

## Menzies supports report card on Indigenous childhood development

Tuesday, 10 December 2013

A key Northern Territory Indigenous child development research organisation has today enthusiastically endorsed an Australian Medical Association (AMA) report on the development of Indigenous children.

The AMA today released its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Report Card 2012-13 entitled, *The Healthy Early Years – Getting the Right Start in Life*. The report notes that the early years of a child's development are critical in determining future health and wellbeing.

Leading child health and development researcher and Director of Menzies' Centre for Child Development and Education (CCDE), Professor Sven Silburn has described the report as a "call to action" for the broader Australian community to redouble its efforts to ensure that Indigenous children get a good start in life.

"Nowhere in Australia is the need more apparent than here in the Northern Territory, where Indigenous children lag worryingly behind their non-Indigenous counterparts in reading and writing levels," said Prof Silburn today.

"While there has been some improvement in the circumstances of Indigenous children in Australia, an enormous amount remains to be done if we are to close the gap between the health and wellbeing of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians," concluded Professor Silburn.

AMA President, Dr Steve Hambleton said: "Without intervention, problems can be transmitted from one generation to the next – and the cycle continues."

"In their early years children need to be safe, have adequate opportunities for growth and development, and have access to adequate health child, child development, and education services," Dr Hambleton said.

"We are seeing some improvements, but much more action is needed."

View the AMA media alert here: <https://ama.com.au/media/ama-indigenous-health-report-2012-13>

**Media note:** Prof Silburn is a national leader in clinical, epidemiological and evaluative research in child development and education, youth mental health and suicide prevention. He was a chief investigator on the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey of over 5600 children, young people and their families.

View his profile at: [http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Our\\_People/Researchers/Sven\\_Silburn/](http://www.menzies.edu.au/page/Our_People/Researchers/Sven_Silburn/)

### Media Contact:

John Flannery, Australian Medical Association – 0419 494 761

Graham Ring, Menzies' Centre for Child Development and Education – 0404 362 290

### Menzies Background

Menzies School of Health Research is Australia's only Medical Research Institute dedicated to improving Indigenous health and wellbeing. We have a 28-year history of scientific discovery and public health achievement. Menzies works at the frontline, partnering with over 60 Indigenous communities across Northern and Central Australia. We collaborate to create resources, grow local skills and find enduring solutions to problems that matter.