

RECIPIENT PROFILES

2019 NT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker and Practitioner Excellence Awards

2019 Honour Roll

2019 Honour Roll Recipient - Gwen Paterson-Walley

Born and raised in Meekatharra Western Australia, Gwen worked in her home town in the hospital as a nursing assistant for 6 years and then as an Aboriginal Health Worker with Community Health for 14 years before moving to the Territory.

In 1990, Gwen moved to Alice Springs and had a job as an Ear Health Worker with community health. Gwen was the first interstate, trained Aboriginal Health Worker to gain NT registration and recognition.

Over the following years Gwen remained within the primary health sector including Alcohol and Other Drugs - Living with Alcohol and several other health promotion positions.

Gwen has been involved in several published works including health evaluation and other Aboriginal cultural health related topics.

Gwen's passion for working with people and informing them about the different aspects of healthy life choices remains strong and steadfast. She has loved every job she has encountered but the current one is the most challenging when it comes to changing the dominant cultures' viewpoints and perceptions of Aboriginal workers.

Gwen currently works as an Aboriginal Employment and Career Development Officer, Primary Health Care, Central Australia Health Service.

Gwen's role involves extensive travel to remote communities and consultation with the appropriate community members and facilitating community meetings to assist with service delivery to these communities.

Education is important to Gwen - who believes that "without education the gap will only widen".

Gwen's motto is "go for it – take the opportunities as they arise and run as fast as you can."

Gwen continues to travel to remote communities as it gets her out bush working with the people whom she loves.

2019 Honour Roll Recipient - Esther-Rose Seaton

Esther-Rose Seaton was born in Darwin and is a descendant of the Wambaia / Wakaya – Rain Maker People in the Borroloola region.

She is a well recognised face around Darwin, growing up as the youngest of 10 siblings and then having five children of her own.

Esther-Rose works as the Manager Aboriginal Health practitioner Education with the Clinical Learning Education and Research Services (CLEaRS) at Royal Darwin Hospital.

Esther-Rose's career started in 1967 as a 15 year old working part time at the Myilly Point Hospital, which was one of the major employers of Aboriginal people in Darwin at that time.

Esther-Rose went on to work as an Aboriginal Health Worker at the East Arm Hospital.

When the hospital closed in 1982, she took up a position at the Bagot clinic working alongside a team of Aboriginal Health Workers.

Esther-Rose's leadership and passion saw her take up the role as manager of the Bagot clinic.

She became the first Aboriginal Health Worker Educator for the Katherine Institute for Aboriginal health (KIAH).

In the first year she supported 24 students to graduate, many of whom are still around today working in rural and remote communities.

Her passion for health and wellbeing of her people seen her pursue post graduate studies at Flinders University in Adelaide. Returning to Darwin Esther-Rose then went on to undertake several roles in policy and management supporting the Aboriginal Health Worker profession.

Esther-Rose's passion for the profession saw her lobby for a union to represent the views and protect the rights of her colleagues, this work continues.

In Esther-Rose's current role she is working towards the very first ever Aboriginal Health Practitioners Graduate Program to support and grow the much-valued role in the public health system.

Esther-Rose is passionate about her work as she is a shining example of what can be achieved if you believe and are given the opportunity to make a difference.

As an advocate for the profession, Esther-Rose's mantra is 'we are here for our people as Aboriginal Health Practitioners, we can stand proud and strong together and we have our communities and our families with us all the way'

Student Award

Winner - Melissa Kungul

Melissa was born in Wadeye, one of six children, her mother, Bernadine worked as an Aboriginal Health Worker at the old Hospital in Wadeye.

Melissa has been working with the Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program team for the last two years, where she works with young mums to support them with their newborn babies.

Melissa speaks Murrinh Patha to share information and stories about healthy babies and children.

In 2018, Melissa commenced a Certificate One in Skills for Vocational Pathways with Central Australian Remote Health Development Services however given her willingness to learn, Melissa changed qualifications to the Certificate Two in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care.

Melissa has dedicated herself to her studies and enjoys learning new things about the human body and Primary Health Care.

Melissa's dream is to follow her mum's footsteps - to work in her clinic as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner.

New Practitioner Award

Winner - Singita Campion

Singita was born in Mildura, Victoria.

Singita enrolled and began her studies with Batchelor, Institute before she realised the importance of finding a clinical placement to complete the Certificate IV Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care (Practice).

She actively went looking for a clinical placement and was provided a placement with Katherine District Hospital - where she began her career, as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner.

Singita spent two years in Katherine District Hospital, before relocating to Gunbalanya Health Centre to further her clinical skills and learning in a remote setting.

Singita is passionate about educating her clients on illness and Chronic Disease conditions.

Singita works on the Rheumatic Heart Disease program, where she educates families on the importance of regular check-ups and medication compliance.

Singita believes that there is always room for improvement, including increasing your practical and skill knowledge and to teach others.

Singita plans to further her studies in management, to one day manage a Health Centre.

When Singita is not working, she enjoys spending time with her family.

