NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program: Final Evaluation Report

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

10 June 2026

nous



Nous Group acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians and the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We pay our respect to Elders past and present, who maintain their culture, Country and spiritual connection to the land, sea and community.

This artwork was developed by Marcus Lee Design to reflect Nous Group's Reconciliation Action Plan and our aspirations for respectful and productive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

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1 Executive summary

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program (the Program) supports Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) to identify and respond to developmental concerns in young children through use of a culturally adapted screening tool. Early identification of developmental delay is critical to improving long-term health, education and wellbeing outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. However, access to culturally appropriate screening tools, training and follow-up support has historically been inconsistent, particularly for ACCHOs operating in rural and remote settings. The program addresses this gap by enabling practitioners to use the 'Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Talking about Raising Aboriginal Kids' (ASQ-TRAK2) in a way that is practical, culturally safe, and embedded within community-controlled models of care.

Funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (the Department) and delivered by the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), the program provides nationally coordinated access to training, resources, and implementation support. Training is delivered by the University of Melbourne, the sole provider of ASQ-TRAK2 training in Australia, within a NACCHO-led model that coordinates participation, reduces access barriers, and supports culturally appropriate engagement. This model reflects a complementary partnership, with NACCHO leveraging its sector leadership and relationships to enable participation, while the University of Melbourne provides specialist training expertise.

This evaluation finds that the program is making a strong contribution to building culturally appropriate developmental screening capability across the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector. It addresses a clear and ongoing need by reducing financial, coordination and access barriers that would otherwise limit ACCHOs' ability to participate in training. NACCHO's role as a trusted intermediary is a key strength, supporting culturally safe and relevant training experiences while enabling broader sector reach and more equitable participation across jurisdictions.

Delivery to date is effective and broadly on track. Workshops are near full, demand exceeds available places, and participant feedback is consistently positive. Evidence indicates the program is strengthening practitioner confidence, improving readiness to use the ASQ-TRAK2 tool, and supporting earlier identification of developmental concerns. These early outcomes demonstrate improved service capability within ACCHOs and suggest a positive trajectory toward longer-term impacts for children and families.

Importantly, the program is also contributing to broader system-level benefits. By building capability across multiple ACCHOs, it is supporting more consistent approaches to developmental screening, strengthening referral pathways, and increasing sector-wide awareness of early intervention. Over time, this is expected to contribute to more coordinated, culturally appropriate responses to developmental delay and improved continuity of care for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The evaluation highlights several opportunities to strengthen impact and sustainability. These include extending support across the full training continuum, particularly through structured post-training follow up to support certification and embed practice. There is also an opportunity to improve accessibility and clarity of the Community of Practice, which participants value but have engaged with variably due to awareness and scheduling challenges. Maintaining clear communication about roles and responsibilities across NACCHO, the University of Melbourne and participating ACCHOs will also be important to sustain effective delivery.

Further opportunities include prioritising training toward roles and locations where application is most likely to drive impact, strengthening partnership arrangements, and addressing structural enablers such as pathways for recognition of prior learning and potential integration with Clinical Information Systems.

Looking ahead, there is a compelling case for continued investment in the program, alongside consideration of how funding can best support both delivery and implementation. Strong demand, positive participant experiences, and early evidence of effectiveness demonstrate the program's value. Overall, the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program is well positioned to continue supporting ACCHO-led workforce capability and to further embed culturally appropriate developmental screening across the sector, contributing to improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

Table 1 | Summary of recommendations

Recommendations	Responsibility
RECOMMENDATION 1: The Department and NACCHO should establish a structured approach to post-training support within the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program, recognising current gaps across the training continuum, and jointly determine the appropriate scope and delivery model to support ongoing implementation.	DHDA and NACCHO
RECOMMENDATION 2: NACCHO should explore expanding the delivery model of the CoP to increase accessibility and support participation. This may include offering a broader range of session formats, timings and engagement options (e.g. multiple sessions, shorter or drop-in formats, or asynchronous options), alongside clearer and more consistent promotion to participants. With ~2 in 3 participants choosing every 2 months, the dominant signal is that participants likely want the CoP to feel regular but not burdensome - enough time between sessions to apply learnings, manage workload, and still stay connected.	NACCHO
RECOMMENDATION 3: NACCHO should embed a clear articulation of roles, responsibilities and the scope of support across NACCHO, the University of Melbourne and participating ACCHOs into core program communication materials, to maintain flexibility while minimising misaligned expectations.	NACCHO
RECOMMENDATION 4: Consider ongoing investment in the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program, alongside a more targeted jurisdictional focus. This may involve prioritising delivery in the Northern Territory (NT) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), where developmental outcomes for First Nations children are comparatively lower, to support enhanced service capability and more equitable access to culturally appropriate developmental screening and follow-up care.	DHDA
RECOMMENDATION 5: For future iterations of the Program, there is an opportunity for NACCHO to undertake consultation with ACCHOs ahead of the next Expression of Interest (EOI) process. This would support deeper insights into which practitioner groups and roles are most likely to drive meaningful application and impact. Leveraging these insights within the selection process could further enhance role alignment and maximise the effectiveness of training investment.	NACCHO
RECOMMENDATION 6: NACCHO and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing should work with the University of Melbourne to explore options for incorporating a train-the-trainer component within the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program.	DHDA and NACCHO
RECOMMENDATION 7: NACCHO may consider a range of practical mechanisms to strengthen partnership foundations with the University of Melbourne.	NACCHO
RECOMMENDATION 8: NACCHO and the Department should determine whether establishing a formalised, mutually agreed intellectual property (IP) partnership arrangement with the University of Melbourne is a priority for the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program. If an IP agreement cannot be progressed, this deliverable should be removed or revised if there are future iterations of the Program to ensure it is realistic and achievable.	DHDA and NACCHO
RECOMMENDATION 9: The Department should consider the continuation of funding for the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program beyond the current agreement period and review the structure of funding arrangements to ensure they support both training delivery and post-training implementation.	DHDA

2 Evaluation context and approach

Context and overview

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program equips ACCHOs to confidently use the 'Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Talking about Raising Aboriginal Kids' (ASQ-TRAK2) developmental screening tool.

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program equips ACCHO practitioners to use the culturally adapted ASQ-TRAK2 developmental screening tool. Designed specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, ASQ-TRAK2 supports the observation and monitoring of children's developmental progress. In 2023, the tool was expanded to cover all 21 age intervals from two months to five-and-a-half years. The Program promotes access to culturally appropriate early intervention information and strengthens sector-wide awareness of how to identify and respond to developmental concerns.

Funded by the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, the Program is delivered by NACCHO, which coordinates training for up to 200 ACCHO staff in partnership with the University of Melbourne's STRONG kids, STRONG future team. NACCHO also provides wraparound support, including a Community of Practice to enable peer learning and ongoing engagement. Training is delivered exclusively by the University of Melbourne, the sole provider of ASQ-TRAK2 training in Australia, which also delivers training independently outside of the NACCHO-coordinated program.

NACCHO engaged Nous to deliver a collaboratively designed process evaluation that was culturally safe and applied mixed methods tailored to the available data.

NACCHO engaged Nous to undertake a culturally safe, collaboratively designed process and formative evaluation at the midpoint of delivery. The evaluation assessed implementation, progress against intended delivery, and factors influencing continuation, and identified early outcomes such as increased workforce confidence and improved capacity to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in understanding developmental delay and disability. It also documented lessons to inform future program delivery and sustainability.

