

## Research in remote Australia: doing work that really matters

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In 1993, I was working as a junior doctor at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in Sydney. One Friday the medical superintendent indicated that on Monday I needed to be in Alice Springs, where I would be working as the medical registrar at the hospital for the next three months. I arrived totally unprepared for a crash course in remote Aboriginal health. Those three months sparked a passion to contribute meaningfully to address the complex health problems faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across remote Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote areas are more than 50 times more likely than other Australians, of the same age and sex, to be hospitalised for dialysis for end-stage kidney disease. The impact of kidney disease on patients, families and communities is devastating, especially when people must relocate hundreds of kilometres away to access dialysis. In my work, I have sought to understand what drives this heavy burden of disease, to generate evidence regarding how to prevent and better treat disease, to listen to and empower patients to tell their stories and to engage with policy makers to improve patients' access to health care that better meets their health, social and cultural needs. In this talk, I will reflect on my journey, what I have learned and why I have found my research career so rewarding.