



Welcome to the June 2025 Replanting the Birthing Trees (RBT) e-news!

Welcome to the June 2025 newsletter, where we share updates about the Replanting the Birthing Trees (RBT), Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future (HPNF) and Relighting the Firesticks (RF) projects three times a year. Teams across these three large Medical Research Future Funded projects have been working hard during 2025 to meet the ambitious project plans and we thank everyone for their commitment to improving support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. The HPNF project is in its final year (with a six-month extension to December 2025), so the team are busy collecting final data, writing up findings, and working with the community advisory group to plan future possible research. The RBT project is in the third year of a four-year project, with implementation in Victoria being finalised in June 2025, and later 2025 in Western Australia, and plans being made for final data collection. There has been good progress on the workstream activities, with the [Resource Hub](#) being accessed; Aboriginal Complex Trauma and Strengths Questionnaire training developed; [Baby Coming You Ready](#) implementation completed in WA and starting in Victoria; over 1200 people completing the free online [RBT training](#); over 1000 people completing the one day face to face HPNF training with several requests to expand this; over 50 people completing the We Al-li Pty Ltd advanced trauma/wellbeing champion training; the culturally responsive, trauma aware healing informed continuity of care/r toolkit has been drafted, received extensive stakeholder feedback and is now with the graphic designer; and the Supporting Aboriginal Families to Stay Together from the Start workstream have published a [series of tipsheets](#) for parents involved with child protection and have three papers in progress presenting data about integrated models of care. The RF project is in its first year and builds on work from HPNF and RBT, with: a narrative review exploring what trauma-informed health promotion might be conceptualised well underway; starting recruitment for further validation of the Aboriginal Complex Trauma and Strengths Questionnaire; plans for validation of the [ASQ-Steps](#) tool; developing resources and ethics to support service improvement activities with three partner organisations using a 'see one, do one, teach one' approach; and undertaking a scoping review of core outcomes/indicators we should be considering in evaluating programs to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Please read the newsletter for further details and feel free to get in touch at rbt-project@unimelb.edu.au.

In solidarity,

Professor Cath Chamberlain and Professor Rhonda Marriott on behalf of the RBT project team



Workstream Updates

Update from the Resource Repository workstream

The [Replanting the Birthing Trees Resource Hub](#) has now been online for six months and has received a positive response from those engaging with the website. We're encouraged by the growing interest and uptake and continue to welcome feedback to ensure the Hub remains relevant and supportive. We're also excited to share more about the Resource Hub in a poster presentation at the Lowitja Conference this June. If you wish to share the Resource Hub in your service, there is a great range of posters and flyers available [here](#), or reach out to request something tailored to your needs.

Replanting the Birthing Trees Resource Hub Launch in Western Australia

On May 8th, we proudly came together on Noongar Country at the Ngangk Yira Institute for Change, Murdoch University, in collaboration with Melbourne University, to launch the Replanting the Birthing Trees Resource Hub in Western Australia. This special event brought together the Aboriginal community, health professionals, managers, and executives from a range of health services in Boorloo (traditional Noongar name for the city of Perth).

The launch began with a heartfelt Welcome to Country and a powerful Smoking Ceremony by custodian Rohan Collard. Our guests then walked through the new Resource Hub, sharing the drive and direction from the Aboriginal community in its development and creation and exploring how the resource hub can support our communities, health services, and clinicians. It was a day of connection, pride, and shared vision.



Update from the Culturally-Safe Assessment workstream

The Baby Coming You Ready program has undergone a transition to a new provider. The program continues to be implemented in Western Australia and one health service in Victoria is exploring options for implementation. Other jurisdictions are also looking to implement this culturally responsive program.

The Aboriginal Complex Trauma and Strengths Questionnaire (ACTSQ) training has been developed with Emerging Minds and will be available shortly. Programs and services interested in using the ACTSQ will then be able to complete the online training and a memorandum of understanding to use it in practice and research.

Update from the Workforce Development Resources to build capacity for safe skillful care workstream

There continues to be good uptake of the online training developed with Emerging Minds, with over 1200 people completing this with measurable improvements in knowledge, attitudes and practice. The one-day face to face Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future training has been provided to over 500 staff at the Royal Women's Hospital and Mercy Hospital for Women in Victoria. It is currently being offered with partner services in Western Australia, with over 90 people completing it and another 8 sessions planned for 2025. The 4-day advanced training provided by We Al-li Pty Ltd has been completed in Victoria and is planned for late 2025 in Western Australia.

