

HEAL NETWORK NT



NEWSLETTER

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY NT COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

VOL. 1 ISSUE 1. APRIL 2025

We are thrilled to introduce the inaugural edition of the HEAL Network Newsletter for the Northern Territory Communities of Practice (NTCOP). Our focus is on fostering a healthier future by addressing the significant impacts of environmental factors on public health across the NT region. A major focus for the NTCOP is addressing issues in partnership with Indigenous communities, across remote, regional and urban settings.

Throughout this newsletter, the terms Indigenous, First Nations, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, will be used interchangeably to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The HEAL NTCOP seeks to bring together local researchers, policymakers, and community members to collaborate on innovative projects aimed at sustaining the health of our environments and communities. In this first edition, you'll discover insights into our ongoing research initiatives, learn about upcoming events, and find out how you can become involved in transformative actions that promote health and sustainability.

We are expanding our NTCOP and we want you to be involved!

To become a member, please email your EOI to healntcop@menzies.edu.au

Benefits of Membership

- Join the LinkedIn Group: *Northern Territory Communities of Practice*
- Members can be anywhere in Australia
- Stay Informed and Connected on events, opportunities, and latest research
- Collaborate with Diverse Experts such as researchers, policymakers, and community members
- Empower Communities to take ownership of their health and environment



CALL FOR CONTENT!

Do you have an environmental story, issue, or event in the NT?

To be included in the June edition, please email us at

healntcop@menzies.edu.au



OPPORTUNITIES

JOBS



2 x PhD Scholarship Opportunity

Northern Institute, Danala, Education and Community Precinct, Darwin
Project Title: NHMRC Healthy Environments and Lives (HEAL) - National Research Network

- 3 years full-time appointment
- Domestic Research Training Program (RTP) Stipend
- Up to \$44,190 for a First Nations PhD Candidate, \$34,190 otherwise

We can offer a scholarship package which is competitive with a professional salary for someone who can bring existing experience in the sector with them to this role. There are a range of on-ground projects which the candidate could consider, and all elements of our work focus on delivering on the research priorities identified by our HEAL partner organisations. The overarching theme across this work is to support Indigenous people of the NT and their governance arrangements which recognise Indigenous leadership, knowledge authority and decision making.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact Professor Linda Payi Ford, Senior Research Fellow, Northern Institute, CDU linda.ford@cdu.edu.au or contact her at: 08 8946 7203

Menzies School of Health Research Research Officer—Based in Alice Springs

- Fixed Term, Full Time (1.0 FTE) Contract for 5 years
- Generous leave provisions including 6 weeks annual leave
- Salary Packaging options available

Menzies is looking for a Research Officer to work as part of the newly established Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre (RHC3) based in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). RHC3 embodies a rapidly growing health systems strengthening and multi-sectoral research program emphasising equitable service delivery and the social determinants of health in remote Australia and overseas.

If you have any questions regarding the role, please contact Associate Professor Supriya Mathew. Email: supriya.mathew@menzies.edu.au

Closing date: Sunday 13 April 2025

How to obtain the Position Description, please visit: Menzies' careers website: <http://careers.menzies.edu.au> or Phone: 08 8946 8409 or Email: Human Resources at human-resources@menzies.edu.au

Menzies School of Health Research Senior Research Officer/Research Fellow—Based in Alice Springs

- Fixed Term, Full time Contract for 2 years
- Generous leave provisions including 6 weeks annual leave
- Salary packaging up to \$15,900 tax free

The successful applicant will work closely with research leads within the newly established Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre (RHC3) in Menzies, based in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) and NT Health clinicians co-leading five discrete research projects to ensure the smooth running of each project and to build research capacity. RHC3 embodies a health systems strengthening and multi-sectoral research program emphasising equitable service delivery and the social determinants of health.