A mixed-methods approach was applied, integrating qualitative and quantitative data from program documentation, existing delivery data and targeted primary research. This included analysis of NACCHO-provided data, stakeholder consultations across participant groups, and participant survey data. The evaluation was conducted in line with Aboriginal-led principles and cultural protocols. A program logic and key evaluation questions (KEQs) guided the approach, enabling a structured assessment of program appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led governance approach

Our approach to this evaluation, including stakeholder engagement, was guided by Nous' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Principles (see Table 2).

Table 2 | Application of Nous' Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Principles

Principle	How this shapes our stakeholder engagement approach
Ensuring a culturally safe and trauma-informed approach	• We have actively considered the mix of gender balance and experience when conducting consultations. Our team included both male and female evaluators who have experience in leading trauma-informed conversations. • We sought to communicate warmly and openly, listen deeply, and ensured we summarised and validated conversations so that participants felt heard and respected. • We acknowledged potential unconscious bias and encouraged team reflection throughout the project.

Principle	How this shapes our stakeholder engagement approach
Using a strengthens-based approach and language	• We have recognised that Nous' knowledge of systems and structures are built off Western ways of knowing and doing, which can disadvantage certain groups. We have considered how we can challenge this and elevate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives and methods throughout this evaluation. • We have been wary of language and statistics that perpetuate a deficit view. We report on poor outcomes where necessary with the context that contributed to them (e.g. structural barriers etc.). • We have considered how to leverage the strengths of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and approaches as part of our findings and recommendations.
Supporting self-determination through our engagement, data analysis and reporting	• We have ensured that engagement approaches are informed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people (both internal team members and external participants) to empower participants to share their views. • We have sought to be flexible in our data collection to measure what matters for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and use appropriate approaches and language. • We have supported Indigenous Data Sovereignty (IDS), including by ensuring Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people can access project findings and have a say in what, how and why data are collected, accessed, owned and used.
Supporting genuine partnerships and shared benefits	• We allowed for flexibility in project timelines to align with stakeholder needs. • We designed our proposed consultation approach to avoid adding to potential over-consultation for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. • We will make sure Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people directly benefit from our work, such as through capacity building and sharing findings.
Considering whether and how to include Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait leadership, Nousers, partners and governance	• The evaluation has been Aboriginal-led and supported with a gender balanced team to ensure that Aboriginal voices guide the evaluation, oversee all evaluation activities, lead engagements, and conduct all data collection. • We have worked collaboratively with NACCHO (and other key stakeholders as appropriate) throughout the course of the evaluations. This included to design the Evaluation Methodology Plans and Toolkits, to confirm data collection tools, and to test and confirm insights and recommendations. This will ensure that evaluation findings reflect the wisdom and experience of NACCHO representatives and recommendations are appropriately framed to improve outcomes for ACCHOs and the communities that they serve.

Methodology

Key evaluation and research questions.

Key evaluation questions (KEQs) and research questions have guided this evaluation to ensure a clear and focused assessment of the Program's performance, outcomes, and areas for improvement. The KEQs were developed in consultation with NACCHO and confirmed to reflect their priorities and key areas of learning, ensuring the evaluation is aligned with NACCHO's information needs and decision-making context. A full list of KEQs and research questions is provided below in Table 3.

Table 3 | KEQs and research questions

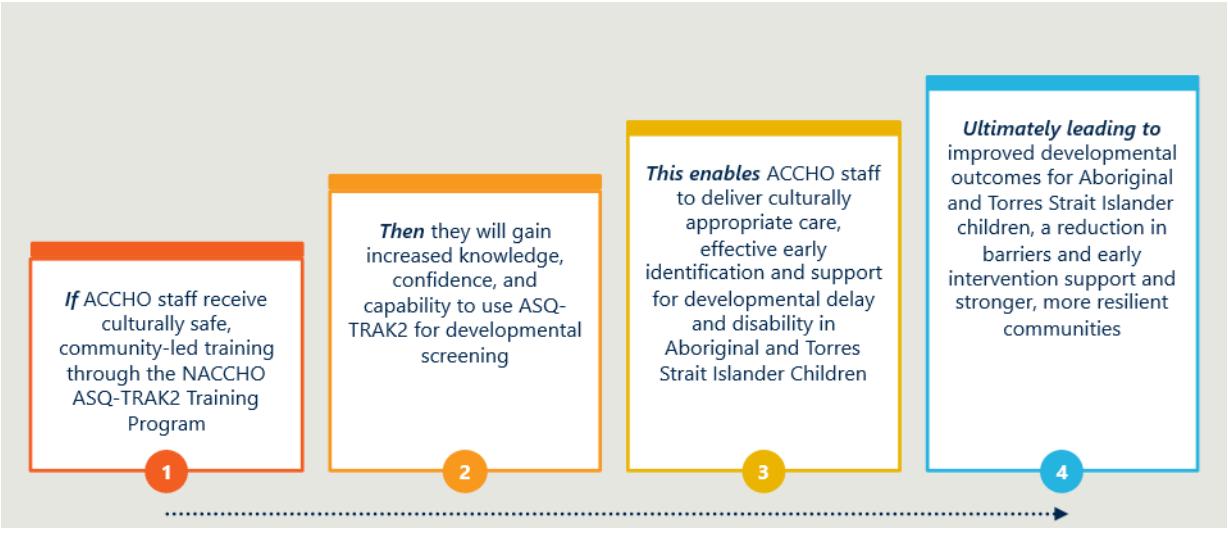
KEQ	Research questions
1. Appropriateness *To what extent does the program address identified needs?*	• What types of coordination and wraparound support are needed to enable ACCHO staff to participate effectively in training for the ASQ-TRAK2 tool? To what extent does the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program currently meet these needs? • What additional or alternative forms of coordination and wraparound support could be provided to better support ACCHO staff?

KEQ	Research questions
	• Is the coordination and wraparound support offered through the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program appropriate for all staff groups (e.g. practitioners, Team Leads, Managers) and across all ACCHOs?
2. **Efficiency** *To what extent are activities being delivered as planned?*	• Is the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program being delivered on time and to budget? • What factors support or hinder efficient delivery of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program? • What else could be done to support efficient delivery of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program (such as more or different wraparound support)?
3. **Effectiveness** *To what extent is the program achieving its intended outputs?*	• Have the intended program outputs of the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program been achieved so far (e.g. number of staff members participating in training; number of training workshops delivered)? • What, if anything, has helped or hindered the roll out of program activities?
4. **Impact** *To what extent is the program achieving its intended outcomes?*	• To what extent is NACCHO's coordination enabling conditions that support participants to build confidence and capability in using the ASQ-TRAK2 tool? • Are there early indications that the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program is helping ACCHOs build readiness to administer the ASQ-TRAK2 tool and to identify and respond to developmental concerns?
5. **Sustainability** *How likely is it that the program will continue into the future?*	• Are there indications that similar training activities will be needed in the future? If yes, is the current model the most appropriate and sustainable model? • What additional support may be needed (for ACCHOs or for NACCHO) to support future sustainability and maintain capability? • To what extent is the partnership between the University of Melbourne and NACCHO contributing to the sustainability of training activities? What improvements could strengthen this collaboration?

A theory of change and program logic guided the evaluation.

