

MEDIA RELEASE – 06 December 2021

Mr Selwyn Button appointed new Lowitja Institute Chair

Lowitja Institute today welcomed health, education and governance leader Mr Selwyn Button, a Gunggari man and former Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations, as the new chairperson of its Board.

Mr Button succeeds Pat Anderson, an Alyawarre woman and powerful advocate for the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who retired last week after nearly 20 years in the role and will remain, alongside Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, as a Lowitja Institute patron.

"I am truly humbled to become the new chairperson of the Lowitja Institute," Mr Button said.

"Having served on the board with Pat over the last 8 years, I admire the contributions she has made and will continue to make to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the country."

"She has been an inspiration and hers are significant shoes to fill. I hope to do her proud in continuing her legacy."

Mr Button said he looked forward to continuing the work progressed by Ms Anderson over many years through her dedication and commitment to improving the lives of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"The Lowitja Institute, like its namesake and patron Lowitja O'Donoghue, is a small yet powerful organisation exploring research questions that seek to improve the health and wellbeing of our people across the country and, at the demand of our communities, traversing paths that no other research institutes follow."

Lowitja Institute CEO Dr Janine Mohamed welcomed Mr Button's appointment, saying his deep connections to community, strong record in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health and education, and exemplary governance skills have already served the Board and Lowitja Institute well.

"I look forward to working closely with Selwyn, and benefiting from his leadership, in our ongoing work to create better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research, researchers and communities," she said.

Mr Button, who is now a Partner at Price Waterhouse Coopers Indigenous Consulting, was the first Indigenous person appointed as Registrar of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations and is a former teacher and member of the Queensland Police Service.

Previously he worked for the Queensland Government as Assistant Director-General (Indigenous Education), as Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council and Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Health Service Brisbane Limited.

He is also a Director of the Australian Children's Early Childhood and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), the Institute for Urban Indigenous Health (IUIH), and Queensland Rugby Union, and a Trustee of the Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation.

He has led governance reform process for all community controlled medical services in Queensland, major reforms within the Queensland Department of Education to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, and negotiations with state and federal agencies implementing Council of Australian Governments (COAG) partnership agreement initiatives.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact Raina Hunter on 0402 145 820

Lowitja Institute is Australia's national institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research. To find out more visit lowitja.org.au