2025-2026

IMPACT REPORT

Northern Communities Health Foundation

Northern Community Health & Research Foundation

NCH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

A message from the Chair

As we look back on the 2025-2026 year for the Northern Community Health & Research Foundation, I am proud to share the success of some significant new initiatives this year.

The Foundation presented our inaugural Research Week, during which we hosted the Research Week Plenary Presentation at the National Wine Centre. This event featured our 2026 Visiting Professor's Address, presented by Professor Emilio Nuzzolese, and a showcase of our programs and projects.

We also launched a fundraising campaign for our flagship programs supporting research and community programs and projects.

From a program designed to mentor northern community students with ambitions to study medicine to expert international and local insights in forensic odontology, evaluating an innovative method which may radically improve efficacy of treatment for snake bites, and hosting an expert roundtable on the topic of multimorbidities, the Foundation's impact through 2025-2026 has been both tightly focused and broadly felt.



I would like to acknowledge our longstanding partners for their continuing support. My thanks also go to our Board members and Board committees for their continuing efforts and support which enables the Foundation to achieve so much.

Nino Di Sisto Chair

Our focus is local. Your impact could be global.

Our purpose is to create sustainable improvements to health outcomes through research, partnerships and community programs.

Through decades of providing support and our strong relationships with leading researchers, clinicians and practitioners, the Foundation has contributed to knowledge and practices which have positively impacted health outcomes beyond Adelaide's northern communities to deliver benefits at state and national levels, and contributed to international expertise and insights.

Find out more:

Our mission

The Northern Community Health & Research Foundation (NCHRF) was formed to work with researchers, clinicians and local communities to improve the health outcomes for the communities of Adelaide's northern districts.

In the northern suburbs of Adelaide, people experience higher rates of mental health and behavioural conditions, arthritis, asthma and diabetes than both metropolitan Adelaide and national averages, highlighting significant chronic disease and wellbeing challenges across the region. These health issues contribute to reduced quality of life and high levels of potentially preventable hospitalisations, reinforcing the need for targeted prevention, early intervention, healthy ageing, and community-based health programs. The Foundation supports activities ranging from local community initiatives through to multi-agency projects aiming to accelerate adoption of research by practitioners.

These challenges are not, of course, unique to the northern region of Adelaide. Through our decades of support and our strong relationships with leading researchers, clinicians and practitioners, the Foundation has contributed to knowledge and practices which have positively impacted health outcomes beyond Adelaide's northern districts to deliver benefits at state and national levels, and contributed to international expertise and insights.

We aim to achieve:

Improved health outcomes for older South Australians
Through targeted community support programs, we aim to enhance the health and quality of life for older individuals in the northern suburbs.

Acceleration of research and strengthening South Australia's research expertise
Through targeted support for early career researchers, we aim to push the boundaries of health and medical research and practice focusing on the key health challenges facing our communities.

Connecting research and practice
By creating opportunities to bridge the gap between researchers and practitioners, we aim to ensure that research leads to real-world, actionable and scalable outcomes.

Strengthening partnerships
By continuing to facilitate relationships and partnerships with universities, health and medical researchers, primary health care networks, clinicians, local councils and service providers, we aim to amplify the impact achieved when experts connect and collaborate.

NCH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

RESEARCH WEEK

21ST SEPTEMBER – 1ST OCTOBER 2026



Research

Research Week 2026

NCHRF hosted our first annual Research Week this year. The program extended to 10 days and included the Plenary Presentation event at the National Wine Centre on 22 September, at which the Foundation showcased current and recent groundbreaking research and community projects we have supported.

The program also included the 2026 Visiting Professor's Address from forensic odontology expert Professor Emilio Nuzzolese and a panel discussion with Professor Nuzzolese and South Australian experts in this field, Dr John Berketa and Dr Sher-Lin Chiam from Adelaide University.

Over 100 researchers, professionals and interested members of the public attended this event, making it one of the largest events the Foundation has hosted.

Photo (above): Nino Di Sisto speaking at the NCHRF Research Week Plenary Presentation event at the National Wine Centre.



Visiting Professor Program

The 2026 NCHRF Visiting Professor was Professor Emilio Nuzzolese, Researcher, Forensic Odontologist & Professor of Legal Medicine at the University of Turin.

