

Meet our Speakers



THE HON SEN MALARNDIRRI MCCARTHY

Senator the Hon Malarndirri McCarthy is a Yanyuwa Garrwa woman from the Gulf country in the Northern Territory. She first entered the public sphere as a journalist with the ABC and more recently for SBS/NITV.

Senator McCarthy was elected to the Northern Territory Assembly as the Member for Arnhem in 2005 and held a number Ministerial appointments in the NT Government between 2008 and 2012.

Senator McCarthy has served as Senator for the Northern Territory (including Christmas and Cocos Keeling Islands) since 2016. She is the Assistant Minister for Indigenous Australians and Indigenous Health.



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DR CHELSEA WATEGO

Chelsea Watego (formerly Bond) is a Munanjahli and South Sea Islander woman born and raised on Yuggera country. She is currently Professor of Indigenous Health at QUT's School of Public Health and Social Work. Her scholarship has drawn attention to the role of race in the production of health inequalities and her current ARC Discovery Grant seeks to build an Indigenist Health Humanities as a new field of research; one that is committed to the survival of Indigenous peoples locally and globally, and foregrounds Indigenous intellectual sovereignty.

Chelsea is a prolific writer and public intellectual. Her debut book *Another Day in the Colony*, published by UQ Press, was released in November 2021 and met with critical acclaim.



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PAUL CALLAGHAN

Paul Callaghan is an Aboriginal man belonging to the land of the Worimi people which is located one hour north of Newcastle, NSW, Australia.

Paul has held a number of senior executive positions in his career and has qualifications in the disciplines of surveying, drafting, commerce, training, executive leadership, company boards and executive coaching. He also has a PhD in Creative Practice. His most important learning however, has been through going bush with Elders.

Paul is a motivational speaker, a story-teller, a dancer and an author. His book ,The Dreaming Path was published in print in February 2022, as an audio book in July and became a best seller in September that year.



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VICKI WADE

Vicki Wade is a senior Noongar woman with over 40 years of experience in health at state and national levels.

Vicki is a recipient of multiple national awards including the 2019 AHHA Sidney Sax medal and CSANZ Indigenous Health lifetime award for her contributions to Australian health services policy, delivery and research, particularly in relation to Indigenous heart health.

Vicki is well known across Australia and is well respected for the work she has done in helping to close the gap. She sits on the National Close the Gap steering committee and a previous board member of the Congress of Aboriginal Nurses and Midwives.



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PROFESSOR ROIANNE WEST



Born and raised Kalkadoon on her grandmother's ancestral lands in North West QLD with connections to the Djunke/Djaku-nde peoples in South West Queensland, Professor West continues a family legacy of four generations of Aboriginal nurses and a long line of healers that include her mother, a twin sister and a brother who are Registered Nurses and twin daughters who are studying Nursing and Midwifery.

Professor West has completed a Bachelor of Nursing, a Masters of Mental Health Nursing, and a PhD which developed a model of excellence for increasing Indigenous nurses in Australia 2012.

Professor West was recently acknowledged for her outstanding research leadership as the 2020 Lowitja Institute Cranlana Award recipient and she is the only Aboriginal Nurse in the country who is a recipient of both the CATSINaM Sally Goold Award and Fellowship.



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ROBERT SKEEN

Robert Skeen is the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW (AH&MRC). Robert has traditional ties to the Gubbi Gubbi of the Queensland Sunshine Coast, Mununjarli of Southeast Queensland, and Waanyi of Northwest Queensland.

Robert has worked in the government and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (ACCHO) sector for almost 25 years, including in organisational leadership roles in the Northern Territory, Queensland, and New South Wales.

He is the co-chair of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations (CAPO) and is also the NSW representative on the Joint Council of National CAPO and has most recently been appointed co-deputy chair of the National Advisory Group for Family, Domestic and Sexual Abuse.



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LAVERNE BELLEAR



Ms LaVerne Bellear is a proud Bundjalung woman from the North Coast NSW. Her career encompasses over 30 years in health administration in both the public and not for profit sectors. Ms Bellear is the current Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Medical Service Cooperative Limited (Redfern).

LaVerne has held several senior leadership and directorship roles, with a particular focus on Aboriginal Health reform and improvement. LaVerne is a director for Thirrili Ltd; A national provider of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific suicide postvention support and assistance; Board Member, Sydney Local Health District, NSW Health and is currently Co-Chair for the Sydney Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Health Partnership Agreement - the primary tool for providing advice and expertise on Aboriginal health issues in the Greater Sydney Region.



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JANET STAJIC



Janet is a Yidinji-Jirrbal woman from Far North Queensland who grew up in Brisbane. She is an Aboriginal Health Worker and a NAATSIHWP Member currently undertaking a Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Queensland.

Her research article, "... but what about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Health Worker academic? Transcending the role of 'unknowing assistant' in health care and research through higher education: a personal journey" aimed to recognise the unique and invaluable contribution the workforce makes to the Australian health system.

Her work experience is in community development, community services, clinical services, project and program management, policy and research roles across the Aboriginal community controlled, public, not-for-profit and university sectors.



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