



## ABORIGINAL EDUCATION FINALISTS

The Finalists have been selected for The Aboriginal Educational Council Aboriginal Education Award in the 2016 NSW/ACT Young Achiever Awards. The Awards aim to encourage, acknowledge and reward the achievements and valuable contribution young people make in their local communities.

The four finalists are;

- Joshua Celi, 23 of ESTELLA
- Carlie Gemmell, 27 of GLENFIELD PARK
- Jo-Anne Hurwitz, 30 of WAVERTON
- Brendon Burns, 25 of CLAREMONT MEADOWS

**Joshua Celi, 23 of Estella** is a proud Wiradjuri man and an enthusiastic first year teacher at Coolamon Central School. He coached the NAIDOC debating team to become state champions and developed Aboriginal education and cultural initiatives. Joshua led implementation of the Rural and Remote Literacy Program at the School. He is a founding member of Coolamon Central School's Multicultural Education Committee through which he developed a program for disengaged boys and girls with low self-esteem. Joshua is also a member of the Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

**Carlie Gemmell, 27 of Glenfield Park** works as Future Moves School Outreach Officer, supporting engagement of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds in higher education. She has a Bachelor of Media and Communications and a Graduate Certificate in Wiradjuri Language Culture & Heritage. Carlie has developed educational programs to support the teaching of local language skills, including a handbook of language activities entitled "Wiradjuri basics for Teachers and Students". Carlie supports the Danygamalanha project, a program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with workshops, camps and mentoring by Indigenous role models.

**Jo-Anne Hurwitz, 30 of Waverton** leads personal development and leadership camps for Indigenous youth promoting leadership, empowerment, teamwork skills and self-respect. Every school holidays Jo-Anne takes a group of University students to the remote and disadvantaged communities of Toomelah and Boggabilla and educates them about Indigenous culture and heritage. She volunteers as a tutor for Stand Up, a not for profit organisation empowering disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. With Stand Up, Jo-Anne is a positive and motivational role model to the secondary school students attending the Biala Aboriginal youth hostel.

**Brendan Burns, 25 of Claremont Meadows** is an Aboriginal Education Officer at Putland Education and Training Unit, providing educational services to the young people incarcerated at Cobham Juvenile Justice Centre. Brendan provides teacher assistance to support improved learning outcomes for Aboriginal students. He coordinates BroSpeak, a program encouraging students to be strong in identity, set goals, increase self-esteem and become positive role models for their family members and community. Brendan teaches Aboriginal Dance to the students where they gain confidence to deal with the stresses that present whilst in custody.

The Aboriginal Education Council Aboriginal Education Award will recognise young Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Support staff, Community Educators and community members who are passionate about providing and improving education for Aboriginal people. The Award will recognise young men and women who have the skill and ability to inspire students of all ages.