If you have any questions regarding the role, please contact Deb Russell, Principal Research Fellow. Email: deborah.russell@menzies.edu.au

Closing date: Sunday 27 April 2025

How to obtain the Position Description, please visit: Menzies' careers website: <http://careers.menzies.edu.au> or Phone: 08 8946 8409 or Email: Human Resources at human-resources@menzies.edu.au

FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Maali Hub Indigenous EMCR Health Research Related Support Fund

Offers up to \$10,000 for research support, \$5,000 for training, \$5,000 for international conferences, and \$2,500 for national conferences.

Open round, applications accepted until November 30, 2025.

Apply to maalihub@ecu.edu.au

NEXGEN Hub Health Research Experience Scholarships Program 2025 (Round 2)

Twelve \$10,000 scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander undergraduates (including Honours) or postgraduate coursework students to gain research experience.

Open round, closes September 30, 2025, or when all scholarships are awarded.

Contact nexgen@sph.uq.edu.au.

Winston Churchill Trust

Australian citizens and permanent residents can travel overseas for 4-8 weeks to explore a topic they're passionate about.

Applications are open now and close on May 1st, 2025.

Learn more at the Winston Churchill Trust website: <https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/>

Katherine West Health Board (KWHB)

PhD Opportunity: Evaluating the Impact of Health Coaching in Aboriginal Primary Health Care (PHC)

Evaluate the implementation of a new Aboriginal Health Coaching qualification in remote communities. Located in Darwin or Katherine.

For further information, contact: sinon.cooney@kwhb.com.au (CEO KWHB)

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

CLIMATE ATTRIBUTION OF WILDFIRE SMOKE IMPACTS ON PRIORITY POPULATION HEALTH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND AUSTRALIA (CANBREATHE)

This project was awarded 5M from the WELLCOME Climate Impacts Awards: Unlocking urgent climate action by making the health effects of climate change visible.

The devastating impacts of climate change are becoming increasingly clear in Southeast Asia and Australia, where extreme wildfires and choking smoke haze are on the rise. This dangerous combination is fuelling respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses and tragically contributing to thousands of premature deaths. The 2015 Sumatran wildfires, for instance, are estimated to have caused around 100,000 excess deaths, while the 2019/20 Australian Black Summer fires were linked to 417 fatalities.

While the health risks are evident, current data doesn't fully pinpoint climate change's role in these wildfire events, nor does it specifically address the disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. This project uses advanced climate modelling to understand how climate change is influencing the risk and severity of wildfires and the resulting smoke haze. This project will also focus on the health of Indigenous people, pregnant women, and children in five heavily affected regions across Thailand, Laos, Indonesia, and Australia.

Crucially, this initiative is a collaborative effort. Policymakers, Indigenous communities, citizen scientists, and artists are working together to create innovative communication tools. These tools will combine climate science, health data, and the lived experiences of communities facing the ongoing threat of wildfires. For more information please visit: <https://healnetwork.org.au/projects/>

The Research Team

Prof Sotiris Vardoulakis, University of Canberra

Dr Kraichat Tantrakarnapa, Mahidol University

Prof Budi Haryanto, Universitas Indonesia

Prof Kim Oanh Nguyen

Dr Veronica Matthews, University of Sydney

Prof Fay Johnston

Dr Tippawan Prapamontol

Dr Keonakhone Khounvilay

Prof Linda Ford, Charles Darwin University

BURDEN ON FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES IN UNDER-RESOURCED REMOTE AUSTRALIA

This project was awarded 4.1M from the WELLCOME Climate Impacts Awards: Unlocking urgent climate action by making the health effects of climate change visible.

