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TIRELESS EFFORTS OF TWO INSPIRING FIRST NATIONS WOMEN RECOGNISED AT HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

Today, Janine Dureau was announced as the 2023 Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award winner at an online event livestreamed from Vancouver, Canada.

Hosted by Community First Development, an Aboriginal community development and research organisation, the Award provides an opportunity to identify and honour those who are doing outstanding work with First Nations' people and communities, exemplifying self-determination in practice.

This year, the fourth year of this Award, Community First Development received many strong and worthy nominations, including for several inspiring First Nations' leaders.

“The Bill Armstrong AO Award has gone global. As well as our presenting team coming from different continents this year, this extended reach was also reflected in the range of nominations of people working in support of the human rights of First Nations Peoples across different countries and continents... including for several inspiring First Nations' leaders.”

Following the Panel's deliberations, Janine Dureau, a Derby born Nyikina woman, was announced as the 2023 Award winner in recognition of her passion and dedication to empowering and strengthening the capacity of Aboriginal people, families and communities to improve their quality of life.

Janine has held roles in community development, aged care, youth, children's and women's rights, where she has provided aspiration, leadership and excelled in her capacity to represent the voices of those who are often unheard. Over a thirty-year period, Janine has led several campaigns and initiatives focused on culture and leadership for and on behalf of the Aboriginal community. She is currently the Chair of the Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council which she established with the support of 100 Aboriginal women.



Pictured left to right: Janine Dureau, Chairperson at the Kimberley Aboriginal Women's Council; Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People; June Oscar, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner; Mary O'Reeri, Former Local Hero Award Winner

Credit: Commissioner for Children and Young People WA



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On receiving the Award, Janine dedicated it to these 100 women stating, “We know the Council will make a great difference for the betterment of the generations to come.”

This year, the Award Panel also issued a Special Commendation to Rayleen Brown. Rayleen is the Founder and Owner of Kungkas Can Cook. She is well-known and respected for her insistence on using only wild harvest bush foods sourced directly from the women who gather the food, to support livelihoods and the continuation of connection to story and Country. Rayleen was instrumental in establishing the Australian Bush Foods Alliance, the only First Nations owned and led peak body dedicated to protecting the integrity and authenticity of sovereign foods and botanicals, celebrating First Nations culture as an asset.

On receiving the Award Rayleen stated, “For me it’s been a massive journey to bring our people to the world again and try to take back our food sovereignty. It’s about recognising our contribution to an industry that is worth quite a bit of money now. Our people struggle to have our Intellectual Property rights respected. As yet, there are no requirements set in place around returning value back to people doing the wild harvesting.”

Coinciding with the anniversary of the adoption of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the 2023 Award event was emceed by Rae Johnston, a proud Wiradjuri woman, and featured a passionate speech on human rights by Ian Hamn, a proud Yorta Yorta man.

Please join Community First Development in congratulating both Janine and Rayleen on their outstanding contributions to creating positive outcomes in human rights.

Watch the Award Ceremony at: <https://www.communityfirstdevelopment.org.au/bill-armstrong-ao-human-rights-award>

About the Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award

In 2019, Community First Development’s highly respected Co-Chair, Bill Armstrong AO, retired after 20 years with the organisation, and 13 years in the role of Co-Chair.

Bill’s leadership and experience in the community development field, both within Australia and internationally, is greatly admired. And his influence and human rights legacy is strongly recognised within our organisation.

Presented annually, the Bill Armstrong AO Human Rights Award celebrates those who are pushing through adversity and challenges to create positive outcomes in human rights for First Nations’ people.

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