

MEDIA RELEASE – 20 June 2025

Lowitja Institute celebrates Blak excellence in health research

This week, Lowitja Institute presented its 2025 [Lowitja Institute Awards](#) during the [4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference](#), on Kaurna Country, South Australia.

As Australia's national community controlled health and wellbeing research institute, these awards recognise excellence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing research, community leadership, and innovation.

The awards were celebrated on Wednesday 18 June at a gala event, with entertainment from local Adelaide band Sound Factory and a surprise performance by special guest Yorta Yorta rapper, Briggs.

Lowitja Institute CEO Paul Stewart said, these awards showcase research that is culturally, ethically, and intellectually rigorous and for the benefit of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.

'Our Lowitja Institute Awards put a spotlight on Blak excellence in health research, and the outstanding contribution that our leaders and researchers make in improving the health and wellbeing of our peoples,' Mr Stewart said.

'Our award winners are leading examples of how Aboriginal-led research can achieve better outcomes that make a real difference in our communities.'

During the conference week, over 1,300 delegates engaged with renowned experts and leading voices in Indigenous health and wellbeing research from across Australia and internationally.

Congratulations to the following Lowitja Institute Award winners:

Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue Lifetime Achievement Award

For outstanding and significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Dr Aunty Mary Graham

Adjunct Associate Professor Mary Graham is a Kombumerri and Wakka Wakka (wokka wokka) woman acknowledged as one of Australia's leading Aboriginal philosophers and educators.

Uncle Patrick Dodson

Mr Patrick Dodson, a Yawuru Elder from Broome, is one of Australia's most respected Indigenous leaders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research Leadership Award

Recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research leadership and excellence by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researcher who has made a significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of Australia's First Peoples.

Associate Professor Lisa Whop

Lisa Whop is a Wagadagam Gumulgal woman from the Torres Strait Islands, Epidemiologist, Associate Research Director and Senior Fellow at Yardhura Walani – the National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Wellbeing Research, at the Australian National University, specialising in cancer screening and prevention.

Pat Anderson Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researcher Award

Named after internationally respected health leader Pat Anderson AO, this award recognises emerging leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing research both inside and outside of the academy.

Associate Professor Graham Gee

An Aboriginal Chinese man, born on Larrakia Country, Graham is a clinical psychologist and worked at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service in Naarm for 11 years before taking up a position as Senior Research Fellow in the Intergenerational Health group at Murdoch Children's Research Institute in 2019. Graham's clinical and academic work has centred around trauma and healing, making significant contributions to informing policy and practice.

Dr Ali Drummond

Ali's people are the Meriam (miri-yarm) and Erubam (e-rub) people of Zenadh Kes and the Wuthathi people of Cape York Peninsula. Ali was a Director of Lowitja Institute for close to a decade before being appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM), Australia's peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses and midwives. At CATSINaM Ali Co-Leads a Lowitja Institute-funded research project titled 'The Ume Project: Telling the story of the Torres Model of Care'.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Award

Recognises an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student who has, or is, finishing their studies with a Masters (by research) or PhD postgraduate degree within the nominated timeframe.

Mr Stephen Harfield

Stephen is a Narungga and Ngarrindjeri man from South Australia, a PhD candidate and Senior Research Fellow with the University of Queensland Poche Centre for Indigenous Health. Stephen is an epidemiologist and public health researcher.

Tarrn-doon-nonin Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research Project Award

Tarrn-doon-nonin is the Woiwurrung term meaning 'trust'. This award recognises a research project in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing that has conducted their research to an exemplary standard in line with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ethical principles and practices.

Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre

Marninwarntikura Women's Resource Centre (MWRC) provides families a place for inspiration, positive change and leadership. The centre supports Fitzroy Valley families by providing mentoring, advocacy, and access to culturally responsive services.

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Conference website: www.lowitjaconference.org.au

For more information or to request an interview with a speaker or Lowitja Institute representative, please call Jo Cackett on 0474 727 506 or email communications@lowitja.org.au

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