

MEDIA RELEASE – 7 March 2022

Funding welcomed for Aboriginal-led health research

Lowitja Institute today welcomed federal funding commitment for its work as a significant investment in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing.

Minister for Health and Aged Care, Greg Hunt announced on Saturday 5 March that the forthcoming Federal Budget would allocate \$30.5 million to Lowitja Institute's work as Australia's national community controlled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research institute.

"This announcement gives us much-needed stability in our work, and the Lowitja Institute Board and Membership thanks the Australian Government for responding to our requests to move beyond shorter-term funding cycles," said Mr Selwyn Button, Lowitja Institute Chairperson.

Mr Button said the commitment provides greater certainty for the organisation and a critical platform to build on the legacy of its work that has reshaped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research over the past 20 years.

"We look forward to building the capacity and authority of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research workforce and asserting Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing to expand our reach and impact," Mr Button said.

The Lowitja Institute was born of disruption, established 20 years ago as a Cooperative Research Centre to challenge Western models of research, and the power instilled in research organisations and funding. In 2020, it fulfilled its long-held vision to become an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisation, further transforming its work.

"With this funding, our work as a community controlled, member-based organisation is strengthened to support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled sector and the aspirations of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap. It is putting research back into the hands of our peoples," said Adjunct Professor Janine Mohamed, CEO Lowitja Institute.

An independent review of Lowitja Institute by Deloitte Access Economics found it has delivered a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, through research, knowledge translation and by supporting the health research workforce.

"Our research has generated new ways of thinking, addressing knowledge gaps through genuine inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. Its impact extends beyond health care and has influenced approaches to service delivery of education, housing, and justice."

"We are demonstrating what can be achieved when Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, knowledges, priorities and leadership are at the centre of the work to improve the health and wellbeing of our peoples."

– Adjunct Professor Janine Mohamed, CEO Lowitja Institute

For media queries and/or to arrange an interview with Adjunct Professor Janine Mohamed or Mr Selwyn Button, please contact Jo Cackett, Lowitja Institute, Communications, 0474 727506 / communications@lowitja.org.au

ABOUT THE LOWIJA 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.