A theory of change (Figure 1) and program logic for the Program (Figure 2) was developed as part of the initial stages of the evaluation with the support of NACCHO. The theory of change sets out the overarching goals and the rationale for how culturally safe, community-led training is expected to build practitioner confidence and capability, ultimately improving developmental outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Figure 1 | NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program theory of change

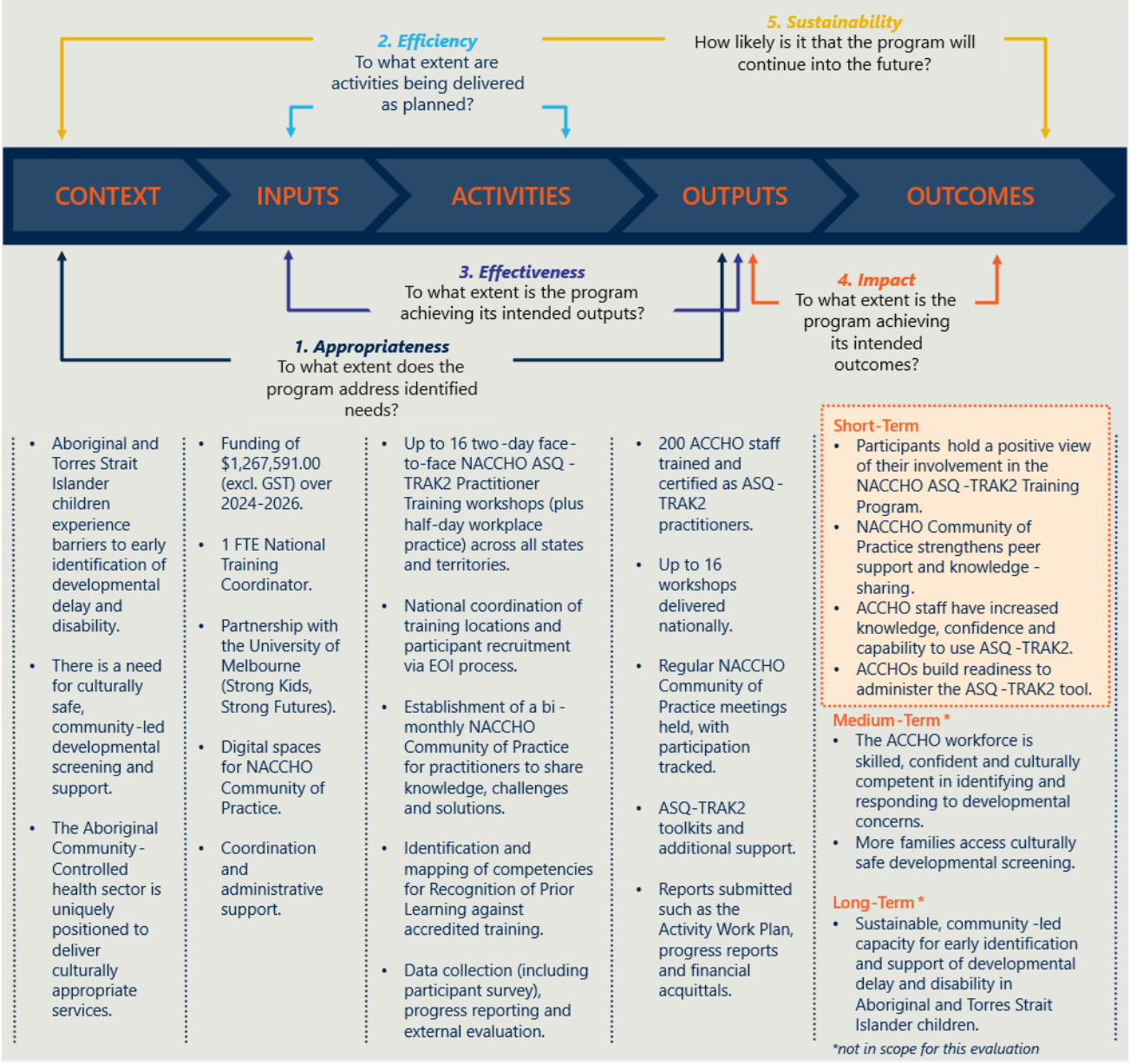


A program logic describes the logical connection between:

- **Context**: The background for the program and the environment in which it is being delivered, including why the program is considered relevant and appropriate.
- **Inputs:** The resources that are used to deliver the program.
- **Activities:** The activities that are undertaken as part of the program, building on the inputs.
- **Outputs:** The results of activities (both quantitative and qualitative).
- **Outcomes:** The changes that are expected as a result of activities and outputs.

The program logic provided an important basis for the development of the KEQs and our line of questioning.

Figure 2 | NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program logic



3 Findings

Appropriateness: To what extent does the program address identified needs?

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program provides funding to ACCHOs to undertake training that would otherwise be costly, thereby reducing a key barrier to participation.

Access to ASQ-TRAK2 training is centrally delivered through the University of Melbourne, creating inherent cost and access barriers for ACCHOs in the absence of coordinated support. The University of Melbourne is the sole provider of ASQ-TRAK2 training in Australia, delivered through its STRONG kids, STRONG future team. Training is offered via workshops priced at $23,400 (excluding GST), with additional costs for trainer travel and ASQ-TRAK2 toolkit hire where required. Each workshop accommodates up to 14 participants, equating to approximately $1,671 per participant at full capacity. Individual practitioners can also access training; however, this typically requires travel to major metropolitan centres (e.g. Brisbane, Melbourne, Darwin, Perth, Sydney or Adelaide), with a cost of $2,240 (excluding GST) per person.[1]

This delivery model presents several financial and logistical challenges for ACCHOs. Hosting a workshop can reduce the per-participant cost and allows training to be delivered on-site; however, this approach requires ACCHOs to fund the full workshop upfront and secure sufficient participants to fill available places. For smaller or resource-constrained services, this can be difficult to achieve, resulting in underutilised workshops and a higher effective cost per participant. Organising a workshop locally may also involve additional coordination and logistical effort, particularly in remote or geographically dispersed settings where travel, accommodation, and scheduling considerations can increase overall delivery complexity.

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program has played a critical role in mitigating these access and affordability barriers. By coordinating and funding training places at no cost to participating organisations, the program enables smaller cohorts, typically at least two practitioners per participating ACCHO, to attend centrally organised workshops. This approach reduces financial risk, alleviates the need for ACCHOs to independently coordinate training, and ensures that access is not determined by organisational size, workforce capacity, or ability to aggregate demand.

Consultation findings reinforce the importance of this model, indicating that, in the absence of NACCHO-funded places, many participants and their organisations would have been unable to access ASQ-TRAK2 training or would have faced a substantial financial burden. While some ACCHOs had previously engaged directly with the University of Melbourne, others had not, reflecting variability in awareness, capacity, and financial resources across the sector. Overall, the NACCHO-supported model has reduced financial and logistical barriers and enabled more equitable access to ASQ-TRAK2 training across ACCHOs.

NACCHO plays an important intermediary role in bridging institutional and cultural gaps between ACCHOs and the University of Melbourne, reducing barriers to engagement.

The STRONG kids, STRONG future team, which delivers ASQ-TRAK2 training, is based within the Department of Paediatrics at the University of Melbourne. The team works in partnership with communities to support research, development, training, and implementation of culturally appropriate developmental measures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. In doing so, the team operates within an Aboriginal health context and brings relevant expertise and experience engaging with the ACCHO sector.

However, as part of a large institutional setting, the University of Melbourne is also shaped by longstanding structures, norms and histories, many of which predate contemporary understandings of cultural safety. While staff and leadership may create a welcoming environment, these embedded features can influence assumptions within the curriculum, language, physical environment, and decision-making authority in ways that may not always be visible.

[1] Strong Kids Strong Future. Training. Available at: https://www.strongkidsstrongfuture.com.au/training (accessed 18 May 2026).

