The South Australian Aboriginal community, with 30,000 people accounting for over 5 percent of the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, has identified Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) as a key health issue for its communities.

The severe, early and rapid progression of diabetic complications often defines the experience of diabetes for many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The way it can lead to premature kidney, eye, feet, heart and brain problems is not fully understood and the Aboriginal communities in South Australia have welcomed further Aboriginal-focused research. In response, the Wardliparingga Aboriginal Research Unit at the flagship South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAHMRI) has established a program of work focused on making our research translate to policy and practice, understanding the causes and preventing the consequences of T2DM, raising community awareness and improving the ways in which health services can better manage T2DM. Below we showcase two pieces of work that focus on diabetes.

A landmark study, with the scientific name of PROPHECY (Predicting Renal, Ophthalmic and Heart Events in Aboriginal Communities), has been established and will be known more widely as The Aboriginal Diabetes Study. The study is Aboriginal-led—its leader, Alex Brown, is an Aboriginal professor and medical doctor from New South Wales and more than half the Aboriginal Diabetes Study team are Aboriginal. Alex and his team are working in close partnership with South Australian communities to ensure research is carried out with respect to Aboriginal ways of doing business.

**Looking for volunteers**

The study is looking for over 4,000 Aboriginal adults (aged 15 or over), both with and without T2DM, across SA, to better understand the burden, natural history and development of complications of diabetes. While the focus of the research is on understanding the severity of T2DM in Aboriginal communities, it is also hoped its findings will add to the existing knowledge regarding the global challenge of diabetes.
Developing a Type 2 Diabetes Strategy for Aboriginal people in South Australia

Developing a Type 2 Diabetes Strategy for Aboriginal people in South Australia is the opportunity for direct translation of research, service and community knowledge informing policy and practice. There will be several stages to the development of the Strategy including gaining a better understanding of:

1. The current burden and impact of diabetes among Aboriginal people
2. The quality of diabetes care currently received by Aboriginal people in the South Australia
3. The state-wide availability of diabetes and related services

This information will also inform The Aboriginal Diabetes Study.

The last diabetes strategy for Aboriginal people in South Australia was published in 2000. An aim of this Strategy is to improve the quality of life and increase longevity of Aboriginal people in South Australia with diabetes by preventing or slowing related complications. It will be developed with the intention of the strategy being built and owned by all key stakeholders. SA Health has funded Wardliparingga to develop the Diabetes Strategy. Wardliparingga will invite collaboration with Aboriginal community members, the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Sector, SA Health, Primary Health Networks, general practice, Royal Flying Doctor Service and non-government organisations including Diabetes SA to develop this strategy over the coming year.

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Additional information

- Click here to access further information on The Aboriginal Diabetes Study.
- Click here to download .pdf flyer.