

Aunty Isabel Reid

Citation for the conferral of Order of Companion of the University

I present to you Aunty Isabel Reid for conferral of the title Order of Companion of the University.

Aunty Isabel Reid has made a significant contribution to Charles Sturt University, the Wagga Wagga community and the public good, more generally as a Wiradjuri Elder and her firm belief that education is a powerful key to achieving reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Aunty Isabel is a member of the Stolen generation, taken from her family at the age of seven and was moved to Cootamundra Girls Home where Aboriginal girls were trained as servants. She is now a Wiradjuri Elder and has resided in Wagga Wagga since 1970. She has always presented an argument that education is better than compensation for the Stolen Generation and she has strongly advocated this in a range of public and private forums.

Aunty Isabel uses her story as a mechanism to teach others about respect and is clear to point out that she is not a victim but a survivor. Her clear message is that it is important that we never forget the atrocities of our history, but we move forward to a more positive future. In her words *“the time has now come to turn a new page on Australian history”*.

The respect and admiration shown to Aunty “Is” as she is often referred by students and staff is evidence of the impact she has had on the University and broader community. She is always willing to participate in consultation sessions, provide cultural support and healing to students and has also participated in numerous University functions giving a Welcome to Country. Each time she does this she contributes to the learning of all those that are fortunate enough to be present.

Aunty Isabel contributes to the wider community through presenting her experiences as part of consultative processes, contributing to organisations such as the Healing Foundation and inquiries at Local, State and Federal government levels. She has worked tirelessly to progress the recommendations of the “*Bringing Them Home Report*” that was tabled in Federal Parliament on 26 May 1997. She is also former Chair of the Coota Girls Aboriginal Corporation and was the founder of Mawang Gaway, Aboriginal Consultative Group in Wagga Wagga which aims to support activities that advance relationships, education, community knowledge and reconciliation for all members of the community. Many of you here today may also recognise Aunty Isabel from her appearance in the ABC series, *First Contact*.

In 2001 she co-authored the book, *Making Waves for a New Dreaming*, detailing some of her early life experiences. This was a huge achievement for someone who did not have the opportunity to develop their literacy skills until mid-life when she attended TAFE in order to progress her own education.

Aunty Isabel genuinely represents the Charles Sturt values and our ethos *Yindyamarra winhanganha*, which broadly translates to the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well in a world worth living in, and Charles Sturt University has benefited significantly from her wisdom and positivity.

It is with great pleasure that I present to you Aunty Isabel Reid, inspirational Wiradjuri elder, educational advocate, great friend and contributor to the success of Charles Sturt University.

Dated this Thirteenth Day of December Two Thousand and Nineteen