Recognising this, stakeholders, including the University of Melbourne, highlighted the importance of having NACCHO present in the training environment to support culturally safe delivery. NACCHO's role helps ensure that communication, facilitation and participant experience are grounded in cultural safety principles.

Feedback from stakeholder engagement reinforced the value of this approach. Participants commended the facilitation style of the University of Melbourne team and noted that the partnership with NACCHO contributed to creating a safe and undemanding learning environment. Importantly, this does not reflect any limitation in the capability of the STRONG kids, STRONG future team as facilitators. Rather, it reflects a complementary model: while the University of Melbourne team focuses on delivering the training, NACCHO provides dedicated oversight of participant comfort and cultural safety, helping to ensure a supportive and culturally appropriate environment for all participants.

A further factor contributing to a culturally safe environment is the composition of workshop participants, which typically brings together individuals from across the ACCHO sector. This shared context supports a sense of familiarity and collective understanding, enabling participants to engage more openly in discussions and learning activities. Several participants reflected that being surrounded by peers with similar professional and cultural experiences helped reduce apprehension and fostered a more comfortable and supportive learning environment, reinforcing the overall cultural safety of the training.

NACCHO's pre-training coordination and in-training support are critical to enabling participation and culturally safe delivery by addressing logistical and other challenges unique to the ACCHO sector.

> *"The coordination has been excellent, and communication from NACCHO has been clear and timely. The support we receive makes participation in the ASQ-TRAK2 training easy and enjoyable."*
>
> - NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program participant

Under the NACCHO-led model, the burden on ACCHOs to coordinate and host visiting trainers is reduced through a more structured and proactive approach to delivery. NACCHO plays a central coordinating role, including organising workshops, liaising with host sites, confirming participant attendance, and managing key logistics to support implementation. This involves maintaining regular communication with sites in the lead-up to training, ensuring essential arrangements (such as venue setup and catering) are in place, and troubleshooting issues as they arise to facilitate smooth delivery.

Importantly, coordination and in-training support is delivered flexibly, allowing NACCHO to tailor its approach to the specific needs and capacity of each ACCHO, rather than adhering to a rigid set of responsibilities. This adaptability ensures that organisations requiring greater support can be more actively assisted. This includes supporting participants who may need to travel to attend training at another ACCHO, particularly those travelling from remote or regional locations, who may require additional assistance navigating travel arrangements or attending training in unfamiliar settings.

The model also introduces greater flexibility in how ACCHOs engage with training. Through the Expression of Interest (EOI) process, organisations can elect to host a workshop or participate as attendees only. This reduces barriers for ACCHOs with limited capacity to host, enabling broader and more equitable access to training opportunities that may previously have been difficult to participate in.

Post-training support to embed ASQ-TRAK2 into ACCHO practice is needed; while some light-touch supports could sit within NACCHO's scope, others are not currently funded or provided through the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program.

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program concentrates support in the lead-up to, and delivery of, training, with more limited structured support following training completion. Participants consistently identified a need for support across the full continuum, before, during, and after training, to enable successful use of the ASQ-TRAK2 tool in practice.

Participants described returning quickly to business-as-usual following training, often experiencing a delay before they could apply the tool. For some, this limited confidence and the consolidation of learning. To address this gap, participants suggested a range of 'bridging' supports, including follow-up check-ins to monitor progress, access to additional resources, and opportunities to share best practice across ACCHOs (for example,

through a shared resource repository or expanding the Community of Practice). Participants also emphasised the importance of engaging ACCHO managers to ensure staff are supported to complete post-training requirements for certification.

Some of these functions, namely light-touch check-ins and improvements to the Community of Practice, fall within the current scope of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Program. However, more intensive supports, such as the development of additional resources and targeted engagement with ACCHO leadership to enable staff participation, may sit outside NACCHO's formal remit.

NACCHO noted that, to ensure sufficient funding was available for core workshop delivery and associated activities, trade-offs were required in how resources were allocated. This included a deliberate prioritisation of pre-training coordination and preparation activities, with comparatively less emphasis placed on post-training supports.

Targeted post-training check-ins would support embedding ASQ-TRAK2 into ACCHO practice would address a current gap in wraparound support.

Implementing a light-touch follow-up at approximately two months post-training would provide NACCHO with a low-burden mechanism to understand whether participants have been able to apply the ASQ-TRAK2 tool in practice, identify any barriers to implementation, and reinforce its ongoing use. Given NACCHO's established relationships with participants and its central role in coordinating training delivery, it is well placed to undertake this function and support a more continuous participant experience. This role is also consistent with feedback from the Department, which emphasised the importance of implementation support to help embed ASQ-TRAK2 into routine ACCHO service delivery as part of NACCHO's remit.

This approach would also help address a potential gap in perceived support. The intensive engagement provided leading up to and during the training may create an expectation of ongoing contact, particularly as participants are required to complete competencies following the workshop. As a result, participants may experience a sense of reduced support once the training concludes, despite their learning journey continuing beyond the workshop itself. A structured follow-up would help bridge this gap, better aligning the participant experience with the program's ongoing requirements.

The Department of Health, Disability and Ageing may wish to explore opportunities to further strengthen the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program by considering how additional post-training wraparound support could enhance participant outcomes and sustained practice.

While NACCHO's deliverable is focused on providing training and support to 200 staff members in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector in the use of ASQ-TRAK2, several suggested improvements extend beyond this defined scope. For example, the provision of additional resources and the active engagement of ACCHO managers to support staff in completing post-training requirements for certification may fall outside NACCHO's current role. Similarly, limitations relating to the inability to embed the ASQ-TRAK2 tool within ACCHO Clinical Information Systems (CIS) were identified, noting that addressing this issue would likely require separate collaboration with CIS vendors and/or the University of Melbourne. For these more complex, system-level enhancements, the Department may need to consider how best to support their progression, either within the current ASQ-TRAK2 Program or through complementary initiatives.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The Department and NACCHO should establish a structured approach to post-training support within the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program, recognising current gaps across the training continuum, and jointly determine the appropriate scope and delivery model to support ongoing implementation.

Improving access to and engagement with the ASQ-TRAK2 Community of Practice would strengthen peer connection and ongoing learning, enhancing the experience for participants and support uptake within ACCHOs.

NACCHO has delivered two online Communities of Practice (CoP) to date, held on 18 November 2025 and 18 March 2026. Invitations were extended to all participants who had attended a training workshop. As participation in the CoP was voluntary, follow-up with individuals to confirm attendance was limited.