Professor Nuzzolese is responsible for the Human Identification and Forensic Odontology Research Laboratory at the University of Turin, which provides forensic odontology services on a pro bono basis, both onsite and remotely. He is the co-founder of Solidarity Dentistry for Infants and Handicapped (SOPHI) and founder and President of the Association for Forensic Odontology and Human Rights (AFOHR).

Professor Nuzzolese visited Adelaide in September 2026 and participated in a busy program of events and presentations with students, researchers and clinicians, including his Visiting Professor's Address at the National Wine Centre on 22 September.

Professor Nuzzolese's hospital grand rounds were livestreamed to other major hospitals. He was also interviewed by ABC 891 Adelaide during his visit.

Photo (above): Visiting Professor Emilio Nuzzolese and Dr. John Berketa.



Derek Frewin Early Career Researcher Award

The Foundation congratulates the 2026 Derek Frewin Early Career Researcher Award recipient, Dr Ying Yu. A Registered Nurse, and lecturer with over 20 years of clinical experience specialising in dementia, ageing, and community-based care, Dr Yu currently works at Adelaide University as a Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Currently she is chief investigator on projects adapting iSupport into eight languages and implementing it with eight ethnically specific aged care providers, in partnership with Primary Health Network and Care Gateways.

The Derek Frewin Early Career Researcher Award was established by the Northern Community Health and Research Foundation in recognition of the outstanding contribution Emeritus Professor Derek Frewin AO has given to both the NCHRF and the University of Adelaide.

Photo (above): Professor Derek Frewin AO and Professor Gregory Crawford AM presenting Dr Ying Yu with the 2026 Derek Frewin Early Career Researcher Award.

Adelaide Medical Students' Foundation

The Northern Community Health & Research Foundation supports Adelaide medical students through the Adelaide Medical Students' Foundation (AMSF) through scholarship grants to supplement their learning with additional domestic and international placements and conference opportunities.

In 2025, the four recipients of these grants were Maia Kat, Leo Bowly-Schubert, Tanvi Singh and Violet Spanner. They chose to use this support to gain experience in diverse medical environments, ranging from emergency medicine and infectious diseases to cardiac subspecialties and neonatal surgery, in even more diverse locations - London, Thailand and Brazil.

Experiences such as these, early in a medical career, offer unparalleled opportunities for students to explore and experience their areas of interest, as well as gaining working experience with care teams using different techniques and different healthcare models.

Photo: (right) Tanvi Singh with hospital staff in London. (below) Leo Bowly-Schubert, with hospital staff in Brazil.



3 Minute Thesis Winners

Northern Community Health & Research Foundation congratulates winners in the 2026 Adelaide University Three Minute Thesis (3MT™) competition: Emily Phipps and Eva Moore, pictured right.

3MT™ is an international competition recognising research communication skills and celebrating the wide range of research being undertaken by PhD candidates. The Northern Community Health & Research Foundation provides support for this competition annually with a prize for the College of Health finalists. This year it is a special privilege to see both Eva and Emily go on to win at the University's finals.

Emily won first prize and will now go on to compete at the Asia Pacific 3MT™ competition which includes representatives from universities from around Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, North East Asia and South East Asia. Eva won the People's Choice Award.

Eva's topic was Turning Down Hand and Foot Pain Through the Brain, while Emily presented on Turning on the Survival Switch.

Photo (above right): 2026 Adelaide University 3 Minute Thesis competition winners Emily Phipps and Eva Moore.

Expert roundtable on multimorbidity

On 28 May this year, NCHRF hosted an expert roundtable discussion investigating emerging trends and insights in the management of multimorbidities. Joining us for this event was Professor Rafael Perera-Salazar, Director of Medical Statistics in Primary Care, University of Oxford, who returned to Adelaide to progress projects and connections made during his visit as the NCHRF 2024 Visiting Professor.

Together with leaders in health service delivery, medical and health education, research, and local council representatives, Professor Perera-Salazar discussed current data and emerging insights on Australian multimorbidities.



Increasingly, Australians are presenting with multiple health conditions, yet our system of care is historically designed to treat conditions individually rather than together, lacking the context and insights available regarding how each condition can impact on another and on the overall health of the patient. Health outcomes can be improved when practitioners are able to support the patient holistically, rather than through disconnected care for each condition individually.

