



# WA ABORIGINAL CHILD HEALTH SURVEY

## Project Overview

The Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey (WAACHS) is a large-scale investigation into the health, wellbeing and development of Western Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and is the most comprehensive survey of its kind in Australia. The survey was designed to build the knowledge to develop preventative strategies that promote and maintain the healthy development and the social, emotional, academic and vocational wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

The WAACHS is a collaborative effort encompassing the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, the Kulunga Research Network and Curtin University through the Centre for Developmental Health. Initial funding was secured from the Australian and WA Governments and several corporate sponsors.

## Research Focus

Four volumes of findings have been produced. Each volume builds on the findings of the preceding volumes and also makes specific suggestions of ways in which government agencies and departments can use the findings to inform their policies and practices.

Following the launch of each volume, Kulunga undertakes statewide communication and dissemination of the findings holding a series of regional forums involving the Aboriginal community, community-based service providers and key staff of Australian and State government agencies.

The four volumes launched to date are:

### **Volume 1: *The Health of Aboriginal Children and Young People***

This volume covers findings related to the physical health of Aboriginal children and young people. Specific consideration is given to:

- o The Aboriginal population
- o Carers and their children
- o Forced separation and forced relocation
- o Language and culture
- o Education
- o Employment and financial strain
- o Characteristics of children at birth
- o Substance use during pregnancy
- o Breastfeeding
- o Nutrition
- o Asthma
- o Recurring infections
- o Oral health
- o Disability
- o Contacts with health professionals

## **Volume 2: *The Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Aboriginal Children and Young People***

This volume covers findings related to the mental health of Aboriginal children and young people. Specific consideration is given to:

- o Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- o Family and household factors
- o Child and carer factors
- o Health risk factors
- o Physical activity
- o Substance use
- o Sexual knowledge and experience
- o Self-esteem
- o Self-reported emotional or behavioural difficulties
- o Associations with health risk behaviours
- o Suicidal behaviour
- o Effects of forced separation

## **Volume 3: *Improving the Educational Experiences of Aboriginal Children and Young People***

This volume covers findings related to the educational experiences of Aboriginal children and young people in the state education system, Catholic education schools and independent schools. Specific consideration is given to:

- o School attendance
- o Factors associated with school attendance
- o Academic performance
- o Factors associated with academic performance
- o Teacher and carer ratings of school work performance
- o Young people aged 15 to 17 years no longer at school

## **Volume 4: *Strengthening the Capacity of Aboriginal Children, Families and Communities***

This volume covers findings related to the capacity of Aboriginal children, their families and communities. Specific consideration is given to:

- o Community and household composition
- o Socioeconomic wellbeing
- o Family functioning
- o Life stress events
- o Housing
- o Communities with Aboriginal children

## **Further Information**

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