The Indigenous Governance Awards were created by Reconciliation Australia in partnership with BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities in 2005 to identify, celebrate and promote effective governance in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations and initiatives.

Effective governance is key to success for any enterprise. Effective Indigenous governance melds traditional governance and responsibilities based on culture and kinship, with the requirements of mainstream organisations, including financial and legal accountabilities. By creating governance models that are effective and legitimate in two worlds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations are examples of successful self-determination and two-way governance in action.

The Indigenous Governance Awards recognise and celebrate success in two categories: incorporated Indigenous organisations (Category A), and non-incorporated Indigenous projects and initiatives (Category B). This year, the Awards received a record number of 138 applications, which is testament to the resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives. After long deliberation, the judging panel selected nine finalists and were hosted by each finalist at a site visit. This final stage of the judging process allowed judges to see how the finalists have placed culture at the heart of their governance and developed innovative and inspiring systems of governance.

By shining a light on well-governed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives around the country, the Awards encourage others to emulate their success. Despite working in challenging environments, the finalists showcased in these pages, and others like them, are achieving amazing outcomes for their families, communities and wider Australia. The Indigenous Governance Awards help to tell their stories and play an important role in promoting effective governance and leadership as the foundation of success.

Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities congratulate this year’s finalists and the many applicants. The high standard of applications reflects the quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives around Australia. It is a privilege for Reconciliation Australia to hear these stories of outstanding achievement and invite you to learn about them in the following pages. As we make progress towards a reconciled Australia, the self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must be universally recognised and respected. Learning about, celebrating and promoting the governance success of the Awards finalists can only support this journey.

The Indigenous Governance Awards

Opposite: Putting waru (fire) back into Country is important work for the Martu rangers. It sustains Martu stewardship and the ecology of this important desert ecosystem. Pictured: KJ ranger Kenneth Siddon
In the twelve years that I have been the Chair of the Indigenous Governance Awards, I have seen the courage, determination and incredible innovation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This year is no different. Despite their diversity, the nine finalists in the 2016 Indigenous Governance Awards have one thing in common: with culture at the heart of everything they do, they are driving positive outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.

A great breadth of issues and needs are being addressed by the seven incorporated finalist organisations. Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa is ushering transformative change in Martu Country, through world-class land management programs. The Mallee District Aboriginal Services are pioneering wrap-around services to improve the delivery of Aboriginal health programs. Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women’s Resource Centre is fiercely advocating for the rights and safety of women and families in the Fitzroy Valley. Muru Mittigar is spreading understanding of Aboriginal cultures as they create a commercially sustainable Aboriginal-owned social enterprise. Tangentyere Council is continuing to represent the residents of Alice Springs Town Camps with respect and integrity. Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation is developing our kids into strong, resilient community leaders through life-lessons around culture and community. Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation is delivering lifesaving dialysis services which allow their patients to stay on Country to be looked after, and look after, their families.

The work of the non-incorporated projects and initiatives is equally transformative. Ara Irititja is creating a growing multimedia archive of historical and cultural materials in partnership with the Aboriginal people of the APY lands. Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly represents 16 communities to ensure government services are meeting the diverse needs of Aboriginal people across Western NSW.

The Indigenous Governance Awards are dedicated to celebrating these outstanding organisations and projects. The Awards are promoting a discourse focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success, rather than deficit. They are inspiring pride and confidence in the ability of our organisations and communities to drive positive change. The Awards are also showing that success built on self-determination is good for everyone.

Our long-term partner and supporter BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities knows that investing in governance is the foundation of success, because strong governance is crucial for building and sustaining healthy and prosperous communities. Effective Indigenous governance vests true decision-making power in the people, and reflects the cultural values and beliefs of the communities it serves. It requires strong, skilled and representative leadership that appreciates local circumstances and needs. Each of the 2016 finalists has these attributes in spades, so choosing the winners of each category came down to the smallest of details.

As a result of my work as Chair of the Indigenous Governance Awards, I have been inspired and challenged to use these stories of success in all that I do. I encourage you to read the finalists’ stories and share them as I have. We must work together to change the narrative that we tell about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and I cannot think of a better place to start than by shouting these stories of wisdom, courage and perseverance from the rooftops.

