



the
Lowitja
INSTITUTE
Australia's National Institute
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Health Research

*Incorporating the Cooperative Research Centre
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health*

Media Release

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First Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to Receive Crawford Prize for Academic Excellence

Dr Kerry Arabena, Chief Executive of the Lowitja Institute and inaugural Co-Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples, will be awarded the prestigious JG Crawford Prize today at the Australian National University.

Dr Arabena will make history as the first Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to receive the award. The prize recognises the best intellectual contribution of any thesis in the arts, science and interdisciplinary categories.

Dr Arabena was awarded a Doctorate in Environmental Science in the field of human ecology at ANU in 2010 for her thesis titled: *Indigenous to the Universe: A Discourse of Indigeneity, Citizenship and Ecological Relationships*.

Much of the thesis was informed during Dr Arabena's time living and working in many different communities across Australia in regional and remote areas. 'This work was an exploration of new ways of bringing Indigenous people's sciences together with environmental and quantum sciences to create alternative ways for people to live in and consider the environment. We have a magnificent country and I want to make sure I do my part to guarantee that it is here for generations to come,' she said.

Dr Peter Radoll, Director of the Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre, emphasised the significance of the award for the recognition of Indigenous knowledge. 'It is exciting that Dr Arabena's PhD research has been recognised by one of the best universities in the world in being awarded the prize. This demonstrates that Torres Strait Islander knowledge and culture has a real and meaningful place in academia internationally. I would like to congratulate Kerry on being the first Torres Strait Islander or Aboriginal person to win this prestigious prize at ANU.'

Dr Arabena is grateful for the support she received whilst working at AIATSIS and travel assistance from the Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health, now the Lowitja Institute. 'Without this assistance it would not have been possible to expose my ideas to international audiences, which then shaped and influenced my thinking,' she said.

Dr Arabena will be available for interview in the afternoon following the ceremony on Friday 15 July, 2011.

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Media Contact: Tracey Johnston – 0428 347 573

www.lowitja.org.au

179 Grattan Street
Carlton VIC 3053

PO Box 650
Carlton South VIC 3053
AUSTRALIA