

National Indigenous Cancer Network (NICaN) Roundtable 2013 Summary Report

The National Indigenous Cancer Network

The National Indigenous Cancer Network (NICaN) is a national network which aims to encourage and support collaboration around cancer research and services for Indigenous people with cancer, their carers and families. It includes a website (www.nican.org.au) and a yarning place for sharing information about Indigenous cancer issues. NICaN was officially launched in February 2013 and is supported by a partnership between Menzies School of Health Research, Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet, Cancer Council Australia and The Lowitja Institute.

The 2013 Roundtable

In March 2013 a two-day NICaN Roundtable was held which focused on engagement, research translation and training; using strategies for connecting, communicating and collaborating. The roundtable was attended by more than 80 people representing 47 different organisations over a range of sectors, services and research groups involved in cancer work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



The Roundtable included the formal launch of a Centre of Research Excellence (CRE) in Indigenous cancer research: Discovering Indigenous Strategies to improve Cancer Outcomes via Engagement, Research Translation and Training (DISCOVER-TT) program. Other agenda items included a Welcome to Country by Maroochy Barambah, presentations by experts on a range of topics, and discussion of research priorities.



The roundtable provided a great opportunity for networking. Participants learned about cancer education programs, advocacy, pathways and outcomes of care, improving models of care and service delivery, and overview of research priorities. More information on the presentations given at the roundtable can be found on the 'Presentations' page of the NICaN website www.nican.org.au/NICaN_Roundtable2013/presentations.htm.

The Launch of DISCOVER-TT

The Discovering Indigenous Strategies to improve Cancer Outcomes via Engagement, Research Translation and Training (DISCOVER-TT) CRE is a coordinated, collaborative, Indigenous-led research program which aims to reduce disparities in treatment and survival for Indigenous Australians with cancer through a focus on the delivery of diagnosis, treatment and care services. The program involves a broad range of partners in Australia and overseas, and

includes researchers, service providers, policy makers, advocacy groups, and Indigenous people affected by cancer.

As part of the roundtable, the DISCOVER-TT program was officially launched by Aunty Margaret Lawton (Brisbane Elder and twice a breast cancer survivor) and Prof Helen Zorbas (Cancer Australia's Chief Executive Officer). A seven-minute video of the launch is available on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/OQnmG-XROkM>

Outcomes and Feedback from the 2013 Roundtable



One of the main aims of the Roundtable was to review current research and translation priorities. Participants conducted small-group discussions about current priorities and gaps across several areas. Roundtable participants recognised the importance of building networks, strengthening and initiating collaborative relationships, sharing information, evaluating work and using the 2010 Cancer Australia report¹ as a basis for priority setting.

In addition, a few weeks after the roundtable, participants were asked to take part in a survey to gather feedback on the 2013 roundtable and assist in planning subsequent roundtables. A total of 44 people responded to the survey, representing 53% of those who attended. About a third of respondents indicated that they were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent. Most participants indicated that the roundtable was valuable and worthwhile, delivered what they were expecting, provided adequate opportunities to express their views, had presentations of a high standard, was important in initiating and/or strengthening collaborations, and provided increased knowledge of research opportunities on cancer in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Many respondents made additional comments on various questions, as well as suggestions for future roundtables. The comments generally reiterated their positive responses on the value of the roundtable. Of particular note, some participants pointed out the challenge of taking collaborations forward after the 'big event' of the roundtable was completed.

1. Miller J, Knott V, Wilson C, Cunningham J, Condon J, Roder D, et al. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cancer Control Research Project. Commissioned report to Cancer Australia, July 2010. Available at: <http://canceraustralia.gov.au/publications-resources/cancer-australia-publications/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-cancer>.

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