

Let's Yarn About Sleep: Meet the Team

Let's Yarn About Sleep is Australia's first sleep health equity program, striving to promote culturally responsive sleep health care and achieve healthy sleep alongside First Nations Australians. Let's Yarn About Sleep is rooted in co-design, end-user empowerment, shared decision-making, and a deep understanding of local priorities and began in Mount Isa on Kalkadoon Country in collaboration with the Kalkadoon Elders who expressed the need for better sleep for their community's young people. Since then, Let's Yarn About Sleep has continued to grow roots within 20 communities in Queensland, South Australia and the Northern Territory, collaborating with community members and Elders through journeys of genuine engagement, consultation and collaboration to address systemic inequities in sleep health care. The team includes over 70 collaborators from 14 leading universities across Australia. The program is designed, delivered, and disseminated with over 25 industry partners spanning the health, well-being, education, media, advocacy and government sectors.

The Let's Yarn About Sleep Team works both behind the scenes and on the ground and reflects the program's geographic reach.

In Meanjin, and now on Gubbi Gubbi lands, our team is led by Professor Yaqoot Fatima:

1. **Professor Yaqoot Fatima** is a pharmacist, epidemiologist, sleep scientist, and the Let's Yarn About Sleep program director. With a strong focus on reducing the societal burden of poor sleep and its associated health outcomes, Fatima's work exemplifies integrating multidisciplinary, translational research with culturally responsive, co-designed programs and service models.
2. **Dr Daniel Sullivan** is a Research Fellow in Sleep Health and Clinical Psychologist, working to improve sleep health equity for First Nations Australians through community-co-designed, culturally responsive sleep programs that harmonise sleep science with Indigenous Australian perspectives and knowledge about sleep. Dr Sullivan's research and clinical expertise is in the behavioural aspects of sleep; he is an Editor of the journal *Research Directions: Sleep Psychology* (Cambridge University Press) and is board certified by the US-based Board of Behavioural Sleep Medicine. Dr Sullivan completed postgraduate training in sleep at the University of Sydney (MSc), and his PhD in Clinical Psychology at Griffith University, where his doctoral research examined psychological factors involved in sleep-related headaches.
3. **Caitie Ashby** is the team's Research Communication & Translation Officer. Caitie supports the development and execution of communication strategies for the program, including the creation of key resources and materials that effectively communicate the program's goals and outcomes. Caitie has completed her Honours in Anthropology and is passionate about achieving health equity outcomes across Australia and promoting effective research translation and communication that supports positive social change and connection.



4. **Ishrat Jahan** is a public health professional and Research Assistant with the Let's Yarn About Sleep team who is also completing her PhD at the University of Queensland, exploring the impact of sleep health amongst First Nations adolescents. Ishrat's academic background includes a Master of Public Health from North South University, a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery from Comila Medical College, Bangladesh. . With a strong academic background and hands-on research experience, Ishrat hopes to contribute to advancing community-driven approaches to improve sleep health, particularly within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations.
5. **Sheethal Kalmadka** is a Research Assistant with the team who is also completing her PhD at the University of Queensland. Sheethal has a background in dentistry, having completed her Bachelor of Dental Surgery and holding a dental practising license in India. Sheethal has also completed her Master of Public Health in Global Health from Tokyo Medical and Dental University, Japan. She also holds a Post Graduate Certificate in Clinical Research from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Her key interests are Obstructive Sleep Apnoea, sleep-related disorders, and dental sleep medicine.
6. **Uncle Wayne Williams**, a proud Wakka Wakka Man, is an expert in incorporating First Nations perspectives and methodologies into health research. His work primarily involves integrating First Nations worldviews, ways of knowing, and evaluative frameworks into studies on First Nations health and well-being. Mr Williams is the academic lead for Indigenous Health Education at the Rural Clinical School in Toowoomba. His efforts are centred on embedding First Nations knowledge as a vital part of higher education sector and promoting constructive relationships between First Nations communities and the medical profession.
7. **Ella McGregor** is a research assistant with a background in medical and clinical administration. Ella has recently moved to Australia from England and is planning on starting her nursing degree next year. She is excited to offer support to the team and will be working from the Moreton Bay Campus.
8. **Dr Victor Oguoma** is an Associate Professor of Biostatistics. Victor holds a Master of Biostatistics, Master of Public Health and completed his public health PhD in cardiometabolic disease epidemiology before taking up an academic appointment at the Menzies where he researched chronic middle ear and respiratory disease in Indigenous children. Victor is passionate about advancing health equity and outcomes through biostatistics, epidemiology, and culturally inclusive methods, especially in chronic disease prevention and management. Victor brings a wealth of experience in the design, implementation, and analysis of large-scale randomised controlled trials and epidemiological trials.