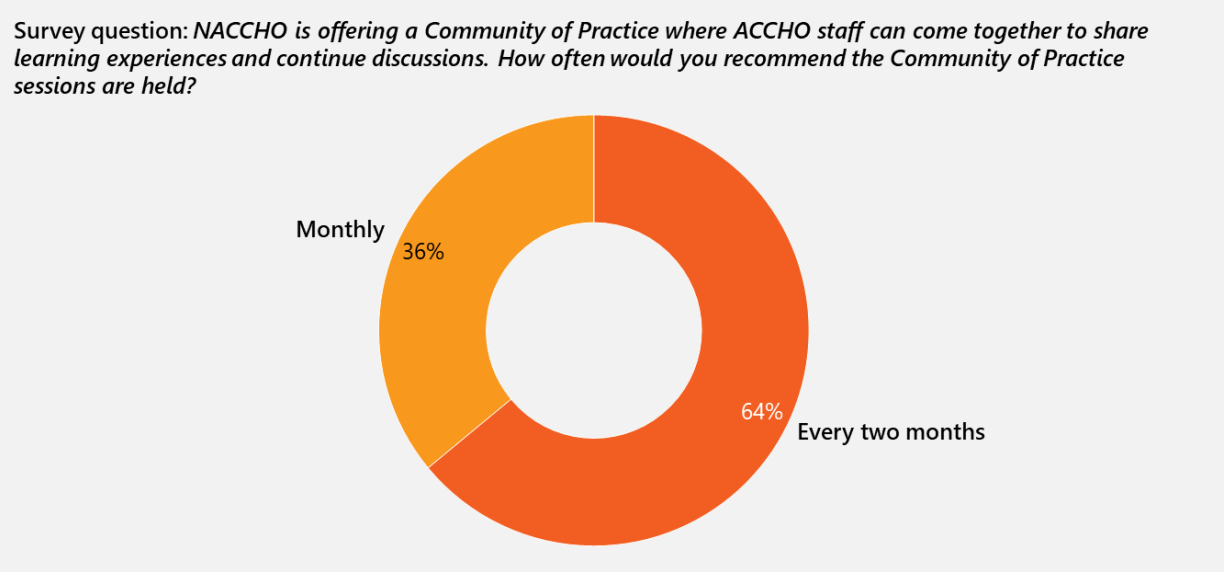
There is an opportunity to strengthen the CoP as an ongoing mechanism for participant support. While NACCHO suggested that low uptake may reflect a lack of perceived value among participants, potentially influenced by the University of Melbourne's separate CoP offering, stakeholder consultation did not substantiate this interpretation.

Instead, findings indicate that awareness and accessibility are the primary barriers to participation. Some participants were not aware that a CoP existed, which may reflect the limited number of sessions delivered to date and the timing of these sessions relative to training. Others recalled being informed about the CoP during training but did not receive, or did not recall, subsequent communications. A further group were aware of the CoP but reported difficulty attending due to competing commitments.

It is also important to note that limited recall of communications may, in part, reflect participants' competing priorities rather than a lack of communication from NACCHO. Across consultations, participants consistently emphasised the high demands on their time, suggesting that some perceived gaps in communication may be attributable to information being missed rather than not provided.

Importantly, participants expressed strong value in the CoP model, particularly one that is ACCHO-specific and delivered through the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Program. This is reflected in survey findings (n=39) (see Figure 3).

Figure 3 | Survey response on Community of Practice timing



Consistent with this, NACCHO reported that participants who attended CoP sessions found them to be highly worthwhile. Participants highlighted the importance of a culturally appropriate forum to connect with peers across ACCHOs and to share experiences. In contrast, accessing the University of Melbourne CoP would require participants to engage outside the established structures of the NACCHO Program, including coordinating attendance independently and without the support of their usual team context. Additionally, as the University of Melbourne CoP is not ACCHO-specific, its broader focus may dilute its relevance for ACCHOs seeking to address context-specific challenges and share tailored, sector-specific insights.

RECOMMENDATION 2

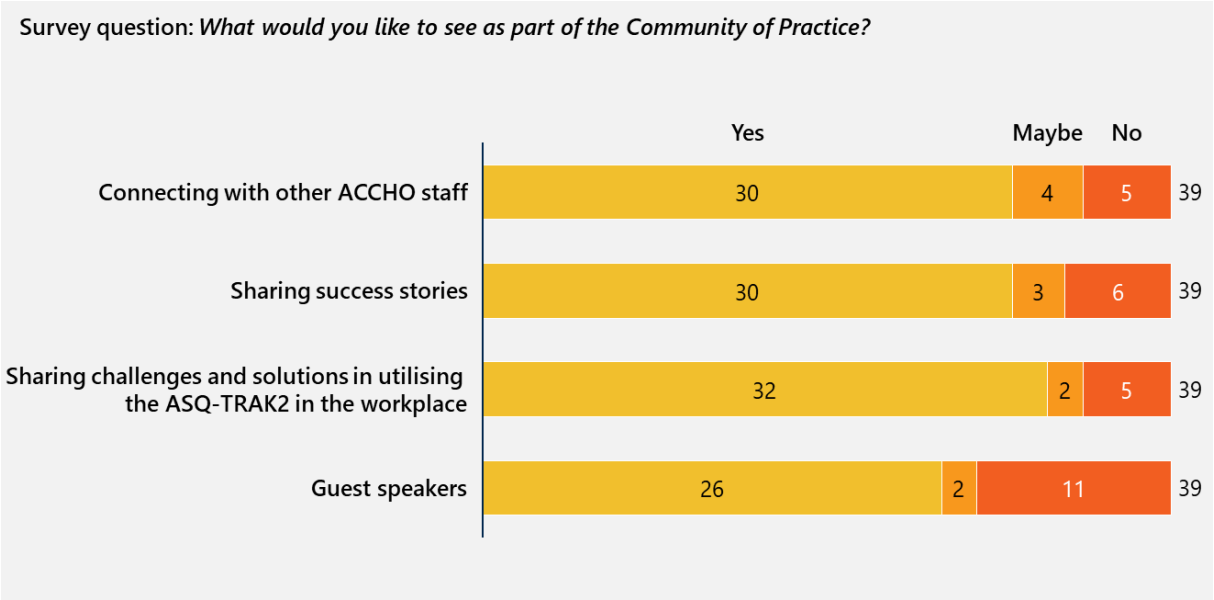
NACCHO should explore expanding the delivery model of the CoP to increase accessibility and support participation. This may include offering a broader range of session formats, timings and engagement options (e.g. multiple sessions, shorter or drop-in formats, or asynchronous options), alongside clearer and more consistent promotion to participants.

With ~2 in 3 participants choosing every 2 months, the dominant signal is that participants likely want the CoP to feel regular but not burdensome - enough time between sessions to apply learnings, manage workload, and still stay connected.

There is strong support for a CoP focused on peer connection and discussion, with more structured elements seen as secondary and most valuable when they support, rather than replace, interactive engagement.

Survey responses show strong and consistent support for the proposed CoP features included in NACCHO's participant survey, with most options receiving predominantly "Yes" responses and only limited "No" or "Maybe" responses (see Figure 4). This indicates broad alignment on what the CoP should include.

Figure 4 | Survey response on Community of Practice features



Participants clearly prioritise opportunities for connection, discussion, and shared learning, with a preference for sessions that enable practical, peer-to-peer exchange. While there is some support for more structured elements, these are seen as supplementary, with less certainty around their importance compared to core engagement.

Overall, the findings suggest the CoP should focus on interactive, participant-led formats, with additional elements used to support, not replace, discussion and knowledge sharing. This is a positive finding, as it suggests the CoP model should be relatively straightforward to deliver rather than requiring significant effort to source external speakers or content, NACCHO's primary role is to facilitate a safe, structured space for participants to connect and share.

The flexibility embedded in NACCHO's approach means the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program is broadly appropriate for a range of staff groups (e.g. practitioners, team leads, managers) across diverse ACCHOs.

NACCHO engages with ACCHOs that submit an EOI and may subsequently host training, as well as with individual participants. The model of support varies: some participants receive direct support from NACCHO, while others reported receiving support primarily through their ACCHO (e.g. Team Leads or Managers), with NACCHO providing guidance to the organisation.

Across stakeholder consultations, perspectives were largely consistent. There were no clear patterns to suggest that the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program, or its support mechanisms, were better suited to types of ACCHOs or staff cohorts.

Efficiency: To what extent are activities being delivered as planned?

There is evidence of effective implementation and adaptive management, with no major barriers to delivery identified.

