Indigenous people are three times more likely to contract Type 2 diabetes and in some remote areas are up to 30 times more likely to suffer from chronic renal failure than their non-Aboriginal counterparts, according to ECU researchers.

Studies show no evidence of Type 2 diabetes in the Aboriginal population before communities adopted Western lifestyles.

ECU Health Science Associate Professor Amanda Devine said staff and students worked with the Aboriginal community to collect dozens of recipes, which were then modified into healthier versions to optimise vegetables serves at the University’s food lab before being taste-tested.

The cookbook, called ‘More Deadly Tucker’, provides 40 recipes that are suitable for people with diabetes, with step-by-step photographs and instructions for each meal.

The collaborative project was funded by the Australian Government under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health Initiative and was run by ECU staff and students and the WA Health Department.

“It’s a brilliant engagement story,” Associate Professor Devine said.

“We had community people from the North Metropolitan Health Service and the Aboriginal community come in and do taste-tasting, to fine-tune and select the 40 recipes that made the grade for the cookbook.”

Food stylists, designers and photographers then spent a month working with the ECU team perfecting the look and feel of the book, ensuring that the cultural essence was maintained. The process took more than a semester to produce and was launched in November 2013.

“The book is a great education resource for all Australians. It could be used with young children who can work through the recipes themselves or any members of the community who have limited English or low-level reading skills,” Associate Professor Devine said.

“It’s about improving Aboriginal health through nutrition. We are giving them the how-to”.

“This book not only gives them 40 recipes, but it talks about the cost of buying in bulk being cheaper, it’s has important information to help with serve sizes, we’ve added tips on storing food in cupboards versus the fridge/freezer and advice on seasonal eating.”

More Deadly Tucker is available to order online through the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet website at www.healthinfonet.ecu.edu.au

An Edith Cowan University Associate Professor has developed a cookbook aimed at tackling the disproportionate rates of diabetes and kidney disease in WA’s Aboriginal communities.