



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

**MEDIA RELEASE – 6 July 2020**

**Lowitja Institute launches the Member Community initiative to strengthen research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing**

The Lowitja Institute today moved into an important new phase in its work as Australia's national institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, launching the Lowitja Institute Members Community portal for engaging with stakeholders and communities.

Lowitja Institute CEO Dr Janine Mohamed said the Members Community initiative reflects the institute's new constitution, strategic plan, and funding arrangements.

"We have been overwhelmed by the early interest from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, communities and individuals, and many non-Indigenous partners, wanting to be part of our Members Community," Dr Mohamed said.

"From the very start, our namesake and patron Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue has urged and inspired us to be a courageous organisation committed to social justice and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to match words to action, to achieve real, tangible and immediate outcomes."

"Building on more than 20 years of that work, the Lowitja Institute is now entering an exciting new phase, that will widen and deepen our capacity to follow Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue's vision through a commitment to self-determination and reciprocity," Dr Mohamed said.

Chairperson, Ms Pat Anderson AO, said the Member Community will comprise a core group of people and organisations with the drive and ethics to make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples, supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander priorities, collective ways of working, strength, agency, and knowledges.

"The Member Community will ensure that we continue to be an authoritative and collective voice for the benefit of Australia's First Peoples," she said.

The Board of the Lowitja Institute last month adopted a new constitution that establishes the institute as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation, having ceased operating last year as a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC).

This enables the launch of the Members Community, which will comprise of the following groups who work in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research:

**Full Member Organisations** – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations committed to the purpose and values of the Lowitja Institute

**Associate Organisations** – Non-Indigenous organisations committed to the purpose and values of the Lowitja Institute, including past Lowitja Institute CRC Participants.

**Lowitja Institute Scholars** – Lowitja Institute Scholarship recipients, past and present Alumni

**Associate Researchers** – whose work and values closely align with the Lowitja Institute.

*For media queries and/or to arrange an interview with Dr Mohamed, please contact Cristina Lochert on 0413 833 354.*

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## ABOUT THE LOWITJA INSTITUTE

The Lowitja Institute is Australia's national institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, named in honour of its Patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG. It is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation working for the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples through high impact quality research, knowledge exchange, and by supporting a new generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health researchers.

Established in January 2010, the Lowitja Institute operates on key principles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership, a broader understanding of health that incorporates wellbeing, and the need for the work to have a clear and positive impact.

The history of the Lowitja Institute dates back to 1997 when the first Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health was established. Since then, the Institute and the CRC organisations have led a substantial reform agenda in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research by working with communities, researchers and policymakers, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people setting the agenda and driving the outcomes.

<http://www.lowitja.org.au>