> *"The training was excellent, and I am grateful I was able to fill in an empty chair."*
>
> *- NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program participant*

A consistent theme emerging from consultations with NACCHO and other stakeholders was the critical role of the National Training Coordinator's flexibility in supporting efficient program delivery. This adaptability was particularly important in the face of logistical challenges, such as flooding in Katherine during a scheduled workshop, which required rapid adjustments to delivery arrangements. The ability to tailor support to the varying needs of individual ACCHOs and participants is a key enabler of program success. Conversely, a more rigid or prescriptive approach to support provision would likely have constrained delivery, limiting the Program's capacity to respond to context-specific needs and circumstances.

At the same time, this emphasis on flexibility reinforces the importance of clearly defined roles and expectations across all parties involved in program delivery. While stakeholders did not suggest that this clarity is absent, it was noted that, in a flexible delivery environment, there is a greater risk of misaligned assumptions, for example, where participants or ACCHOs may expect NACCHO to provide support beyond its remit, or where responsibilities between NACCHO and the University of Melbourne are not fully understood. Ensuring that roles, responsibilities and the scope of support are explicitly communicated will continue to help mitigate this risk, reducing the likelihood of gaps in delivery or duplication of effort arising from unspoken or inconsistent expectations.

RECOMMENDATION 3

NACCHO should embed a clear articulation of roles, responsibilities and the scope of support across NACCHO, the University of Melbourne and participating ACCHOs into core program communication materials, to maintain flexibility while minimising misaligned expectations.

Given the geographic spread of training locations, including rural and remote areas, additional budget flexibility could support delivery where external or environmental factors create unanticipated challenges.

Delivering training across geographically dispersed, rural and remote locations introduces practical and unpredictable challenges that are difficult to fully anticipate at the outset. Stakeholders described barriers such as limited staff availability, the need to maintain clinical service coverage while staff attend training, and logistical constraints associated with travel, including weather-related disruptions (e.g. flight cancellations during the wet season) and difficulties accessing remote communities. These factors can limit participation and require adaptations such as smaller, localised sessions, which may increase delivery costs or complexity.

NACCHO also reports that the current budget structure is relatively inflexible, limiting the Program's ability to respond to these dynamic delivery conditions. Consistent with these experiences, additional budget flexibility would enable the Program to respond more effectively to unanticipated external or environmental pressures, such as travel disruptions, higher delivery costs in remote areas, or the need for additional or on-site sessions, thereby supporting more equitable access to training across diverse geographic contexts.

Effectiveness: To what extent is the program achieving its intended outputs?

NACCHO is delivering on the requirements set out in its grant agreement with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing.

NACCHO deliverables, or key program pillars, are defined in the grant agreement with the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing that funds the Program. Table 4 outlines each deliverable and the corresponding progress as of 25 May 2026.

Table 4 | NACCHO deliverables and progress to date

NACCHO's deliverables under the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program grant	NACCHO's progress to date against each deliverable
Provide training and support for 200 staff members in the Aboriginal Community Controlled Health sector in the use of ASQ-TRAK2	149 staff participated in training, including 78 First Nations staff. Participation has been consistently strong, with near-full attendance across workshops; only two of the ten workshops were delivered below the maximum capacity of 14 participants (with 12 and 13 participants, respectively). There are three workshops still to take place in Bendigo (VIC), Darwin (NT) and Mildura (VIC).
Deliver up to 16 ASQ-TRAK2 Practitioner Training workshops nationally across all states and territories	As of 30 April 2026, ten ASQ-TRAK2 practitioner workshops had been delivered nationally. Delivery locations have been clustered to support equitable access, resulting in workshops being delivered across multiple jurisdictions, including Western Australia, New South Wales, the ACT, Far North Queensland, and South Australia.
Re-certify ASQ-TRAK practitioners annually over the life of the agreement	A substantial proportion of participants who commence training are progressing towards completion of the required post-workshop certification, with 67 participants certified as of 30 April 2026 (45 per cent of total participants). Noting that certification requires additional post-workshop learning, some participants may still be progressing through this process.
Establish and maintain a Community of Practice to support trained ASQ-TRAK2 staff, including ongoing information sharing, collaboration and learning	NACCHO has established a Community of Practice and has held two; one on 18 November 2025 and a second on 18 March 2026.
Coordinate the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Program nationally, including: • **Supporting national promotion of training** • **Managing and facilitating ACCHO expressions of interest**	NACCHO promoted the training through its networks, with an EOI distributed to all ACCHO CEOs on 15 April 2025. The EOI period remained open until 9 May 2025. The response exceeded expectations, with demand significantly surpassing the available training places. In

NACCHO's deliverables under the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program grant	NACCHO's progress to date against each deliverable
• **Coordinating training locations and participants nationally (with the University of Melbourne training team)** • **Reporting to and liaising with funding bodies**	total, 60 EOIs were received, including requests from 30 ACCHOs to host workshops, and 321 staff expressing interest in participating in the training. NACCHO has coordinated training locations and participants, as outlined above. NACCHO completes a dashboard and fulfils formal reporting requirements, including the Activity Work Plan. As part of this evaluation, the Department has indicated confidence in the completeness of the data it receives from NACCHO.
Identify and map competencies and skills gained from ASQ-TRAK2 training for use as Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) against accredited training	Progress against this deliverable remains limited. While the program has successfully supported training delivery and early capability building, the identification and formal mapping of competencies RPL has not been substantively progressed to date. This reflects constraints associated with the ownership of ASQ-TRAK2 training materials by the University of Melbourne, which limits NACCHO's ability to access and map content against accredited training frameworks.

Delivery of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program is on time and to budget.

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Program is broadly on track in relation to both timing and budget. The grant provided to NACCHO for the Program totals $1,267,591.00 (excluding GST).

While there were initial delays in commencing workshops due to establishment and implementation requirements, delivery has since progressed in line with the planned schedule.

As of May 2026, an underspend of approximately $200,000 has been reported. NACCHO has advised that this reflects unintended budget efficiencies rather than a reduction in scope, and that the underspend will be reinvested to expand delivery, including training up to 20 additional staff.

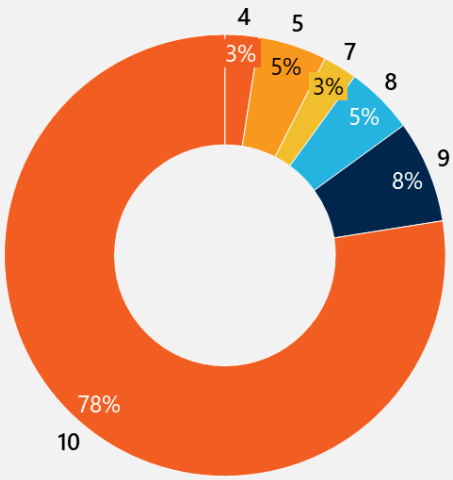
Ongoing monitoring arrangements, including regular dashboard reporting on workshops delivered, participant numbers, and demographic characteristics, indicate that delivery is being actively managed against planned milestones and budget settings. NACCHO has expressed confidence that the remaining will be delivered within the contract period and that overall participation targets will be achieved, consistent with the revised delivery schedule and expenditure profile.

Overall, there is a high level of support from NACCHO and participants and ACCHOs generally feel well supported.

The ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program is consistently experienced as highly supportive and enabling by participants. Survey data collected by NACCHO following ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program sessions indicates a consistently high level of perceived support. Respondents rated support at an average of 9.35 out of 10 (n = 40), with a median score of 10 and 77.5 per cent selecting the maximum rating, reflecting overwhelmingly positive experiences (see Figure 5).

