

# Celebrating the Inspiring Achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduates from The University of Adelaide

The graduation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from The University of Adelaide is a testament to the power of education and determination. It is a moment to celebrate their remarkable achievements and the bright future that awaits them.

Twice a year, Wirltu Yarlú hosts a special graduation ceremony where the students can showcase their accomplishments and discuss their exciting projects for the future. It is also an opportunity for graduates to reflect on their journey and the challenges faced along the way.

For Professor Steve Larkin, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement), graduations are a proud day. "It is a day to celebrate our graduates and to acknowledge and reflect on the importance and need of providing equitable access to university education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Their academic accomplishments are a reminder of how education can transform lives and communities," said Professor Larkin.

Dr Justine Clark, PhD graduate and proud Adnyamathanha woman, is already working towards a brighter future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islanders People. She is currently working as a Post-Doctoral Researcher in Indigenous Genomics at Telethon Kids Institute, looking at the biology and genetics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids affected by cancer. "A PhD is a big undertaking, requiring lots of dedication. I'm really pleased that I've graduated. Now I move straight into my new role where I can use my degree to try to help my community with something important to me, to my identity as a cancer researcher and as an Aboriginal Person."

During the main University graduation ceremonies, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who



**Kaurna Elder Uncle Rod O'Brien, Cultural Advisor; Toni Shearing, MBA; Rigby Downs, MBA; Dr Justine Clark, PhD in Medicine Physiology; Rebecca Haynes, Bachelor of Health and Medical Sciences (Advanced); Christopher Crowe, Bachelor of Psychological Science; Professor Steve Larkin, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Engagement)**

graduate from The University of Adelaide wear a cultural sash over their graduation gown that identifies their cultural heritage as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or both.

Wirltu Yarlú celebrates all Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander graduates. Their achievements are a source of inspiration, and their success will encourage other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pursue university education and positively impact their communities.

## 'Lifting Up' your career opportunities



**Avah Topp, Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery students, The University of Adelaide**

The prospect of pursuing higher education can be overwhelming. Fortunately, the Karnkanthi Education Program is here to offer a helping hand and make the journey less challenging for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Translating to 'lifting up' in Kaurna language, this innovative program, coordinated by Wirltu Yarlú at The University of Adelaide, provides a range of services that assist High school students from years 10 to year 12/13 in navigating the complexities of tertiary education and prepare them by building on their unique personal, academic, and cultural strengths.

Avah Topp, a current student in the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery program, believes the Program was fundamental to help her cement her chances of accessing university education. "I wouldn't be where I am now if it wasn't for the Karnkanthi Education Program. Without their support, I wouldn't have been studying medicine. It provided me with an endless number of opportunities. I would have been lost without the program", says Avah.

Through mentorship, academic support, and cultural connection, the Karnkanthi Education Program is breaking down barriers and providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander High school students with the opportunity to pursue higher education, helping them to achieve their goals and seize their dreams.

The free initiative allows participants to join an ever-growing community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who aspire to develop their resilience and leadership skills to succeed in life. Wirltu Yarlú works closely with students to ensure sustainable academic growth and success, aiming to build their confidence in pursuing higher education pathways that will empower them for life.

Students in years 10 and 11 can apply to join the program any time of the year. Year 12 students must apply by June 30. Applicants can participate in free academic, cultural, social, and career development activities, access private tutoring for school subjects, receive financial support for educational costs, travel and accommodation, and receive student development scholarships. For more information, please email us at [wirltu.yarlú@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:wirltu.yarlú@adelaide.edu.au)