

## Growing more Aboriginal health professionals: the 2009 **Shalom Gamarada Ngiyani Yana** Art Exhibition and show

I don't know where I would be — six years' study is a long time — and the fact that I have had a home, with meals, on campus lets me do the job I have to do to pass my exams. I have been here for four years now, and I have had the time to work hard at uni, and work out where I want to go when I graduate. The scholarship — without question — has allowed me to stay at uni and get on with my dream of becoming a doctor. I really want to go into public health when I finish — and make a difference to my people. — *Josef McDonald, fifth year medical student*

Josef is one of 22 Aboriginal students enrolled in medicine at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), and one of 10 students who hold a Shalom Gamarada Ngiyani Yana residential scholarship.

There are many reasons why Indigenous health professionals are part of the critical path to wellness for Indigenous Australians. Indigenous health professionals can provide a shared understanding of the circumstances of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who enter the health system, and bring a diversity of understandings and views around health that enrich the academy initially and the profession over time.

Like so many Indigenous students, Josef is one of the few in his extended family who have been able to finish high school and enter university. Josef's sister, 9 years his senior and herself a success story, is an engineer. While at university, she worked every night to support herself — an experience familiar to many students.

There are few scholarships and awards that can help Indigenous students pursue their dreams of becoming health professionals — Josef and his college cohort are certainly aware of this and of the role they each play in providing encouragement to others from their families and communities who also wish to enter tertiary education in the future.

"I'm the same as anybody that has a dream. The only difference is that I've been given the opportunity to achieve mine," says Jenna Owen, the first Aboriginal student at UNSW to study optometry. Jenna will be one of only two Aboriginal optometrists when she graduates, and is the first person in her large extended family to attend university.

Each residential scholarship is valued at \$15 000 per year and covers tuition and full board at Shalom College on the university's Kensington campus. Each student awarded a scholarship has tenure until they complete their degree.



Artist: Liddy Napanangka Walker

These scholarships are funded mainly from the proceeds of the annual Shalom Gamarada Ngiyani Yana Art Exhibition and show (<http://www.shalomgamarada.org/>). The art show is run in partnership with Shalom College, and two distinct Aboriginal units on campus, the Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit and the Nura Gili Indigenous Programs at UNSW.

The first exhibition was held in 2005, and it has run annually since. This year, as in the past, the artists themselves, through their agency as the creators of the artworks, make a deliberate contribution to improving Aboriginal health outcomes.

This year, the show will focus on two distinct areas — the Yuendumu community in the Western Desert region of the Northern Territory and the artists of Bidyadanga in northern Western Australia.

All of our works are sourced from community art centres and we expect to have about 130 pieces on display this year, some of which can be seen in

this issue of the Journal (pages 531, 544, 545, 564, 579, 600), with prices ranging from \$150 to \$50 000 or more.

The opening ceremony will be held at 5pm on Sunday 19 July, with guest artist Daniel Walbidi from Broome, and Yuendumu art centre coordinator Cecilia Alfonso as guest speakers.

Shalom Gamarada allows the public to see a broad range of current contemporary and traditional art. People can meet representative community members and artists and learn about collecting art and hear about the current thinking in health, and all proceeds go to help grow more Indigenous health professionals — all of this makes this particular week-long event unique.

**Lisa R Jackson Pulver**

Professor and Director

Muru Marri Indigenous Health Unit, University of New South Wales  
Sydney, NSW

### Details of the Exhibition and show

**Open:** 10am to 6.30pm each day from 19 July to 26 July

**Address:** Eric Caspary Learning Centre, Shalom College, University of New South Wales, Kensington (enter via Barker St)

**Art Panel:** art centre managers from Peppimenarti, Yuendumu and Bidyadanga, 3pm Sunday 19 July 2009

**Health Forum:** 3pm Sunday 26 July 2009

More information: visit <http://www.shalomgamarada.org/> or call Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver on 02 9385 1769. ♦

