



16 September 2011

National award for life's work in improving Indigenous health

The prestigious Menzies Medallion will be presented to Stephanie Bell today for her significant contribution to primary health care and Indigenous health in the Northern Territory.

CEO of Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Stephanie Bell is a Kullilla/Wakka Wakka woman of stolen generation heritage.

Director of Menzies School of Health Research Professor Jonathan Carapetis said the medallion is the highest award offered by the Board of Menzies. It is awarded to a person who has made a significant contribution to health in the Northern Territory, although there is no requirement for the individual to live, or even work, in the NT.

"This year we are fortunate to have a medallion recipient from the Territory who has contributed to Indigenous health at a national level," he said.

Ms Bell has worked with Congress for more than 25 Years and regularly speaks out on Aboriginal health issues and human rights.

"I am very pleased that Menzies has seen fit to award me this medal and I think it symbolises the greatly increased engagement that Menzies has with our sector," she said.

"Congress started in 1973 to provide emergency accommodation for Aboriginal people living in Alice Springs. It opened up its doors as a medical service in 1975 and now has a medical clinic, community health program, hearing program, pharmacy, male health program and dental service," she says.

The organisation provides care to more than 6 900 people living in Alice Springs, surrounding outstations and auspiced communities.

"I feel very fortunate to be part of a leading Aboriginal health care community service and this medal recognises the work that has been achieved both by me and Congress," Ms Bell said.

Ms Bell is a founding Board member of the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance NT, Chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Consortium and an Executive Member of the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation.

The award will be presented by the Administrator of the Northern Territory, Tom Pauling AO QC, at Charles Darwin University at 4pm. Ms Bell will make a presentation about her journey with Congress and the work it is doing to improve Aboriginal health in Central Australia.

The awarding of the Medallion and Ms Bell's presentation will be the culmination of the annual "Menzies Scientific Colloquium" – a half-day of public talks, starting at 2pm at Charles Darwin University, by Menzies researchers on their work.

This year's Colloquium theme 'Indigenous Voices on Indigenous Research' was chosen to highlight the essential contribution Indigenous researchers make to improving health.



What: Menzies Scientific Colloquium

Where: Mal Nairn Auditorium, Charles Darwin University

When: Friday 16 September 2011 at 2pm

Note: Jonathan Carapetis will be available for interview in the morning from 7am and Stephanie Bell will be available from 9am.

Background:

Menzies School of Health Research has a national reputation as a leading research institute in Indigenous and tropical health research. With its head office in Darwin in the Northern Territory, Menzies has been conducting its ground-breaking research for more than 25 years. We have more than 300 dedicated staff and we work hand in hand with communities throughout Australia and across the tropical region to our North.

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