Aboriginal Health Worker – Remote

Winner - Darren Wanybarrnga

Darren “Chicko” Wanybarrnga works as an Aboriginal Health Worker at Miwatj Health Ramingining Clinic.

When Darren completed the Certificate II in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care, he was keen to further develop his skills and knowledge to give back to his community of Ramingining.

Darren has recently completed the Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care, at Batchelor Institute and is awaiting registration with Aboriginal Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).

Darren’s passion lies in Men’s Health, and Mental Health and has developed excellent relationships with service providers and across agency to ensure Yolngu clients receive holistic, culturally appropriate care.

When Darren’s not working, he loves fishing and hunting and is one of the superstars of Black As - you can check them out on YouTube!

Aboriginal Health Worker – Urban

Winner - Dannielle Townsend

Danni comes from the Palawa peoples of Tasmania, but grew up in Darwin and works at the Royal Darwin Hospital.

During her time working at the Breast Care Unit (BreastScreenNT), Danni always showed compassion and empathy towards clients.

Dannielle would personally take extra care of the women from the communities when they came, as they were quite scared at being re-tested for cancer.

Danni made sure to be respectful to the women, making them comfortable, giving blankets and hugs, organising lunch and or just be there with them to listen over a cup of tea.

Danni would like to make a difference in people lives and help them to get the best treatment and care from medical providers.

This is one of the reasons why Danni is now studying to become a qualified Aboriginal Health Practitioner.

Aboriginal Health Practitioner – Remote

Winner - Emslie Lankin

Emslie was born in Alice Springs, currently living and working in Ntaria (Hermannsburg), a remote community 125km west of Alice Springs.

Emslie lives with her 6 children and fiancé and works at the Ntaria Health Care Centre.

Emslie began her health career as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner trainee with Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC) in Alice Springs and gained registration as an Aboriginal Health Practitioner in 2012.

Emslie has worked at Papunya Health Centre; the Centre for Remote Health; Alice Springs Hospital; Purple House Renal Unit; and the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress – Family Partnership Program.

Emslie's decision to work in primary health care was inspired by a senior Aboriginal Health Worker (Brogas) in Papunya.

Brogas was a relative, and a dialysis patient when he began to influence Emslie about a career in health care.

Like many of our elders; he recognised her special qualities and attributes; and encouraged her to become a healer in primary health care.

Emslie began to understand and realise that she had grown up around relatives who suffered from some sort of chronic or debilitating disease and not being able to help ease their suffering.

Since completing her Aboriginal Health Practitioner training, Emslie has continued her learning and education and is currently studying a Bachelor of Nursing.

Emslie believes being a local familiar face in the community, is a benefit for patients.

Emslie enjoys working with her colleagues and discussing the patient's needs, requirements and requests makes her job gratifying and rewarding, especially when she is learning new things every day about different illnesses.

Emslie's strength is facilitating communication between Aboriginal language and English. She is a strong advocate for Health Care and helping Aboriginal people of the Community understand the Health Care provided and what decisions are required.

Aboriginal Health Practitioner – Urban

Winner - Jennifer Hampton

Jenny was born in the Barkley region and raised in Tennant Creek before moving to Alice Springs.

Jenny's ambition was to become a nurse and she completed her enrolled nurse training at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in South Australia.

In 1978, Jenny's commenced work with Central Australia Aboriginal Congress completing her basic skills qualification in Aboriginal Health Worker and then completing a Certificate III in Health Studies.

Jenny was amongst the first group of Aboriginal Health Workers to graduate in the Central Australia Region.

In the early eighties, Jenny transferred to the NT Health Department and worked in the Community Health Centre particularly working with the Failure to Thrive children program in Child Health Unit and then with Aboriginal Health Worker Training unit where she supported the training of Aboriginal Health Workers from urban and remote communities.

Jenny has worked as a relief Aboriginal Health Worker and Health Centre Manager across a number of remote communities including Yuendumu, Yuelamu, Docker River, Laramba, Canteen Creek, Epenarra and Bonya.

Since 2017, Jenny has been the Acting Director Aboriginal Health Practitioners for Central Australia Health Service.

Jenny is passionate about increasing the number of Aboriginal Health Workers and Practitioners working across Central Australia.

Aboriginal Health Practitioner – Specialist

Winner - Wayne Campbell

Wayne Campbell is an Arrernte man from a large and very well-known Alice Springs family. He was born in Alice Springs and grew up in Darwin.

Wayne has worked for many years in the social services sector, including 10 years with the Salvation Army in Perth.

Wayne is a Senior Aboriginal Health Practitioner, with the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress (CAAC), working as a clinic manager for men's health (Ingkintja).

Wayne became an Aboriginal Health Practitioner because he saw the need for male Aboriginal Health Practitioners within the NT mainly Central Australia, he also has a lot of family members that work in the health sector.

Wayne's passion is with Men's health and especially Men's sexual Health.

Wayne sees the hardship on a day to day basis that some of our people go through in life and does the best he can for his clients to better their health.

When Wayne is not working he and his husband like to travel and spend time with their family and their dogs.