Figure 5 | Survey response on overall support

Survey question: *How would you rate the overall support you received from NACCHO?*



Note: No respondents gave a rating of 1-3 or 6.

These findings are reinforced by stakeholder consultations conducted by Nous, which surfaced similarly strong sentiments. Participants spoke highly of NACCHO's role as the peak body for Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations, as well as the approachability, responsiveness and commitment of the individual staff delivering the program. While a small number of respondents reported lower ratings (scores of 5–7), this appears to reflect isolated variations in individual experience rather than a broader or systemic gap in support. Overall, both survey and consultation findings point to a high level of satisfaction with the support provided, underpinned by both organisational leadership and the quality of personal engagement.

> *"We've seen a real uptake in how many ASQs are being done. Our data is fantastic in terms of how many more are being done, and we've got a NDIS connector program so it can identify some of those children quite early in their developmental delay."*
>
> - NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program participant

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program has enabled the University of Melbourne to expand its reach into the ACCH sector by leveraging NACCHO's networks, coordination and sector leadership.

The Program is delivering on a key objective of expanding access to ASQ-TRAK2 training and building knowledge within the ACCHO sector at scale. This represents a shift from historically engaging primary health networks or mixed participant cohorts, to delivering training more directly to community-controlled organisations through NACCHO-facilitated access. Evidence from stakeholders indicates that this partnership has supported a rapid scale-up of delivery, including a reported doubling of training volume within a single year.

By engaging a broader cohort of ACCHOs, the Program is contributing to increased sector-wide knowledge, confidence, and capacity to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in understanding developmental delay and disability. It is also strengthening the availability of culturally appropriate information on early intervention and promoting broader awareness across the ACCHO sector of how to identify and respond to children's developmental needs.

Although not a formal output, the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Program has enabled the University of Melbourne to generate learnings from NACCHO's involvement.

NACCHO's involvement has also contributed to continuous improvements in the quality and relevance of the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program. University of Melbourne stakeholders described the partnership as enabling fruitful conversations and ongoing learning from the community-controlled perspective. Through this collaboration, delivery approaches have been iteratively refined based on participant feedback, facilitator experience, and insights generated through NACCHO's coordination role. This has supported the delivery of training in ways that are more closely aligned with community needs, including local, culturally appropriate and group-based formats. As a result, the Program has functioned not only as a delivery mechanism, but as a

feedback-driven learning loop, where insights from implementation inform ongoing refinement. This has strengthened the quality and cultural responsiveness of the training for NACCHO-supported cohorts and has potential to enhance the program more broadly, including for participants accessing ASQ-TRAK2 training outside of the Program.

Impact: To what extent is the program achieving its intended outcomes?

By enabling access to a well-regarded training experience and tool, NACCHO's coordination is indirectly supporting participants' early confidence and capability with ASQ-TRAK2.

While NACCHO does not directly deliver the ASQ-TRAK2 training, its role is closely embedded within the overall training experience. NACCHO's enabling and coordinating functions are strongly associated with participants' positive perceptions of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program. This coordination appears to support confidence-building by enabling participation, ensuring access to required materials, and facilitating effective engagement.

NACCHO also provided supplementary toolkits to support implementation, representing a key enabling condition for capability development by allowing staff to practise and administer the tool following training. Consistent with this, participants and their respective ACCHOs reported improved outcomes associated with use of the tool, including increased screening uptake and earlier identification. Together, these findings reflect the complementary roles of NACCHO and the University of Melbourne in supporting program delivery and outcomes.

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program is contributing to early readiness to use ASQ-TRAK2, with scope to further embed and sustain this capability within everyday ACCHO operations.

Participants indicated that NACCHO could strengthen post-training reinforcement, including through clearer communication about Communities of Practice and the introduction of structured follow-ups or resource supports. While current program coordination supports attendance and initial capability development, these suggestions point to a perceived need for stronger mechanisms to sustain confidence in practice over time.

Consistent with this, manager and team leaders in ACCHOs emphasised the importance of systems, processes and staffing arrangements that enable effective implementation. Practical enablers, such as peer support, resource sharing, and access to a centralised repository, were highlighted as critical 'readiness' markers, reflecting the extent to which the tool can be embedded within day-to-day workflows rather than solely acquired through training. There is an opportunity for NACCHO and the Department to consider which elements of implementation support can be embedded within the current ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program, and which may require complementary approaches or additional investment to support sustained use in practice.

Sustainability: How likely is it that the program will continue into the future?

Strengthening culturally appropriate early developmental screening through ACCHO-led workforce capacity is critical to closing the AEDC developmental gap.

Outcome 4 of the 2020 National Agreement sets a target to increase the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children assessed as developmentally on track in all five Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) domains to 55 per cent by 2031. In 2021, approximately 34 per cent of First Nations children were developmentally on track across all domains, compared with 56 per cent of non-Indigenous children. While this reflects a persistent gap, there has been a gradual improvement over time. However, progress remains below

the trajectory required to meet the 2031 target, with the 2021 result falling 5.5 percentage points below the projected milestone of 39.8 per cent.[2]

The NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program contributes to this objective by expanding the national workforce capable of delivering culturally appropriate developmental screening. The Program supports a significant number of Aboriginal practitioners to administer the tool, which is critical for ensuring cultural safety and strengthening engagement with children and families. Delivery through ACCHOs also helps to ensure that children accessing care through these services can receive consistent, preventive developmental screening aligned with best practice.

Jurisdictional disparities may point to the need for additional training to strengthen capability in the Northern Territory and the ACT.

AEDC data highlights substantial jurisdictional variation in developmental outcomes for First Nations children. The highest proportions of children assessed as developmentally on track are observed in New South Wales (39%), Tasmania (38%) and Victoria (36%), while markedly lower proportions are recorded in the NT (16%) and the ACT (27%). This disparity underscores the importance of strengthening early detection and management of developmental concerns, particularly through improving access to culturally appropriate, accessible health and social services in the NT and the ACT.

In this context, NACCHO has taken steps to support service capability in jurisdictions with comparatively poorer outcomes, including delivering ASQ-TRAK2 training workshops in Katherine (NT) and Canberra (ACT), with a further workshop planned in Darwin. NACCHO has also implemented an equitable selection process for participating ACCHOs. However, should the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program continue, there is an opportunity for NACCHO, in partnership with the Department, to consider whether a more targeted approach to investment and delivery in the NT and the ACT is warranted, given the relative level of need.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Consider ongoing investment in the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program, alongside a more targeted jurisdictional focus. This may involve prioritising delivery in the NT and the ACT, where developmental outcomes for First Nations children are comparatively lower, to support enhanced service capability and more equitable access to culturally appropriate developmental screening and follow-up care.

Strong demand for ASQ-TRAK2 training reinforces the importance of continuing to prioritise role alignment to maximise application and impact.

The EOI process was significantly oversubscribed, with demand exceeding available capacity by approximately 60 per cent, signalling strong sector demand for expanded training opportunities. This is further reinforced by stakeholder consultations and NACCHO's survey data, which consistently highlight the value placed on access to training and the perceived benefits of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program.