Professor Mick Dodson AM
Chair, Indigenous Governance Awards

‘Effective Indigenous governance vests true decision-making power in the people, and reflects the cultural values and beliefs of the communities it serves. It requires strong, skilled and representative leadership that appreciates local circumstances and needs.’
Every two years, Reconciliation Australia has the privilege of engaging with high-performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and projects through our Indigenous Governance Awards. The Awards celebrate the many professional, well-run and strategic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and projects achieving exceptional outcomes across Australia. Reconciliation Australia’s landmark report of 2016, The State of Reconciliation in Australia, reaffirms the critical role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led organisations and projects in our reconciliation journey. The Report defines reconciliation through five interconnected dimensions: equality and equity, race relations, unity, institutional integrity, and historical acceptance.

The Indigenous Governance Awards 2016 finalists exemplify key work across each dimension of reconciliation. The Awards and the finalists are valuing and sharing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories, and rights – central to the dimension of ‘unity’. The finalists are driving ‘institutional integrity’ by holding governments and stakeholders to account and lobbying them to support Indigenous-led solutions. By recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ right to self-determine their social, cultural and economic development, the Indigenous Governance Awards are contributing to the dimension of ‘equality and equity’.

The finalists are improving ‘race relations’ by developing relationships based on trust and respect with non-Indigenous Australians, and the Awards showcase these relationships. Finally, to practise true ‘historical acceptance’, we must understand the wrongs of the past and commit to never repeating them. The Awards’ support for community-controlled services, in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lead the development of comprehensive, preventative, long-term approaches, also represents a real break from past policies and practices.

I am honoured to celebrate and share the successes of the Indigenous Governance Awards 2016 finalists, which are all contributing to the empowerment and achievement of their communities, and our nation’s reconciliation journey, in remarkable ways.

Justin Mohamed
CEO, Reconciliation Australia
BHP Billiton has been a proud supporter of Reconciliation Australia’s Indigenous Governance Awards since they began over a decade ago.

We are passionate about the economic empowerment, social development and cultural wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and the importance of good governance in the creation of long-term and sustainable social and economic development.

Through our operations, we aim to partner with Indigenous communities wherever we work.

In Australia, we are pleased to support a range of critical programs to help Close the Gap, including through our voluntary community investments and the BHP Billiton Foundation. Last year we were proud to become the first resources company to pledge support for the campaign for Constitutional Recognition for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The Awards are an opportunity to celebrate outstanding program and service delivery by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and the inspirational work taking place right around the country to make a difference in local communities.

Congratulations to all finalists.

Andrew Mackenzie
CEO, BHP Billiton
Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa

Finalist, Category A
Incorporated organisations

Based in Newman, Western Australia, Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (KJ) was established to help the Martu people look after their culture and heritage and ensure Martu’s connection with Country remains strong. KJ works to protect the health and wellbeing of the land under the Martu native title determination, which spans three deserts and 13.6 million hectares. Initiatives operated by KJ include an extensive ranger program running in five communities, a leadership program, a return to Country program and cultural knowledge management. Together, these programs have generated social, cultural and economic transformation across the Martu communities, and KJ is now the single biggest employer of Martu.

One of the less tangible, but equally important, successes of KJ’s work has been the reinstatement of cultural authority to the Martu Elders. The Elders now have increased confidence in their ability to shape their future and have responded positively to the commitment of younger Martu to learn and fulfil their cultural obligations.

KJ sees culture as the wellspring of identity, confidence and strength. This is true for both communities and individuals. With this belief at the core, KJ is building an economic base that empowers Martu to make their own decisions about their communities’ futures.

"KJ is driving change in the Martu communities by going back to the core of what is most important, which is Country and the ability for people to reconnect with that Country."

Dr Simon Longstaff, IGA judge

"Fundamentally it’s based strongly on Martu cultural aspirations to look after Country, to look after waterholes, to teach their young people. Underlying all that is really to give their young people jobs and opportunities that they might not have had."

Peter See, CEO KJ

Opposite: Martu rangers use both traditional knowledge and contemporary natural resource management to look after their Country, an area about twice the size of Tasmania. Pictured: KJ ranger Levina Biljabu.
Mallee District Aboriginal Services

Finalist, Category A
Incorporated organisations

Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS) operates out of Mildura, Swan Hill, Kerang and Robinvale and was established to service the diverse needs of Aboriginal communities along the Murray River in Victoria and New South Wales. By providing “cradle to the grave” services in the areas of health, family, housing, aged care, substance abuse, training, community development, emotional and social well-being, rehabilitation and justice, MDAS is bringing about generational change.

MDAS recognises the benefit to health and well-being of reconnecting the community with culture and building pride in local Aboriginal heritage. As a result, MDAS is pioneering a community-controlled approach to Aboriginal health services and supporting improved life outcomes within their communities.

MDAS’s commitment to developing systems and structures informed by evidence-based data is enabling the organisation to improve community health and well-being outcomes. This rigorous approach to decision-making and strategic planning is placing MDAS in a strong position to support real and sustainable change.

