



## Meet the Heart Foundation's Inaugural Chief Medical Advisor, First Nations Health

David Lloyd, CEO National Heart Foundation of Australia, BA, MPA

Sandra Eades AO, Chief Medical Advisor First Nations Health, National Heart Foundation of Australia, BMed, PhD

As the Heart Foundation enters the third and final year of its [Connecting Hearts Strategy](#), we remain committed to improving the heart health of all Australians. As part of this commitment, we continue to develop new initiatives and collaborations to help close the heart health gap between First Nations Peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

In 2022, we were delighted to announce the appointment of Professor Sandra Eades AO as the Heart Foundation's inaugural Chief Medical Advisor, First Nations Health.

Sandra is a Minang Noongar woman from Western Australia. Now based in Melbourne, she is the Associate Dean (Indigenous) and Professor at the Centre for Epidemiology and Biostatistics in the School of Population and Global Health at the University of Melbourne, positions she holds concurrently with her Heart Foundation role.

Sandra's research career began at the Telethon Kids Institute with a focus on the epidemiology of First Nations children's health, followed by a decade at the Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute.

"That is how I developed these overlapping interests in Aboriginal child health and the impact of heart disease on older Aboriginal people," explains Sandra.

"Heart disease continues to devastate Indigenous communities and so I am proud to be joining the Heart Foundation to support work that saves Indigenous lives."

Among her long list of accolades and accomplishments, in 2003, Sandra became Australia's first Aboriginal medical doctor to be awarded a PhD. In 2006, she was named the NSW Woman of the Year in recognition of her research contributions to Aboriginal communities and has a Deadly Award for Outstanding Achievement in Health. Sandra was also recognised in the Australia Day 2022 Honours list.

Sandra's current research spans the age spectrum of First Nations Peoples, from the early pathways to cardiovascular disease in young people, to improving management of risk factors for dementia and cardiovascular disease in older people. Rheumatic heart disease is also a particular interest.



*Professor Sandra Eades*

"Rheumatic heart disease is one of the big shame stories, that there are still kids in Australia who suffer from the disease and its terrible consequences," says Sandra.

"We need to prevent it in the first place and ensure people who have rheumatic heart disease get adequate care to limit the severity of the disease and its impact on Aboriginal young adults and the community."

The Heart Foundation will draw on Sandra's strategic advice and expertise as we continue our collaborative work to address heart health inequities in First Nations communities.

"I look forward to amplifying what we can do to ensure the evidence gets into practice and makes the difference we want it to on the ground," says Sandra.

Explore our range of First Nations resources and information for health professionals here: [heartfoundation.org.au/bundles/for-professionals/fp-aboriginal-peoples-information-resources](https://heartfoundation.org.au/bundles/for-professionals/fp-aboriginal-peoples-information-resources)