

James Fitzpatrick

Dr James Fitzpatrick is currently a paediatric advanced trainee at Princess Margaret Hospital for Children, a researcher at the Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, Perth; Director of Patches Paediatrics and a PhD candidate with the University of Sydney. In 2001 James was named Young Australian of the Year for his longstanding dedication to addressing rural and Indigenous health issues.

James is the founder of True Blue Dreaming, an Outback Youth Mentoring Program working with communities in the WA Wheat-belt and Kimberley regions, with a vision to expand the program throughout Western Australia and then nationally.

He currently sits on the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equality Council that advises the Federal Minister for Indigenous health.

He recently led a federally funded project aimed at improving the lives of children living in remote Indigenous communities in the WA Kimberley, in partnership with local community organisations and national research institutes. The work involved estimating for the first time in Australia the prevalence of foetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) in the 40 remote communities of the Fitzroy Valley. Having documented the prevalence of FASD, James is now working with health and education partners to develop a child health clinic run in schools to help young people to reach their educational potential.

James has been a rabble-rouser and activist for some time. As the chairman of the National Rural Health Students Network in 2000, James shifted the focus of this organisation of 5000 medical and allied health students to deliver community service activities to some of Australia's most remote communities. In that year he helped to establish the Carnarvon Children's Festival in Western Australia in response to alarming rates of youth suicide. Through the Children's Festival members of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities were encouraged to come together and celebrate the value of young people within the community.

Honoured with the title of Derby Bush Poetry champion in 2009 and 2011, James captures his life's experiences in verse with a blend of deep thoughtfulness and roguish irreverence.