"We've got an overarching vision of generations of healthy, vibrant communities.”
Letitia Robinson, Manager Governance and Quality MDAS

"Organisations like MDAS could teach mainstream organisations a lot about governance, governance effectiveness, continuous improvement, and the way to run a service.”
Glen Kelly, IGA judge

Opposite: Uncle Eric Murray participating in Mallee District Aboriginal Services Elders painting program.
Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women’s Resource Centre
Incorporated organisations

Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women’s Resource Centre (Marninwarntikura) is a vocal advocate for the rights of women and their families from the Fitzroy Valley’s five main language groups, and beyond. Its foundational purpose was to provide a space of safety for women releasing themselves from domestic and family violence. As Marninwarntikura has grown, it has expanded its programs beyond crisis support. Informed by practices in trauma and healing, today it offers innovative approaches to support women and children and drive generational changes.

Marninwarntikura believes that only generational change can break the cycles of trauma and resulting harms, including alcohol and other drug abuse, violence and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. The community of women engaged with Marninwarntikura has created tools and resources which provide healing and build self-worth, individual and collective empowerment, cultural pride, leadership and economic security. These tools allow women, their families and children to reconstruct a culturally rich and dynamic society with a healthy future.

As it works to help women and young people reach their full potential, Marninwarntikura is bringing together Indigenous ways of knowing and being with the knowledge and systems of contemporary Australian work practice.

“‘We’ve been able to in this community stand on the shoulders of the strong women … and continue to advocate for the things that matter.’ ”

June Oscar AO, CEO Marninwarntikura

“‘The women … come to the organisation with a lot of experience around not only culture, but also being women of families and matriarchs. They bring that strength of community with them.’”

Glenda Humes, IGA judge

Opposite: Marnin Studio supports women to turn their art practices into a source of income, while providing skills transfer and therapeutic aid. Pictured: Brooke Small (left), Manager of Marnin Studio, and artist Aisha Oscar (right).
Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre

**Finalist, Category A**
Incorporated organisations

The Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre (Muru Mittigar) seeks to create a better understanding of Aboriginal cultures, particularly the local Darug culture, while supporting improved opportunities and life outcomes for First Peoples in Greater Western Sydney.

Having been in operation for 15 years, Muru Mittigar’s ongoing vision is to function as an exemplary, commercially sustainable Aboriginal-owned social enterprise. Muru Mittigar works towards this vision by offering Aboriginal contracting and consulting in market-driven services, such as land management and cultural education.

Muru Mittigar strives to improve the economic and social capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within its community by providing workplace skills training, sustained employment opportunities, financial counselling and an interest-free loan service. These opportunities and services empower First Peoples to support themselves and meaningfully participate in their role as Traditional Custodians of Country.

“One of the most important things is the aspiration, which is in fact being realised, to be entirely self-sufficient. It’s an extraordinary thing to see.”

Dr Simon Longstaff, IGA judge

“Our success is normally guided by job opportunities and that’s meaningful jobs. It’s not difficult to see the wellbeing and fulfilment that comes with a job that not only provides meaning to somebody’s economic independence, but also for their personal passion.”

Peter Chia, CEO Muru Mittigar

Opposite: Muru Mittigar staff members Joshua Nicholls (front), Richard Duarte (left) and Karl Wickey (back) with child participating in an Aboriginal cultural experience run by the organisation.
Participants in the St Mary’s craft activity program run by Tangentyere Council with Indigenous Governance Awards judges Professor Mick Dodson, Paul Travers and Professor Gary Banks.
The approach of Tangentyere Council is informed by the belief that the capacity of Aboriginal people to set their own agenda for social change and community-based development must be strengthened.

Tangentyere Council works to ensure that residents of the Alice Springs Town Camps, and other Central Australian Aboriginal people, are represented and respected by all levels of government and by external service providers. The organisation’s support for community leadership assists residents to access and participate in appropriate service delivery, despite periodical changes in government policy.

Tangentyere Council itself delivers culturally appropriate education, training, employment and economic development services. These services, delivered with dignity and integrity, aim to sustain a peaceful, safe and positive way of life for Aboriginal people.

Tangentyere Council’s approach to community representation and service delivery empowers Town Campers to be proud and strong — walking in both worlds, connected with the past, contributing to the present and working towards a bright future.
Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation

Incorporated organisations

In the remote Northern Territory community of Yuendumu, Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (WYDAC) was established as the Mt Theo Program in the early 1990’s as a response to the petrol sniffing epidemic affecting the four Warlpiri communities. Working with disengaged young people, this highly successful program remains at the heart of WYDAC. It continues to provide at-risk youth the opportunity to spend time on Country, learning life-lessons around culture and community with the support of Elders and social workers.

