Board members and representatives from OATSIH were updated on research activities since the preceding telemeeting.

A number of reviews providing comprehensive and up-to-date information on selected health topics are nearing completion. There has been some delay in completing reviews partly because AIH is (1) enhancing the way reviews are done – moving to narrative reviews, which are more comprehensive and hence take longer to complete and (2) obtaining more expert feedback on the reviews before they go to peer review. Work is continuing on reviews of cardiovascular health, kidney health, diabetes, physical activity, ear health, eye health and illicit drug use.

The Board was updated on other projects that AIH is involved in. A major new project has been awarded to AIH, but details are confidential until the project is announced by the Minister of Indigenous Health.

The Healthy Lifestyle project is now complete with a new portal on the web resource for Healthy Lifestyle workers. A number of portals making plain language material easily accessible for Indigenous health workers have been added to the AIH web resource over the last few years. It is planned to add two further portals in the next year – one for ear health workers and one for AOD (alcohol and other drug) workers.

The WA pilot workshop program is progressing well. AIH is exploring options for rolling out similar programs in other states and territories, working with the NACCHO affiliates. This would involve a ‘train the trainer’ program for workshop coordinators and trainers in the other jurisdictions.

AIH’s sustainability related to succession and funding was discussed. The Board was advised that ECU has agreed to fund an ongoing professorial position for AIH, and a Director Designate will be recruited as soon as possible. AIH will be commencing work on the submission to OATSIH for continued funding from July 2013.

ECU, with AIH as its representative, has been accepted as an ‘Essential Participant’ of the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health at the Lowitja Institute.

Visits to the HealthInfoNet have increased by 39% over the past year, and page views by 10%. Visits to the HealthInfoNet’s peer-reviewed journal, the Australian Indigenous Health Bulletin have increased by 35% and page-views by 34%.

Two events are planned to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the HealthInfoNet in September 2012 – one in Canberra and one in Perth. The Honourable Warren Snowdon, Minister for Indigenous, will participate in the Canberra event.

Promotion of the web resource is continuing through conferences, all of which are either Indigenous-specific or contain a significant amount of Indigenous-specific content. There have been nine HealthInfoNet cafes run at conferences since April 2012; presentations were made at two of
these conferences. Promotional materials were included in the delegate satchels of 25 other conferences. Communications with stakeholder groups have included mail-outs of our hard-copy reviews, and email blasts. Articles written by AIH researchers have appeared in various health-related professional publications and journals. In June, the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet was announced as a finalist in the 2012 National Drug and Alcohol Awards for our Indigenous substance use section on the web resource. AIH received the ECU Vice-Chancellor’s ‘Excellence in research’ award in July.

The HealthInfoNet yarning places (electronic networks), which enable people interested in Indigenous health to share information, knowledge and experiences, continue to grow. There are currently 14 yarning places with a total of 2,674 members.

The next meeting – a telemeeting – is scheduled for February 2013.