Photo (above right): Professor Perera-Salazar presenting at the Expert Roundtable event.

Co-designing health checklist for men's health

The Foundation provided funding support for a project reviewing the Men's Health Checklist (MHC) in a co-design process with focus groups of Aboriginal men aiming to develop a context-sensitive and culturally-tailored health checklist for this audience. This project was led by Adelaide University's Mortlock Professor of Medicine, Professor Gary Wittert.

The MHC and linked resources were developed to support male patients and their general practitioners and focuses primarily on lifestyle and chronic diseases. This research provided key insights into the priorities, values and preferences which can now be used to inform future development of the MHC app.

New mobile test for antivenom treatment

The Northern Community Health & Research Foundation is funding an exciting project to determine if a relatively simple mobile test, performed virtually at the bedside, can determine whether there is a need for antivenom treatment. Critically, antivenom administration within six hours of a bite is crucial to minimise complications. However, not every snake bite injects venom and antivenom treatments can pose potentially serious side effects. The new test could give doctors more certainty about who needs treatment and enable earlier administration of antivenom, leading to improved health outcomes.



Community

School to Scholar Program

The School to Scholar Program provides secondary school students with an experience which can change their futures. The program connects secondary school students with senior medical students in a mentoring program designed to support more students to enter medicine and develop their career within their local community.

Through interactive workshops, close mentoring, and community-based activities, secondary students gain both inspiration and practical guidance, seeing first-hand that a medical career is possible. By stepping into mentoring and leadership roles, the senior medical students develop teaching skills, community engagement experience, and the confidence to inspire others — qualities that will shape their professional identity throughout their careers.

Jointly led by the Adelaide University and the Northern Adelaide Local Health Network and funded for the next three years by NCHRF, School to Scholar reflects a shared commitment to educational opportunity, professional development, and stronger community connections.

Photo (above right): Professor Gregory Crawford AM presenting at the School to Scholar event.

Connecting at the cafe



The Chatty Cafe Walkerville provides a welcoming space where people of all ages and backgrounds can come together for conversation and connection each month. The Cafe is an initiative of the Walkerville Community Committee, a group of local residents and Town of Walkerville councillors. This program has proven very successful at encouraging interaction in a relaxed environment, directly supporting mental health, combatting loneliness, and building resilience across the community.

Social connectedness is key to improved physical and mental health in the community. NCHRF has provided funding for the expansion of the Chatty Cafe Walkerville project through the Foundation's grant program supporting community capacity building. This will enable the program to be delivered at more sites, extending capacity for residents to connect with each other and participate in the program.

Photo (above): Nino Di Sisto with the Chatty Cafe group.



Prescriptions for Connection

A social prescribing approach for healthy aging

Social prescribing is defined as "a means for healthcare workers to connect people to a range of non-clinical services in the community to improve health and wellbeing". This project commenced in 2024 and focused on identification of barriers to, and facilitators of, social prescribing for older patients from identified vulnerable communities, with the aim of facilitating a scalable, sustainable approach to health and ageing 'in place'.

Benefits of social prescribing include improving patient health and wellbeing, improving function, reducing isolation and loneliness, and reducing demand on health professionals. It is widely recognised that older adults in Australia can experience many causes of ill-health, with social isolation and loneliness contributing to around 20% of GP consultations.

This project has demonstrated the success of the model, confirming that the approach addresses an important gap in services and has the potential to be upscaled successfully.

The Foundation provided funding for this project, which was supported by the Councils of Port Adelaide Enfield, Walkerville, and Prospect, the Adelaide Primary Health Network, and Flinders University, and received funding from The Hospital Research Foundation and significant in-kind support from The Adelaide Primary Health Network.

Photo (above): Prescriptions for Connection, City of Port Adelaide Enfield

NCH RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Northern Communities Health Foundation and the Northern Community Health & Research Foundation are volunteer-led not-for-profit organisations.

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Thank you to our partners: Adelaide University, Agostino Group, City of Prospect, City of Port Adelaide Enfield, Town of Walkerville, and Van Diemen Foundation.

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