

MEDIA RELEASE – 15 November 2023

Congratulations to Lowitja Institute CEO named 2024 Australian of the Year for Victoria

Lowitja Institute is proud to acknowledge **Adjunct Professor Janine Mohamed** as 2024 Australian of the Year for Victoria.

As Chief Executive Officer for Lowitja Institute since 2019, Janine Mohamed was chosen for her exceptional leadership skills and dedication to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing, championing culturally safe healthcare throughout her career.

'Dr Mohamed works tirelessly to advocate for justice in healthcare for our peoples. We are immensely proud that she has been recognised for this work,' Lowitja Institute Chairperson Selwyn Button said.

'The recent Referendum campaign highlights how important it is to close the gap in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, dismantling racism and embedding cultural safety across our health systems,' he said.

A Narrunga Kurna woman from South Australia, Dr Mohamed studied nursing at the University of South Australia where she is now an Adjunct Professor and a celebrated Alumni of the Year.

For the past 25 years, Dr Mohamed worked in nursing, health policy and research in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health sector. Prior to the Lowitja Institute, she was the CEO of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives. In 2020, Dr Mohamed was awarded an honorary doctorate in nursing by Edith Cowan University.

'I feel honoured to be recognised for this award. Growing up in my community, there were too many funerals and too many preventable deaths. People like my Nanna and mum didn't receive the healthcare that they deserved,' Dr Mohamed said.

'Through this award I will continue to advocate to transform the health system and shine a light on racism and its impacts on our health and wellbeing. I want my children to be able to celebrate the Blak excellence that we all strive for every day,' she said.

'And finally, I urge non-Indigenous Australians to reflect on cultural safety in the home, workplace and social settings – challenge your own assumptions, listen to our voices, and support Aboriginal-led decision making because we know what is best for our peoples' health and wellbeing.'

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For more information or to arrange an interview with a Lowitja Institute representative, please contact Jo Cackett 0474 727506, or the Communications team at communications@lowitja.org.au

ABOUT LOWITJA INSTITUTE

Lowitja Institute is Australia's only national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled health research institute, named in honour of its patron, Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue AC CBE DSG. It is working for the health and wellbeing of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by facilitating high-impact quality research, tools, resources and knowledge exchange, and 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.