



Sisters in Spirit

Aboriginal Corporation

MEDIA RELEASE – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women united for Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation Launch

On 14 July, over 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and supporters from the ACT and surrounding region gathered at the National Arboretum, to celebrate the launch of Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation, a recently established organisation in the ACT with a focus on Aboriginal women and girls.

Ms Jude Barlow, Ngunnawal Traditional Custodian opened the event with a powerful Welcome to Country, sharing her experiences and the knowledge she has gained from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman in our community.

The objective of Sisters in Spirit is “to affirm the human rights of Aboriginal women in the ACT and surrounds, including our rights to maintain our own institutions, to self-determination, and for protection against violence and discrimination” said founding Director, Rachelle Kelly-Church.

The member-based organisation has been established under a model of community control and will be governed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander board of directors. The four founding Directors are Diane Collins, Rachelle Kelly-Church, Patrice Soward and Tracey Harris.

In speaking at the launch, Diane Collins, said “I have the pleasure of introducing Sisters in Spirit, a space for women to share, to grow, to heal, to acknowledge and to be”. This sentiment was supported by founding Director, Tracey Harris, who spoke about her passion and commitment to work together to progress the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Sisters in Spirit shares core values and a collective vision built on – **Respect, Resilience and Recognition**. Director Patrice Soward said, “My passion for Sisters in Spirit Aboriginal Corporation, is to provide opportunity and education for our younger generations who are coming through, ensuring our stories, strength, advocacy and empowerment is passed down, just like it has been passed down to me”

Guests were inspired by a powerful and truth-telling speech by local Kamilaroi woman, Louise Taylor, the first Aboriginal judicial officer for the ACT, asking people to get behind and support the growth of this much needed organisation.

During the launch, the first Sisters in Spirit ACT Aboriginal Woman of the Year was awarded to local Aboriginal woman, Betty Callow in recognition of her significant and ongoing support and contributions to the community, her family and our local organisations.

Sisters in Spirit would like to acknowledge their sponsors for the launch, Indigenous Allied Health Australia and Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service, and look forward to continuing the partnerships and collaborative efforts to lead solutions and strategies which address challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander woman in the ACT.

For more information and to become a member email sistersinspiritact@gmail.com or follow their Facebook page @sistersinspiritACT.