9. **Dr Nisreen Aouira** is the Program Manager and supports the delivery of LYAS research programs ensuring that programs are delivered responsibly and in ways that are both culturally respectful and evidence-informed. Dr Aouira has obtained a PhD in pharmacy (2021) and a Master's in Medical Research. Her academic work has focused on improving the safe use of antipsychotic medications in youth mental health, and she has continued to apply this foundation through research and program coordination roles in the higher education sector. Dr Aouira has contributed to academic outputs including peer-reviewed publications, research reports, and conference presentations. She has also supported student supervision and research capacity-building. Her work often focuses on translating complex research into accessible, meaningful outcomes for communities. Dr Aouira is deeply committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and contributes to related university initiatives. She values strong relationships and works closely with First Nations communities, researchers, and healthcare professionals to ensure that research and health initiatives are grounded in respect, collaboration, and shared understanding. Dr Aouira brings a reflective, consultative approach to her work and remains committed to ongoing learning and community engagement.
10. **Dr Danielle Wilson** is a Research Fellow in Sleep Health and a Sleep Scientist. She brings to the team over 20 years of clinical experience working with people with sleep disorders, particularly obstructive sleep apnoea. Danielle holds a Master of Science (Research) and was awarded her PhD in 2019, assessing obstructive sleep apnoea during pregnancy and the impact on the mother and baby. Her research interests also include measurement issues on polysomnography and other abbreviated sleep study devices when diagnosing sleep disorders in the community. She looks forward to contributing to the Let's Yarn About Sleep team's work on improving access to sleep services in order to advance sleep health in collaboration with First Nations Australian communities.

Our team working on Kalkadoon Country in Mount Isa includes:

11. **Roslyn Von Senden**, a proud Kalkatungu/Kalkadoon woman who also has Gungalida ancestry (Gulf of Carpentaria), and has dedicated nearly 30 years of her life to advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and children. Ros is the team's Community Research & Engagement Manager, and has been instrumental to the growth of the project and working with communities and young people across North West Queensland and more.



12. **Markesh Fanti**, a proud Kukatj, Waluwarra/Kalkadoon woman of the Gulf of Carpentaria and NW Queensland, who works as a Community Research Assistant and has been integral to the running of the Let's Yarn About Sleep's Young People program in Mount Isa. Markesh has also completed her training to become a Sleep Coach.
13. **Lacoata Major**, a proud Kalkadoon and Mitakoodi woman, has recently joined the team as a Community Research Assistant. Lacoata is training to be a Sleep Technologist and will support the program in Mount Isa.
14. **Raelene Macnamara** is the respiratory nurse navigator and team leader of the North West Hospital and Health Service (NWHHS) Respiratory Service. Raelene will be providing clinical advice to the Mount Isa team and reviewing participant eligibility, screening, and assessments.
15. **Christine Parter** is a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman working with the NWHHS Community & Primary Health Care as an Advanced Health Worker- Respiratory. Christine is involved in supporting the clinical portion of the Let's Yarn About Sleep program.

Our work in Gimuy/Cairns on Yidinji Country, in partnership with Ngak Min Health, is supported by:

16. **Jayrahni Nicholls** is a proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman and mum. Jayrahni has worked with Ngak Min Health as an Aboriginal Health Worker/Practitioner and Registered Nurse for a number of years. Jayrahni is passionate about working within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health care, and closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples every day. Jayrahni will assist in program delivery and evaluation at Djarragun College and will also lead sharing research findings with community members and health services.
17. **Georgina Triantafilou** is a Registered Nurse at Ngak Min Health with 5 years' experience in General Practice. With a Post Graduate Certificate in Primary Health Care, Georgina is passionate about making a positive impact on young people's lives through Primary Health Care. Georgina will be working alongside Jayrahni to support the program's delivery, evaluation, and sharing research findings with the community and Djarragun College students.



18. **Kimberley Daniels** is a proud Kuku Yalanji, Meriam Mir and Mualgal descendant, and a traditional owner of Townsville Wulgurukaba tribe. Kimberley works with us as the Project Coordinator in Cairns. For the past 22 years Kimberley has been working with Queensland Health throughout the state doing clinical, environmental, generalist and hearing health. Kimberley was the Hearing Health Champion for Far North Queensland and worked very closely with the Care for Kids Ears program and feature throughout their resource packages and all through NSW Tafe modules for their hearing health package. Kimberley is the only Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker in Australia trained to grade Trachoma, a bacterial eye infection that can lead to blindness, run by Tropical Data. Over the last nine years, Kimberley has worked at Darling Down Health co ordinating Hearing Health for that Health Service area training and mentoring staff, arranging Deadly Ears Clinics. On returning to Cairns, she worked with Child Youth and Family for close to a year, coordinating Cairns and Hinterlands Hearing Health clinics through the Community Health's. Previously, Kimberley was working at Mareeba Hospital doing chronic disease, health assessments, allied team care arrangement and palliative care. Kimberley has worked through both the Aboriginal Medical Services in Far North Queensland: Wuchopperen for 8 years co ordinating the school hearing health program and Deadly Ears clinics; Mulungu doing Health For Life and auditing client charts; she was the Senior Health Worker at Kalwun Health Service at the Gold Coast and wrote a MOU between Kalwun and Palm Beach Hospital and with Medical Director training, and helped set up their original clinic at Burleigh Heads.