

## Funding secured to support new iteration of wellbeing app

**14 September 2023**

A Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) partnership project to develop a new iteration of a wellbeing app for First Nations people living with chronic conditions, has received funding.

Menzies Mental Health and Wellbeing ‘Stay Strong’ team and [Aboriginal Kidney Care Together – Improving Outcomes Now \(AKAction2\)](#) Reference Team in South Australia will codesign culturally safe resources to support the wellbeing and self-management of First Nations people living with chronic conditions, including chronic kidney disease.

The user guided Stay Strong app is presently known as ‘Stay Strong Kigutj’, meaning ‘my personal spirit guide’ in the Kungarakana language.

Through involving First Nations communities to develop this resource, it will result in a self-guided tool that supports users to strengthen and care for their wellbeing.

The current Stay Strong app is a holistic, wellbeing intervention tool, that considers cultural, spiritual and social wellbeing to be integral to health.

The app assists users to identify their support network, strengths, worries and needs, and helps establish goals for change.

A [recent study](#) with First Nations people living with chronic kidney disease demonstrated that the Stay Strong app significantly improved wellbeing for those with symptoms of distress and depression and was suitable for use as a self-management tool.

This result is important as there are few, if any, culturally responsive self-management support tools currently available.

This project has been made possible through the Bridging the Gap Foundation, who has been awarded a \$30 000 contribution from the Fay Fuller Foundation to this project.

The project will begin shortly, with the app aimed to be launched by the end of 2024 or early 2025.

**Quotes attributable to Menzies Mental Health Research Lead, [Professor Tricia Nagel](#):**

“Empowering those on their kidney care journey through self-guided tools and peer support can lead to transformative change.

“First Nations people prioritise social connection, family, country, and cultural identity and having culturally sensitive self-management tools is key to support their wellbeing.

“Our collaboration with AKAction began through storytelling with kidney care patients about their experiences in the hospital system. We look forward to continuing this journey to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experiencing chronic conditions to stay mentally strong.”

**Quotes attributable to [Aboriginal Kidney Care Together – Improving Outcomes Now \(AKAction2\)](#) Reference Team in South Australia:**

“We believe that re-empowering community voices and listening with eyes, ears and hearts, unlocks doors, strengthens understanding and allows journeys through care to flow and thrive.

“AKction aims to improve kidney care and respond to the needs of patients and family through codesigned innovative, re-empowering and responsive culturally safe models of kidney care for mob.”

“Change takes time, but by working together side by side, we can improve the quality of life of First Nations people with flow on benefits to all the community.”

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**Menzies School of Health Research**

Menzies is one of Australia’s leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and a leader in global and tropical research into life-threatening illnesses. Menzies continues to translate research into effective partnerships and programs in communities across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

**About the Aboriginal Kidney Care Together – Improving Outcomes Now (AKction) group in South Australia**

The AKction project brings together Aboriginal kidney patients and family members, health professionals, health services, academics and researchers to improve kidney care in South Australia. It aims to identify and respond to the needs of Aboriginal kidney patients and their families.