

CHANCELLOR,

I have the honour to present to you Elaine Lawurrpa Maypilama, who Council has determined should be awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters *Honoris Causa*.

Elaine Maypilama is a resident of Elcho Island, where she has connections to the land through her father's ancestry. She also has strong connections to Yirrkala lands through her mother's family. She has taught in the Galiwin'ku Shepherdson College Primary School and has also worked in the Women's Resource Centre in Galiwin'ku, promoting health and education, both throughout the community and via outreach programs.

Working with the University and the Menzies School of Health Research for over twenty years Elaine has developed a strong track record of involvement in research projects funded by the Commonwealth around Indigenous health, education and community development.

Elaine Maypilama recognised that non-Indigenous researchers often fail to understand the complexities of an Indigenous world view, and that this lack of understanding is significant when conducting research. To address this, she has consistently acted as a facilitator to assist non-Indigenous researchers to better understand their processes within a Yolgnu context. She has been instrumental in making explicit the Indigenous world view, and has always conducted her work with respect for her people and a deep pride in her culture.

Elaine regularly acts as a cultural mentor for non-Indigenous researchers, having skillfully introduced them to, and guided them through, the Yolgnu world. In addition to this, she has used cultural metaphors to introduce non-Indigenous research methodologies and practices to Yolgnu people. This has transformed the process of informed consent so vital to the ethical conduct of research, and has enabled Yolgnu people to engage actively in research.

Elaine was instrumental in establishing the Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Indigenous Centre at Galiwin'ku, which uses traditional Yolgnu clan structures of governance and management to promote the physical, spiritual and emotional health of Yolgnu people. She was one of three researchers on the paper entitled *Indigenous Health and Education: Exploring the Connections*, which found that Indigenous people felt strongly that their health would improve if their traditional health and education systems were strengthened and recognised by others.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal Health recognised the uniqueness and significance of these findings and, in 2000, established the Yalu Centre to enable the Yolgnu people to define health, and to foster the re-establishment of community-controlled health and

education systems. This was seen as a way of improving health and education for all community members.

The Yalu Centre was awarded the Menzies School of Health Research highest award, the Menzies Medallion, in 2012 for its contribution to health in the Northern Territory. In addition to this, Menzies and the University jointly hosted the “Recognising Yolgnu Researchers Day” in 2012 to formally recognise the contribution made by the Yolgnu people to research projects since 1992. The Centre, and Elaine in particular, has had a very real effect on how the University and Menzies as institutions and their researchers, approach and conduct research in collaboration with Yolgnu people and other Indigenous people.

Elaine Maypilama has been for many years associated with the University’s Graduate School for Health Practice, and now the Research Centre for Health and Wellbeing. Elaine has been involved in the Australia Research Council-funded *'Indigenous birth and family'* project, the Commonwealth Government funded projects such as *'Footprints in Time'*, and *'Taking Control of Chronic Disease'*. She also initiated the Community Harmony project which resulted in the publication *Yolgnu Longrassers on Larrakia Land*, which underlined the importance of conducting research in first language. Over the years many doctoral students have been guided in their research by Elaine and she is currently actively involved in a range of projects with the Research Centre for Health and Wellbeing and on nutrition with Menzies. Elaine continues to establish research priorities, as well as to provide guidance and insight through her research and cultural expertise.

Elaine Maypilama is focused on developing pathways for young people to show leadership and be researchers of the future. She strongly believes that for non-Indigenous people to truly understand the barriers to good health for Yolgnu people, they must be guided and nurtured within a Yolgnu landscape. Elaine works tirelessly with researchers and the Yolgnu community to bring this about.

#### CHANCELLOR

In recognition of her outstanding contribution and leadership in Aboriginal health research with the University and Menzies School of Health Research, Elaine Lawurra Maypilama has been awarded by the Council of Charles Darwin University, the degree of Doctor of Letters, *Honoris Causa* - Dr Elaine Lawurra Maypilama