish you all the very best Lis.

As we lead up to ACAH26, Darwin, 23-25 April 2026, I want to warmly welcome new ACAH members. We encourage your ideas, energy, contribution and participation in ACAH and our vision. For those joining us in Darwin- please introduce yourself to Board members so we can get to know you.

The ACAH Board welcomes discussion and engagement on what may be considered sensitive topics, such as youth justice and mental health. We also encourage inclusion of people with lived experience, recognising that we may also be as child and adolescent health professionals. Driving improvements in child and adolescent health sometimes requires us to be bold.

While our conversations may be vigorous at times, especially where we feel a deep sense of injustice, we will be asking all at ACAH26 to converse and engage sensitively, thoughtfully and with respect for others, especially those present who may be carrying generations of trauma.

I encourage you to read about the upcoming events, ACAH26 Programme and associated events and start adding these to your diaries. We will provide updates on our ongoing advocacy in future newsletters.

Please don't hesitate to contact us on admin@acah.org.au.

Jacqueline Small
Chair ACAH Board

ACAH26 Conference

Co-Convenor's Update

On behalf of the 2026 Conference Committee, we are getting very excited to welcome many of you to Larrakia Country in less than two weeks! We are pleased to be hosting over 130 delegates from every Australian state and territory, and even from Japan.

Our program includes over 30 speakers from around the country, including from the Tiwi Islands, and Timor-Leste, and 15 delegates will present their research, showcasing the latest developments in child and youth health.

We have curated a program which aims to inspire and educate, to encourage delegates to reflect about crucial issues which today's children face, and to empower delegates to drive meaningful change.

Next steps:

- Final call for registrations: Tickets, including day tickets, are available [here](#)
- Program: The latest conference program is available [here](#)
- Mentoring: On day 3 (Saturday 25th April), our Prevocational Committee will host a mentoring session to connect consultants with trainees (1:30-2:30pm). To assist with planning, please kindly register your interest and attendance [here](#)
- Social program:
 - After day 1 (Thursday 23rd April) of the conference, please come join us over sunset drinks and dinner at the Darwin Ski Club (no tickets needed, order your own food/drinks), from 6:30pm
 - Day 2 (Friday 24th April) will finish with the Conference Cocktail Evening over another iconic Top End sunset at the Darwin Trailer Boat Club - tickets are available [here](#) and include a canapés and drinks package
 - After the conference finishes on Saturday (25th April), we welcome you to Dock One, near to the Convention Centre, to bid everyone farewell (no tickets required, order own food/drinks).

We look forward to seeing you in tropical and sunny Darwin soon!

Marissa Loh

Co-Convenor, 2026 ACAH Conference

ACAH26 Mentoring Session

Call out for advanced trainees and consultants as mentors!

For those who are joining us in Darwin for the upcoming Academy of Child and Adolescent Health 2026 Conference, we welcome you to join our mentoring session on Saturday 25th April (1:30pm to 2:30pm) as part of our prevocational workshops.

This will be an informal 1-hour speed-dating style event whereby medical students, junior doctors and trainees will get the chance to speak with various senior paediatric doctors to hear the various experiences and career paths that have been taken within the paediatric and medical field and gain practical advice and insights.

We are calling out for advanced trainees and consultants who will be available to sign up for this event and help share their experiences to support the next generation of paediatric healthcare professionals within our ACAH community.

Sign up to be a mentor [here](#)!

We look forward to seeing you there!

Raise the Age Campaign

Children belong in school yards, not in prison cells

The ACAH is proud to stand with the Raise the Age campaign in advocating for safer, more just outcomes for children.

Every child deserves to grow up supported, nurtured, and safe. Yet across Australia, children as young as 10 can still be arrested, charged, and imprisoned. We know this approach causes real harm, as exposing children to the criminal legal system at a critical stage of development can have lifelong impacts on their health, wellbeing, and future.

For decades, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations, and advocates have led the call to raise the age of criminal responsibility, having seen first hand that removing children from their families and communities only deepens disadvantage and trauma.

The evidence is clear: punitive responses don't work. They increase the likelihood of reoffending and fail to address the underlying drivers of youth offending. What does work is early support, investment in health, education, housing, and community-led solutions that keep children connected and thriving.

While tens of thousands have joined this movement, recent policy directions in parts of Australia (including the Northern Territory and Queensland) are moving backwards instead, with tougher laws that see more children incarcerated at younger ages. This is not justice, it is a growing public health and human rights concern.

Now more than ever, we must listen to evidence, centre the voices of communities, and advocate for change. Together, we can raise the age and build a future where all children are given the opportunity to thrive.

Sign the petition now!

National Campaign to Raise the Age: <https://raisetheage.org.au/>

NSW Campaign to Raise the Age: <https://raisetheagensw.org.au/>

Future Webinars in Planning (see <https://acah.org.au/events/> for updates and registration details).

20

MAY 2026

Tuesday, 20 May 2026

The First 2000 Days Framework: Shaping a Healthier Future for Children with A/Prof Elisabeth Murphy, Profs Sharon Goldfeld, Sue Woolfenden & Dr Jacki Small. [Register here](#)

22

JUL 2026

Wednesday, 22 July 2026

Thriving Kids: Screening for success - developmental screening in primary care. [Register here](#)

23

July 2026

Thursday, 23 July 2026

Thriving Kids: A once in a generation opportunity webinar with Frank Oberklaid and Morgan Fitzpatrick. [Register here](#)

TBA

2026

TBA

Primary Care: ADHD for GPs and Primary Care

05

AUG 2026

TBA

Breastfeeding with focus on First Nations programmes and research.

Please contact us to suggest topics or speakers (such as international experts visiting Australia) for webinars, your contributions are very welcome.

These webinars are recorded for later viewing by members. [Join ACAH to get access to these.](#)

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.



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.

Meet the Board



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.



Dr Amelia Lewis

Amelia is the Senior Clinical Neuropsychologist at the Disability Specialist Unit, Sydney Local Health District. With over a decade of experience supporting children and adolescents with neurodevelopmental differences and disabilities, she brings expertise in clinical neuropsychology, research, and health policy. Amelia's work is guided by systems thinking, collaboration, and child-and-family-centred care. She is deeply committed to promoting the wellbeing of children and young people, as well as their families and communities.