New project titled 'The heat health burden on First Nations communities in under-resourced remote Australia' receives 4.1M from Wellcome trust to collect and collate evidence on the impacts of extreme hot temperatures on remote First Nations residents of Australia living across different climate zones. The project led by AProf Supriya Mathew (Menzies School of Health Research) is conducted in partnership with Charles Darwin University, University of Tasmania and Griffith University. For more information contact supriya.mathew@menzies.edu.au

The Research Team

AProf Supriya Mathew, Menzies School of Health Research, Australia

AProf Deborah Russell, Menzies School of Health Research

Prof Kerstin Zander, Charles Darwin University

AProf Jamie Ranse, Griffith University

Prof Linda Ford, Charles Darwin University

Prof Melissa Hart, University of Tasmania

CLIMATE PREPAREDNESS IN VERY REMOTE COMMUNITIES

HEAL NT CoP investigators AProf Supriya Mathew, Prof Linda Ford and Prof Alan Cass were successful in a National Health and Medical Research Council Targeted Call for Research.

In the next 5 years, HEAL postdocs Rishu Thakur and Manoj Bhatta will work with very remote communities in central Australia to co-design, implement and evaluate effective adaptation solutions relevant for very remote desert communities. For more information about the project, please see [Climate preparedness in very remote desert communities - Menzies](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

PEOPLE POLICY PLACE SEMINAR

Presentation: Bush Foods, Country and Climate Change

How can Indigenous ecological philosophy guide a sustainable future?

Presenters: Research Fellow Sharna Motlap and Teaching Fellow Collethy K Jaru

Date: Wednesday, 16 April 2025

Time: 10:30 AM-11:30 AM

Location: 1.12 Danala, Education and Community Precinct, Darwin City NT 0800

Contact: thenortherninstitute@cdu.edu.au

Website: <https://www.cdu.edu.au/northern-institute/engage/seminars>

HEAL Network's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Steering Committee (SC) Gathering

Date: Wednesday 28th to Thursday 29th May 2025

Time: 12:00PM-1:00PM

Location: Darwin, NT (to be confirmed)

Contact: caroline.deen@sydney.edu.au

The HEAL Network's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Steering Committee (SC) are gathering on Larrakia Country on the Wednesday and Thursday 28th and 29th May 2025. The SC sits within the HEAL central governance structure and consists of First Nations researchers and community representatives providing strategic input into the HEAL research program. The purpose of the in person gathering is to share updates of their research programs and to establish a HEAL network research agenda.

HEAL NT Community of Practice members are invited on to join the SC on Thursday 29th May in the afternoon for an informal gathering. Please save the date. More details to come soon.

AIATSI Summit 2025

Theme - Voices of Empowerment: Strengthening our Future

Date: 2nd to 6th of June 2025

Location: Darwin Convention Centre, 10 Stokes Hill Rd, Darwin City NT 0800

Contact: thenortherninstitute@cdu.edu.au

Website: <https://aiatsis.gov.au/whats-new/events/aiatsis-summit-2025>

The AIATSI Summit brings together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, leaders, and youth along with stakeholders such as Academics, Native Title stakeholders, legal experts, GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) and sector and government representatives to come together and collaborate on the issues that matter most to First Nations peoples.

This year's program will delve into GLAM and Research (June 2-4) and Indigenous Country and Governance (June 4-6), along with a dedicated Youth and Emerging Leadership stream across the five-days.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

When bushfires and the climate crisis become the new normal

The Lancet Regional Health-Western Pacific, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanwpc.2025.101528>

By Supriya Mathew 2025

Cars or moving hot ovens? A heat health risk in arid Australia

Australia, Partyline, April 2025 issue [Read Here](#)

By Rishu Thakur, Supriya Mathew and Ollie Jay

Why are solar microgrids not the norm in remote Central Australia? Exploring local perception on solar energy and health

Journal of Cleaner Production Volume 486, 1 January 2025, 144370

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.144370>

By Supriya Mathew, Manoj Bhatta, Gloria Baliva, Veronica Matthews, Kerstin K. Zander, Amelia

L. Joshy, Rishu Thakur, Catherine Joyce, Linda Ford, Shiva Nagendra, Krishna Vasudevan, Jimmy Cocking, Sotiris Vardoulakis

First Nations residents of central Australia are bearing the brunt of rising temperatures

Australian Quarterly, 96: 2, April-June 2025, AQ: [Australian Quarterly 96.2 - April-June 2025 - AIPS](#)

By Supriya Mathew

The effect of ambient temperatures on hospital admissions for kidney diseases in Central Australia.

