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Editorial

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Editorial

Welcome to this edition of the Journal of the Australian Indigenous Health *InfoNet*. In this issue we once again present a diverse range of articles to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health sector workforce. The papers in this edition address key issues in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health using qualitative methodologies that provide a richness and depth to findings and offer promise of informing the practice of communities throughout Australia.

Three of the articles privilege the voices of their participants in ways that speak directly to readers. While acknowledging the importance of epidemiological studies, they each uniquely amplify the lived experience of the participants. Of particular interest in this issue are the papers that explore the experiences of incarceration. Utilising a narrative inquiry, Walker et al. provide in-depth interviews with young men with experience of the justice system about their kinship systems and connection to family. The power of the narratives is particularly resonant. In a contrasting but equally powerful article, Lovell et al. display a similar commitment to listening to the voices of women experiencing incarceration. The pull of parenthood and the imperative for connection with children and family is evocative and poignant, pointing the authors towards some key principles that must underpin program development.

Menges et al. paint with a broader brush, but equally highlight the voices of community in their exploration of the needs in the community of Aurukun, Far North Queensland. The participants highlight the importance of connection to culture, but do not shy away from the harmful effects of violence, alcohol use and the consequential poor mental health outcomes, high rates of incarceration and lack of employment opportunities. They discuss the importance of these intersecting tensions on identity. As non-Indigenous researchers, Menges and colleagues explore their role as non-Indigenous allies and the importance of authentic engagement with local knowledge holders.

The final paper by McNaught and colleagues is perhaps more conventional in its analysis of health services and outcomes for the Martu and Nyiyaparli people in the

northwest of Western Australia. While it adopts an analytic approach to the grey literature, it also situates itself with a commitment to respond to the voice of the community to move away from what they call the 'repair shop' approach to healthcare, to more preventative approaches. There is a danger, thankfully acknowledged by the authors, of perpetuating a deficit narrative. They assert that the locus of causality rests with a healthcare system that has not met the needs of the community. Speaking through a different amplifier to the other three papers in this edition, they nevertheless speak to the importance of person-centred care and place-based solutions.

The connection in all these articles is in the authors' pursuit of better understanding by listening to the voices of the impacted; those whose lived experiences provide a roadmap for program development and more positive outcomes. These approaches are inherently decolonising and illustrate the importance of engaging Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people in the pursuit of positive outcomes and change in their communities.