

MEDIA RELEASE

Opportunity for the future of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce: the 2026 Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship round is now open for applications

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are studying or want to enrol in health qualifications in 2026, the **Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship** is now open and accepting applications until **31 October 2025**.

Now in its 23rd year, this is a **game-changing scholarship** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying health courses in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary care, allied health, dentistry and oral health, medicine, mental health, and nursing and midwifery.

This scholarship can help cover costs and living expenses to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who are studying or are intending to study an eligible entry-level health-related course in the 2026 academic year. Students can receive up to \$15,000 per year, for the normal duration of their qualification.

Emily Hunter, Nyikina and Kokatha woman, daughter of Puggy Hunter, and now the After-Hours Nurse Manager at Broome Regional Hospital, said that receiving the scholarship meant that “I was able to focus on my study and stay connected to community thanks to the Puggy Hunter Scholarship. It changed my life and helped me become a nurse.”

Karl Briscoe, Kuku Yalanji man and Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP) received the scholarship in his own journey, and said that “this scholarship plays a vital role in ensuring equitable access to education and building a strong, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led health workforce.”

The scholarship honours the legacy of **Dr Puggy Hunter**, a Nyikina leader who fought for better Aboriginal health and stronger community control. Now the scholarship is run by mob, for mob, being led by Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) and NAATSIHWP with support from the Rural Doctors Network.

Donna Murray, Wiradyuri and Wonnarua woman and the Chief Executive Officer of IAHA said “the Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship invests in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from diverse backgrounds, who want to carry forward the fight for health equity. It is a flexible and culturally responsive program helping our future health workforce not only to aspire but to thrive, both in their studies and beyond, and we’re honoured to care for this program named in honour of such an important leader”.

The Puggy Hunter Memorial Scholarship is empowering the future of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce to drive transformational change. Aboriginal and Torres Strait students are encouraged to be a part of the 2026 round by applying now.

Jump online and apply today:

👉 www.iaha.com.au/scholarships

For more information or media enquiries:

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Media Portraits:

- Ms Emily Hunter, PHMSS Recipient and After-Hours Nurse Broome Hospital
- Mr Karl Briscoe, PHMSS Recipient and the CEO of the National Association of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners (NAATSIHWP)