



**MEDIA RELEASE**  
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### **NACCHO 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacist Scholarship recipients announced.**

NACCHO announces six successful recipients of the 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacist Scholarship, which is proudly supported by a grant from Sanofi Australia. The Scholarship provides subsidy and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacy students and aims to build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacist workforce.

2023 scholarship recipient, Jai-ann Eastaughffe commented, "I believe this scholarship will allow me to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in health and particularly within the Pharmacy industry. The mentors and connections I make will be valuable as I enter my last year of the degree and prepare to enter the workforce. The scholarship will also help financially, as I complete my final 6 weeks of placement".

The scholarship program, which began in 2022 has been expanded to six recipients and extended till 2025, demonstrating Sanofi's commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. "Our warmest congratulations to this year's recipients, the judging panel and the team at NACCHO for their ongoing leadership of this important scholarship program. Building the skills of future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacists is a crucial part of ensuring that pharmacy and pharmacists can support culturally safe care. We have been enormously impressed by NACCHO and the judging panel's leadership of this program and couldn't be more pleased to confirm our expanded, support" stated, Karen Hood, Sanofi Australia and New Zealand Country Lead.

Out of a total of 27,000 pharmacists in Australia only 85 identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, representing just 0.3% of the pharmacist workforce.<sup>1 2</sup> Currently Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people working in the health sector account for only 1.8% of the total health workforce, despite accounting for 3.2% of the Australian population.<sup>3</sup>

This disparity impacts patients, policy and pharmacists themselves and this scholarship is a step in the right direction to increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people graduating from pharmacy studies and entering the workforce.

Dr Dawn Casey, NACCHO Deputy CEO said, "this year's scholarship recipients are impressive young Aboriginal students. We are so proud to provide these opportunities and to ensure increased representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacists in the health sector."

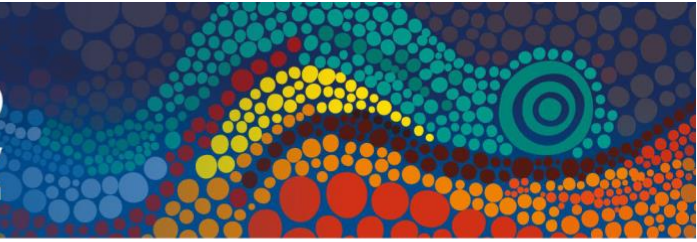
Associate Professor Faye McMillan, a proud Wiradjuri Yinaa (woman), Deputy National Rural Health Commissioner and pharmacist said, " I am so delighted that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacy scholarship program has been extended and expanded. This further reflects NACCHO's commitment to increasing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pharmacy workforce."

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<sup>1</sup> [Department of Health. National Health Workforce Data Set. 2020.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Australian Pharmacy Council. Improving health outcomes for First Australians. 2019.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Australian Bureau of Statistics. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: census. 2022.](#)



## **NACCHO 2023 Winners: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacist Scholarship:**

The 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pharmacist Scholarship winners are:

1. Bryony Forrest, darumbal/kanolu
2. Chelsea Corbett, Lutruwita
3. Jai-ann Eastaughffe
4. James Sowter, Proud Yorta Yorta man
5. Jason Coleman
6. Macy Poke

### **Quotes attributable to scholarship recipients:**

#### James Sowter, Proud Yorta Yorta man:

"Since entering the pharmacy field in 2017 as a pharmacy assistant I have developed a passion for the industry and caring for the needs of the community. Two years ago, I made the choice to follow this passion and head back to university to become a pharmacist. The recipient of this scholarship has taken a source of financial stress away from me and has allowed me to focus more of my time to my studies. I am incredibly thankful for this opportunity and am incredibly grateful that Sanofi and NACCHO have made this available and made it possible for a greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in the pharmaceutical industry".

#### Bryony Forrest, Darumbal/Kanolu:

"I am honoured to be considered for the second year for this scholarship. The differences this scholarship and its community connections made to my journey as an Aboriginal pharmacist are invaluable, and I look forward to what the future holds with this continued support from NACCHO, generously supported by Sanofi Pharmaceuticals."

#### Chelsea Corbett, Lutruwita

"Earning this scholarship is such an achievement that is going to help me go further with my degree. I feel incredibly grateful for this opportunity to receive this scholarship. This scholarship means to me, words can't describe not only will it help me to better my studies, but it also makes me feel so lucky to be part of this community. Thank you for this opportunity to not only further my studies but help me grow as a person".

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NACCHO is the national peak body representing 145 Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations (ACCHOs) across the country on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and wellbeing issues. NACCHO is the third largest employer of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, with over 3,500 out of the 6,000 staff working in ACCHOs being either of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander background.

Many NACCHO members have almost 50 years of experience in the delivery of comprehensive primary health care. Services are delivered through fixed, outreach and mobile clinics operating in urban, rural and remote settings across Australia.