

## **Citation for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of the University (DUniv)**

### **Ms Pat Anderson**

Ms Pat Anderson is an Alyawarre woman from the Northern Territory, with a national and international reputation as a powerful advocate for disadvantaged people, with a particular focus on the health of Australia's First Peoples. Ms Anderson has extensive experience in all aspects of Aboriginal health, including community development, advocacy, policy formation and research ethics.

Ms Anderson grew up on Parap Camp in Darwin in the 1940s and 1950s. Her mother was a member of Stolen Generations, taken from her Central Australian family to be brought up in Darwin's Kahlin Compound in the 1930s.

After leaving Darwin in the 1960s, Ms Anderson travelled and worked in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Israel. On her return to Australia, she worked for the Woodward Royal Commission into Aboriginal Land Rights as a legal secretary. She then went to university and became one of the first Aboriginal graduates from the University of Western Australia, with a degree majoring in literature.

During the 1980s, Ms Anderson worked in Tasmania, Western Australia and Victoria as part of the movement advocating for improved education for Aboriginal children.

Returning to the Northern Territory in the early 1990s Ms Anderson became the CEO of Danila Dilba Aboriginal Health Service in Darwin, and this eventually led to the start of her involvement with Flinders University, supporting the placement of medical students based at the Royal Darwin Hospital Clinical School of Flinders University.

During this time Ms Anderson also played a key role in establishing the Aboriginal Medical Service Alliance of the Northern Territory (AMSANT), the representative body for the Aboriginal Community-controlled Health Organisations within the Northern Territory, and which has become another core partner in the work of Flinders University in the Northern Territory.

Ms Anderson then led the founding of the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) for Aboriginal and Tropical Health in 1997, funded by the Australian Government, and Flinders University became one of the core university participants. The CRC was refunded in 2003 as The CRC for Aboriginal Health, again with Flinders as a core participant, and Ms Anderson took on the role of chair. The CRC was refunded again in 2010 as the CRC for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and became the core of the newly created Lowitja Institute, again with Flinders as a core partner and again with Ms Anderson as chair. In the 2013 Federal Budget the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research and the Minister for Indigenous Health confirmed that the Lowitja Institute would receive an additional \$25 million in research funding over 5 years commencing July 2014.

The Lowitja Institute, under Ms Anderson's leadership, is now recognised as Australia's National Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research; it is an innovative research body that brings together Aboriginal organisations, government agencies and academic institutions, including Flinders University.

Many health and medical researchers at Flinders University have contributed to the work of the CRCs over the years and continue to work with the Lowitja Institute which

provides funds to the university to support collaborative, evidence-based research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and to build research capacity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

Ms Anderson has become a respected national leader in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, with a particular focus on the rights and needs of children, the importance of education, and the need for genuine reconciliation. She is a tireless campaigner for the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia, and has a personal commitment to creating and nurturing understanding, compassion and honesty between people.

Ms Anderson has spoken before the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous People. She is a past Chair of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation, and has served as Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), and, as mentioned, as Chair of the CRC for Aboriginal Health, now the Lowitja Institute, since 2003. She was also a board member of beyondblue, the bipartisan initiative of federal, state, and territory governments aimed at raising community awareness about depression.

Ms Anderson has had many essays, papers and articles published and was co-author with Mr Rex Wild QC of Little Children Are Sacred, a highly influential report on the abuse of Aboriginal children in the Northern Territory. In 2007 Ms Anderson was awarded the Public Health Association of Australia's Sidney Sax Public Health Medal in recognition of her many achievements. In 2012 Ms Anderson received the Human Rights Community Individual Award from the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Ms Anderson is a great Australian and has had a close association with Flinders University for many years, leading by inspiration, and working with our staff and students in advancing many aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.