Environmental Research, October 2024; Volume 259: Article No. 119502.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2024.119502>

By Mohammad Radwanur Talukder, Md Tauhiul Islam, Supriya Mathew, Chris Perry, Dung Phung, Shannon Rutherford, Alan Cass

MEDIA

SBS Podcast Interview with Research Fellow Sharna Motlap

Research Fellow and nutritionist Sharna Motlap was recently featured in of SBS Podcast series, ***Should You Really Eat That?* Season 2, Episode 6 Native foods: bush lillies, medicinal source, climate-change tool.**

Listen to Sharnas' discuss her research as well as her experiences with traditional foods and the traditional knowledges behind them.

[Click here to listen](#)

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



HEAL 2024

HEALING WITH COUNTRY FOR A
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EVERYONE

26-28 NOVEMBER 2024

The HEAL Network's annual conference was a resounding success! Under the theme "Healing with Country for a Sustainable Future for Everyone," HEAL 2024 brought together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to address critical health, climate, and environmental challenges.

HEAL 2024 fostered collaboration and knowledge sharing, driving progress towards a healthier, more sustainable future for all. Stay tuned for updates on the 2025 HEAL Conference!

[Click here for conference recordings](#)

Our NTCoP team presented at this conference. Under the theme: **Rural And Remote Health And Climate -Related Disasters**, Assoc Prof Supriya Mathew, presented *Adapting to extreme heat in remote Australia*, Dr Manoj Bhatta presented *Exploring adaptive capacity to arid heat using a vulnerability-resilience framework in very remote communities of Central Australia*, and Dr Rishu Thakur had an e-poster presentation titled *Particulate matter and health in remote Australia*.

Under the theme: **Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Health and Knowledge Translation For Building Resilience To Environmental Change**, Prof Linda Ford presented *Edens Worldview*, and Sharna Motlap presented E-Poster: *Indigenous Truth-Telling: Ethnographic Philosophy on Traditional Foods, Country and Climate Change*.

Notably, the E-Poster *Indigenous Truth-Telling: Ethnographic Philosophy on Traditional Foods, Country and Climate Change* won the **HEAL 2024 Best Presentation of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Project**.

[Click here to see the E-Poster](#)

HEAL NTCOP REGIONAL HUB SESSION

The NTCOP held our Regional Hub Session online on 26th November 2024 as a part of the 2024 HEAL Conference. This session brought together Northern Territory academics, professionals, stakeholders and enthusiasts to engage in meaningful discussions focused on the leading health, climate, and environmental challenges faced both in Northern Territory and the broader Australia.

We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all the speakers for their presentations.

Maja VanBruggen, Director Sustainability Action, NT Health

Sneak preview of the NT Health Sustainability and Climate Resilience Strategy 2030 and Road Map to 2027

Emily Raso, Chief Executive Officer, Landcare NT

From the ground up: The ecosystem of community led Landcare

Jade Ritchie, General Manager of Tellus

Three-eyed Fish - The impact of hazardous waste on Country

Dr Mark De Souza, Emergency physician, Royal Darwin Hospital,

NT Healthy patients, workforce and environment: 3-year update of Royal Darwin Hospital's biodiversity corridors

Ned Bible, Climate Justice Project Officer, Climate Justice Alliance

NT Climate Justice in the Northern Territory: Possibilities and impossibilities

Rowena Boyd, Epidemiologist, NT Health

Impact of heatwaves on emergency departments in the Northern Territory

Would you like to attend or present at the 2025 NTCoP Regional Hub Session?

Please email healntcop@menzies.edu.au

AWARDS

Congratulations Professor Linda Ford on being elected as a 2024 Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities!

The Australian Academy of the Humanities fellows consists of experts and leaders elected for their outstanding contribution to the humanities and to the cultural life of the nation. A Mak Mak Marranunggu woman, Professor Ford was one of four Indigenous scholars awarded Fellowships in 2024.

