

MEDIA RELEASE – 1 August 2022

Lowitja O'Donoghue Foundation launched today in honour of Dr O'Donoghue's 90th birthday

The Lowitja Institute is proud to launch the Lowitja O'Donoghue Foundation in honour of Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG on her 90th birthday.

Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue is a proud Yankunytjatjara woman, and patron of Australia's only national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health research institute.

Chair of Lowitja Institute Mr Selwyn Button said the foundation will acknowledge, recognise and preserve the extraordinary legacy of Dr O'Donoghue's work.

"Our founding patron and namesake Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue has dedicated a lifetime to upholding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights to improve outcomes in health, education, political representation, land rights and reconciliation," Mr Button said.

"The Lowitja Institute is proud to support a foundation that represents the enduring legacy of Dr O'Donoghue who fought so hard for the rights of our peoples.

"It is only fitting that her work continues to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through scholarships, a newly created suite of educational resources and annual events."

With support from the National Indigenous Australians Agency, the Lowitja O'Donoghue Foundation Scholarships will be dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people interested in study, internship, and a career in nursing and the public service sector.

The establishment of nursing scholarships is more important than ever given the incredible work and strain on our current nursing workforce due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fellow patron Pat Anderson AO and former Lowitja Institute chair said, "Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue has been a powerful and unrelenting advocate for her people and an inspiration to many."

"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses played a critical role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and it is especially fitting that Dr Lowitja's O'Donoghue's legacy will contribute to continuous care for our communities into the future," Ms Anderson said.

Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue was a staunch advocate for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and scholarships in the public sector provides a pathway for others to walk in her footsteps to enable genuine change in Aboriginal affairs.

"Aunty Lowitja has given the establishment of the Foundation her full blessing and encourages us to support the next generation of aspiring leaders," Dr O'Donoghue's spokesperson, her niece Deb Edwards said.

"As a young Aboriginal girl who was repeatedly told she would never amount to anything, Aunty Lowitja defied everyone to become what Noel Pearson described as 'the greatest Aboriginal leader of the modern era ... the rock who steadied us in the storm'."