A very small number of participants were primarily motivated by general professional development rather than a clear intention to achieve certification or apply the tool in practice. While not representative of the broader cohort, this highlights a strong underlying interest in and appetite for the Program, with participants valuing it as a broader capability-building opportunity. In an ideal scenario, this level of interest would support widespread knowledge sharing across the sector, contributing to greater awareness and understanding of the tool in a range of settings. However, given the current cost and limited availability of training, there remains a need to prioritise access for those in roles where application is most immediate and impactful. This suggests an opportunity, should the Program be expanded, to further strengthen targeting, ensuring training places are directed to individuals best positioned to apply and embed the learning. Although NACCHO's existing EOI process is already detailed and designed to support this targeting, maintaining a strong focus on role alignment will be important to maximise the effectiveness and sustainability of any future scale-up.

[2] Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) n.d., Closing the Gap targets: key findings and implications – Children thriving, AIHW, Canberra, accessed 18 May 2026, <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/indigenous-australians/closing-the-gap-targets-key-findings-implications/contents/children-thriving>.

RECOMMENDATION 5

For future iterations of the Program, there is an opportunity for NACCHO to undertake consultation with ACCHOs ahead of the next Expression of Interest (EOI) process. This would support deeper insights into which practitioner groups and roles are most likely to drive meaningful application and impact. Leveraging these insights within the selection process could further enhance role alignment and maximise the effectiveness of training investment.

While workforce turnover creates demand for recurring training, a train-the-trainer approach is constrained by the University of Melbourne's model, making NACCHO's current delivery approach the most appropriate option at present.

The training model is well-suited to building individual capability; however, it is less well aligned to the operating context of many ACCHOs, where workforce instability is an ongoing challenge. Services frequently rely on a mix of permanent, short-term and visiting staff, with movement across roles, locations and organisations contributing to high turnover. In this context, capability gained through one-off training can be difficult to retain and embed at the organisational level. A 'train the trainer' approach would better support continuity by enabling local staff to cascade knowledge and provide ongoing training to new and existing team members. However, as training delivery and certification are the responsibility of and is trademarked by the University of Melbourne, rather than NACCHO, this model is not currently feasible within the program's design. As a result, while the current model remains effective for reaching and upskilling individuals, its ability to support sustained, organisation-wide capability development is more limited.

RECOMMENDATION 6

NACCHO and the Department of Health, Disability and Ageing should work with the University of Melbourne to explore options for incorporating a train-the-trainer component within the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program. This could include assessing whether elements of the current delivery model could be adapted to enable local trainers within ACCHOs, or whether the University of Melbourne would be willing to evolve its delivery approach to support a co-delivery or partnership model.

Sustainability could be strengthened by formalising NACCHO-University of Melbourne relationships, reducing the current reliance on individual capabilities.

While NACCHO and the University of Melbourne's partnership is regarded as effective and underpinned by a complementary division of roles, it brings together two organisations with distinct operating environments, governance structures and ways of working. Evidence from evaluation suggests that the success of the partnership to date has been significantly enabled by the efforts of individuals across both organisations, who have invested time in navigating differences, resolving challenges and building strong, collaborative relationships. While this has supported the development of effective ways of working overtime, it also introduces a degree of risk; should key personnel change, there is potential for established practices and mutual understanding to be lost, requiring relationships to be rebuilt. Formalising aspects of the partnership may help to reduce reliance on individual capability, provide greater clarity and consistency, and strengthen the foundations for ongoing collaboration beyond those directly involved in program delivery.

RECOMMENDATION 7

NACCHO may consider a range of practical mechanisms to strengthen partnership foundations with the University of Melbourne, including:

1. Codifying agreed ways of working by documenting key processes, such as participant communication, workshop coordination and certification pathways, to reduce reliance on informal problem-solving.

2. Developing shared protocols or more detailed memoranda of understanding to complement existing contractual arrangements, ensuring both operational and relational expectations are clearly articulated.
3. Investing in structured onboarding and knowledge transfer materials could support new staff across both organisations to more effectively understand and engage with the partnership model.
4. Embed further mechanisms for ongoing relationship-building, such as regular reflective check-ins, to help maintain trust, align expectations and support continuous improvement in how the organisations work together.

Clarifying intellectual property (IP) arrangements to enable greater use of University of Melbourne ASQ-TRAK2 materials would support sustainability of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program.

The ASQ-TRAK2 tool and associated training materials are the IP of the University of Melbourne, which limits their availability for external use. At present, the University does not support the release of ASQ-TRAK2 training materials to NACCHO or other parties for the purpose of competency mapping. This presents a constraint for one of NACCHO's key deliverables, to identify and map the competencies and skills gained through ASQ-TRAK2 training for potential RPL against accredited training.

As a result, there are limitations in formally articulating or validating the skills acquired through the training in a way that enables practitioners to leverage these capabilities for nationally recognised qualifications. The University has indicated that progressing this activity would require a formalised, mutually agreed IP partnership arrangement between NACCHO and the University of Melbourne. In the absence of such an arrangement, this deliverable remains difficult to progress within the current program parameters.

RECOMMENDATION 8

NACCHO and the Department should determine whether establishing a formalised, mutually agreed IP partnership arrangement with the University of Melbourne is a priority for the ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program.

Without such an arrangement, the feasibility of mapping ASQ-TRAK2 training to recognised competencies for RPL purposes is limited. Accordingly, if an IP agreement cannot be progressed, this deliverable should be removed or revised if there are future iterations of the Program to ensure it is realistic and achievable.

The ability for NACCHO to sustain and scale its support is contingent on the continuation and structure of funding.

Sustaining and expanding the impact of the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program will depend on the continuation of adequate and appropriately structured funding. The current program model has enabled NACCHO to play a central coordination role, reducing access barriers, supporting culturally safe delivery, and facilitating national reach across ACCHOs. These functions are resource-intensive and unlikely to be maintained at scale without ongoing funding support.

The evaluation indicates that demand for training remains high, with Expressions of Interest significantly exceeding available places. In this context, discontinuation or reduction of funding would likely result in a contraction of access, particularly for smaller, regional and remote ACCHOs that are less able to independently fund or coordinate participation. This would risk reintroducing structural inequities that the program has helped to address.

At the same time, the structure of future funding will be important in determining the program's effectiveness. Stakeholders identified opportunities to strengthen the model through enhanced post-training support, improved Community of Practice delivery, and targeted expansion in areas of greatest need. Realising these opportunities may require not only continuation of funding, but greater flexibility in how funds can be allocated across the training continuum.

Overall, while the current program demonstrates early effectiveness, its longer-term sustainability and impact will depend on continued investment aligned to both delivery and implementation support, ensuring that capability gains are embedded within ACCHO practice over time.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The Department should consider the continuation of funding for the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program beyond the current agreement period and review the structure of funding arrangements to ensure they support both training delivery and post-training implementation.

Embedding the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program within Thriving Kids could support continuity and consistency of workforce capability development.

Governments have committed to jointly invest $4 billion over five years to implement the first phase of Foundational Supports, known as Thriving Kids. Of this, the Australian Government will contribute $2 billion, with at least $1.4 billion to be provided directly to states to fund service delivery. Thriving Kids is expected to commence rollout from 1 October 2026, with full-scale implementation anticipated by 1 January 2028.[3]

Given this shift from Commonwealth-administered to state-based funding, there is a risk that progress in building sector capability could become fragmented or inconsistent across jurisdictions. Embedding the NACCHO ASQ-TRAK2 Training Program within the Thriving Kids framework would help mitigate this risk by providing a nationally consistent, culturally appropriate approach to developmental screening capability across ACCHOs.

Positioning the Program as a core component of Thriving Kids would support continuity of investment, maintain momentum in workforce capability development, and help ensure that gains achieved under the current program are sustained and scaled as responsibilities transition to states.

[3] Australian Government – Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, Thriving Kids, (accessed 8 June 2026). https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/thriving-kids.