I would like to acknowledge the Jagera and Turrbal peoples—the traditional custodians of Brisbane. I pay my respect to Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
When WASH works…

- Public health non-compliance for water and sanitation in some NSW Indigenous communities.
- In place of punitive action, NSW Govt partnered with the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.
- Long-term and significant funding ($200mil for 25 years) for equipment, training, mentoring, repairs and risk plans.
- Since 2008: service improved in 41 communities; all 61 NSW communities receive water and sewerage services.
When WASH doesn’t work...

A female Aboriginal elder on one of the communities said to me, 

“How can we wash hands when we don't have hand basins that work and we don't have showers that work and we don't have the infrastructure?”

.... If you don't have the basic infrastructure enabling people to wash their hands, then you’re just offending them

Indigenous organisation rep. #1
Today’s presentation

Question:
How can WASH be best delivered in remote Indigenous Australia?

Discussion paper: WASH priorities in Indigenous Australian remote communities:
Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage 2016 report:
- Health for many remote Aboriginal communities is compromised
- Access to clean water and functional sewerage are key areas for action
Results #1: Status of SDG 6 in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</th>
<th>Australian data</th>
<th>Indigenous Australian data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.1 By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all</strong></td>
<td>6.1.1 Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services</td>
<td>JMP data (from 2015) not available for national; 99% for urban (JMP 2017)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.2 By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations</strong></td>
<td>6.2.1 Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services, including a hand-washing facility with soap and water</td>
<td>No data (JMP 2017), but wide coverage assumed in households and public spaces, plus healthcare facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results #2: Rethinking our approach to WASH health promotion

4 recommendations

1. Infrastructure changes before behaviour changes

There’s no point in talking to someone about hygiene if you’ve got no washing facilities, ... [improving health hardware] makes sure the house [is] able to support healthy living.

(Government representative #5)
2. Target hygiene-related behaviour changes

Soap isn't considered to be an essential purchase ... they'll prioritise other items over personal hygiene items such as soap. ... [It] really impacts some people's ability to have the necessary equipment to be able to adequately carry out personal hygiene

(Government representative #3)
Results #2: Rethinking our approach to WASH health promotion

3. Ensure culturally-engaged health promotion

You can't ignore the fact that you can provide the hardware, you can teach people to wash their hands and all of that, but at the end of the day it’s a Western practice in a Western model that’s been inflicted on Indigenous people, and they’ve been forced to accept it. It kind of assumes that there is no place for Indigenous ways.

(Indigenous organisation representative #4)
Results #2: Rethinking our approach to WASH health promotion

4. Promote respectful messages aimed at women

There can be sensitivity with Indigenous people when there might be some inference that, somehow, they’re not educated or they have unclean habits.

(Government representative #1)

[My priority is] educating women in communities, because in many ways they bear the main responsibility for children and present that understanding of hygiene.

(Government representative #6)
Taking guidance…

NATSIWA’s Guiding Principles:
• Aboriginal strengths;
• The need for cultural understanding;
• The impact of racism and stigma;
• Recognition of the centrality of kinship;
• The impact of history in trauma and loss;
• Recognition of different needs of communities;
• The recognition of human rights and social justice;
• Universal access to basic health care, housing and education; and
• Equitable needs-based funding.
Thank you!

Dr Nina Lansbury HALL
School of Public Health, The University of Queensland
n.hall2@uq.edu.au

**Acknowledgements:** Thank you to WaterAid Australia for their in-kind support and guidance on this project. Thank you to the representatives of the government, utility, NGO and research organisations who contributed time to be interviewed, and for their ongoing contribution to WASH outcomes for remote Indigenous communities.