Congratulations Associate Professor Supriya Mathew on being awarded the 2024 Young Tall Poppy Science Award!

The annual Young Tall Poppy science awards by the Australian Institute of Policy and Science (AIPS) recognise and celebrate the achievements of Australian scientists.

MEET THE NTCOP TEAM



Professor Linda Ford

Senior Research Fellow

Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University

Professor Linda Ford is a local Rak Mak Mak Marranunggu from Kurrindju, Batchelor, Litchfield National Park, Delissaville, Wagait, Larrakia Aboriginal Land Trust and the Gurrudju Aboriginal Land Trust and affiliation with Marrithiyel (grandmothers' country) on the Daly River Aboriginal Land Trust in the NT. She has cultural affiliations with the Warramiri Clan on Elcho Island NT, and a wide network of Indigenous affiliations globally. Her knowledge, expertise and research contribute significantly to new knowledge and innovation in: Indigenous research, Indigenous Studies, teaching and learning, education, Teacher Education, philosophy, special education, ethnomusicology, language & literacy, culture, society, land and sea management, climate change, environment, governance, Indigenous health, mental health & wellbeing in Indigenous knowledges and community engagement projects.

linda.ford@cdu.edu.au

[Click here to see profile](#)



Associate Professor Supriya Mathew

Associate Professor, Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre

Menzies School of Health Research

Supriya Mathew is an environmental health researcher leading the climate change research program at Menzies. Her current program of work supported by more than \$6M of funding focuses on improving climate resilience in remote Australia through citizen scientist-led research data collection, collation of lived experiences of residents of remote Australia and co-designing of adaptation and mitigation solutions with remote residents and stakeholders.

supriya.mathew@menzies.edu.au

[Click here to see profile](#)



Professor Alan Cass

Director

Menzies School of Health Research

Professor Cass is Director of the Menzies School of Health Research in Darwin. Professor Cass, a kidney specialist clinician, has dedicated his research career to preventing and managing chronic diseases. His work focuses on addressing the social and systemic factors influencing health and improving healthcare access for people from remote areas, and with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. He holds leadership positions within the NT Clinical Senate and both NT-based Health Research Translation Centres – Central Australia Academic Health Science Network (CAAHSN) and the Top End Aboriginal Health Research Alliance (TEAHRA).

alan.cass@menzies.edu.au

[Click here to see profile](#)



Dr Manoj Bhatta

Postdoctoral Researcher, Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre,
Menzies School of Health Research

Manoj Bhatta is an early-career researcher at the Menzies School of Health Research, based in Alice Springs. With a multidisciplinary background in socio-ecological research, Manoj utilises qualitative research approaches to investigate the complex intersections of climate change, environmental health, and community well-being. His current research focuses on understanding the health impacts of climate change on remote populations and collaborating with communities to co-design innovative adaptation and mitigation strategies.

manoj.bhatta@menzies.edu.au

[Click here to see profile](#)



Dr Rishu Thakur

Postdoctoral researcher, Remote Health Systems and Climate Change Centre
Menzies School of Health Research

Rishu Thakur is an early career researcher based in central Australia. Her current work focuses on enhancing climate resilience in remote Australian communities. She specialises in environmental monitoring, climate change, soil microbiology, and molecular biology.

rishu.thakur@menzies.edu.au

[Click here to see profile](#)



Sharna Motlap

Research Fellow, Indigenous Engagement
Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University

Sharna Motlap is a proud Indigenous woman of the Mbabaram tribe of Queensland and of Hammond Island of the Torres Strait. She is a nutritionist and a researcher for the Healthy Environments and Lives (HEAL) National Research Network. She is currently completing a double degree studying a Master of Public Health and Master of Health Research in which she was awarded the prestigious 'Menzies Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Coursework Scholarship' in 2023. Her research interest includes nutrition, climate change, public health, and Indigenous health.

sharna.motlap@cdu.edu.au

[Click here to see profile](#)