Update from the Culturally-Safe Trauma-Integrated Continuity-of-Carer Implementation Support workstream

We are delighted to have started working with a graphic designer to transform our toolkit draft into a resource that is engaging and useful to maternity services. We're grateful to the members of our workstream and other project partners for all the feedback leading up to this point. We look forward to piloting the toolkit contents with our project partners, including the three sites of our Relighting the Firesticks project, and to sharing the toolkit with our community. Watch this space!



Update from the Supporting Aboriginal Families to Stay Together from the Start workstream (SAFeST Start)

The tips sheets are now developed and available online, and we hope these will help parents navigating the child protection system.

The team are now working with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency to develop a training package for maternity hospitals to understand more

about the child protection system, and explore decisions around referral and pathways that are available to provide support for families.

Several papers are in development that explore issues and concepts related to integrated models of care or 'wise counsel' models. We have been learning a lot in our many conversations with people about these issues and we are excited to share these soon!

Update from the Implementation and Evaluation workstream

Victorian update –

The implementation phase of the RBT project in Victoria is ending in June, and we are moving to a phase of final data collection, analysis and writing up of the learning from this project. Both the Royal Womens Hospital and Mercy Hospital for Women have implemented a range of training for staff and the resource hub. Both sites have also developed detailed implementation plans based on reflections from the implementation workshop where baseline data from the sites were shared, and will be continuing with these beyond the life of the project.

We are still waiting on linked baseline data and we have a meeting planned to discuss the preliminary analysis of this data. We have also collected extensive implementation data, and have interviews planned with parents and service providers over the next six months.

WA update –

From July to November, we're excited to be rolling out approximately eight RBT training sessions across the Wheatbelt region, with sessions planned in Merredin, Moora, Narrogin, and Northam. We're especially proud that the new trainers from the Wheatbelt Site Implementation Team will be stepping into facilitator roles during these sessions. Their local knowledge and community connections are vital to ensuring the training is grounded in the realities of working with Aboriginal families and communities.

Update from Relighting the Firesticks



We continue to progress on the milestones and deliverables of the Firesticks project as most of the initial project set up (website development, staff and PhD candidate recruitment, workstream members and meeting schedule) has been substantially completed.

Workstream 1: integration of interventions. This workstream is now working on a narrative paper to describe the various concepts including ‘cultural safety’ and ‘trauma-informed’ as they related to health promotion. This work will then inform the development of a culturally safe and trauma-informed health promotion framework and a case study on the application of this framework.

Workstream 2: validation of assessment tools. We have commenced recruitment for the validation of the Aboriginal Complex Trauma and Strengths Questionnaire (ACTSQ). Prof Chamberlain and A/Prof Graham Gee have worked on developing online training and a training video with Emerging Minds. Prof D’Aprano continues to identify and establish partnership with potential collaborators to validate the ASQ-STEPS.

Workstream 3: developmental evaluation. We have developed data collection tools for the evaluation of implementation of initiatives with three partner services, and a workbook to guide partner services with planning and site visit to a peer service. The workbook is partly based on resources within the Culturally response, trauma-informed, Continuity of Care/r toolkit, a resource developed as part of Replanting the Birthing Trees project. We are currently preparing the ethics applications for the various partner sites (Vic, WA, NT).

Workstream 4: health economics. We are conducting a scoping review of evaluation outcomes and indicators. This will inform an initial list of core outcomes which will be used in the consensus workshop to develop a core outcome set for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perinatal and infant health, and social and emotional wellbeing. We have commenced planning meeting for a consensus workshop, which we hope to hold late 2025 or early 2026.

Update from HPNF



Healing the Past by Nurturing the Future has moved into the evaluation and write up phase. We are preparing for post-implementation data collection through interviews with parents and service providers. We have several publications in preparation reporting on the training evaluation, pre-implementation service provider interviews, policy review, appropriate supports, and the implementation evaluation. We are excited to be presenting a lot of the HPNF work at the Lowitja conference in June.

Staff Movements

The project team is pleased to welcome Vivian Yao and Rhianna Brickle (PhD student) who have recently joined the team. Welcome back Ellen McEvoy who has returned from maternity leave. Thank you and farewell to Liv Mauerhofer who is embarking on exciting overseas travel.



For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, our connection to culture, country, community, kin, and family are critical to our wellness. There are things that we can all do to keep our spirits strong, and our families and communities supported.

Watch [Heal Together](#) a song and music video elevating the importance of healing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Composed by Christine Anu and Max Lambert, *Heal Together* provides a message of hope based on telling the truth about Australia's history.

In Australia's historical context, healing must involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, families and communities healing from trauma. This involves the urgent restoring of language, dance, song and custom.

Plant the seeds of hope-inspiring services with us

Contact us at rbt-project@unimelb.edu.au