Today, WYDAC’s ambition is to develop strong, healthy and confident young Warlpiri leaders by offering a suite of Youth Development and Client Services programs. The Jaru Pirrjirdi program focuses on positive and meaningful pathways for young people, including education and employment, and the Warra-Warra Kanyi counselling program provides case management support.

WYDAC’s success has been firmly built upon the strength of Warlpiri youth and communities. Created by, and for, Warlpiri people, and governed by a Warlpiri Committee, WYDAC continues to facilitate the strength and capacity of Warlpiri youth and their families.

“Our communities are really committed to self-empowerment. What we really want is to be in control of our world.”
Matt Davidson, CEO WYDAC

“Their understanding of their own young people and their sense of community and family are really what characterises this wonderful organisation.”
Prof Gary Banks, IGA judge

Opposite: Young men participating in the WYDAC adult numeracy and literacy program with Indigenous Governance Awards judges Paul Travers, Professor Mick Dodson, and Professor Gary Banks.
Established by raising over $1 million in funding at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (Western Desert Dialysis) has grown into a trailblazing community-controlled health organisation. Focused on providing dialysis treatment and support services to Indigenous renal patients from remote communities across Central Australia, the organisation’s name means “making all families well” in the Pintupi Luritja language. Run by Aboriginal people for Aboriginal people, Western Desert Dialysis wraps traditional ways of caring and being around modern medicine.

The Western Desert Dialysis mission is to improve the lives of people with renal failure, reunite families and reduce the incidence of kidney disease in their communities. This is done through the provision of dialysis treatments at the ‘Purple House’ in Alice Springs and the travelling ‘Purple Truck’, which allows people to stay on Country to look after, and be looked after by, their families. By taking an holistic and culturally appropriate approach to healthcare, Western Desert Dialysis is contributing to stronger, healthier communities.

“We started thinking, our people, the Western Desert people, that we need to start acting because our people are getting worse with the kidney disease.”
Marlene Spencer, Vice-Chairperson Western Desert Dialysis

“Their humanity stands out in their governance. They deeply care about each individual and have an holistic approach to the wellbeing and health of their patients.”
Prof Mick Dodson, IGA Chair

Western Desert Nganampa Walytja Palyantjaku Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation

Finalist, Category A
Incorporated organisations

“Their humanity stands out in their governance. They deeply care about each individual and have an holistic approach to the wellbeing and health of their patients.”
Prof Mick Dodson, IGA Chair

We started thinking, our people, the Western Desert people, that we need to start acting because our people are getting worse with the kidney disease.”
Marlene Spencer, Vice-Chairperson Western Desert Dialysis

“We started thinking, our people, the Western Desert people, that we need to start acting because our people are getting worse with the kidney disease.”
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“We started thinking, our people, the Western Desert people, that we need to start acting because our people are getting worse with the kidney disease.”
Marlene Spencer, Vice-Chairperson Western Desert Dialysis
Ara Irititja
Finalist, Category B
Non-incorporated groups, projects and initiatives

Responsible for over 170,000 digital records, the Ara Irititja project is digitally conserving memory in a culture based on oral tradition. This is memory that goes beyond most cultural imaginations, back before the invention of writing, and many centuries before the Christian era. Meaning ‘stories from a long time ago’, Ara Irititja’s goal is to create a sustainable, growing collection of historic and cultural multimedia material related to Aboriginal people from the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands in SA, NT and WA. Ara Irititja also focuses on repatriating these materials to communities across the APY Lands, recording additional materials, and facilitating remote access to the archive.

The Anangu people are passionate about protecting their archival past, accessing it today, and securing it for future generations. Anangu have managed complex cultural information systems for thousands of years, restricting access to some knowledge on the basis of sorrow, seniority and gender. Ara Irititja’s digital archive reflects the needs of Anangu cultural information systems and translates them into the current technological context.

Every Anangu Elder carries a story — one that has been handed down through many generations — and Ara Irititja provides a modern platform for these stories to be told. Ara Irititja not only conserves this knowledge, but also allows these stories to live with the people to whom they belong.

“It’s not just a question that the Anangu people are driving this collection and the access to it — they’ve actually demanded it, and created it.”

Prof John Carty,
Head of Anthropology South Australian Museum

Opposite: Inawinytji Williamson (left) and Linda Rive (right) of Ara Irititja using its interactive multimedia software, Keeping Culture KMS.
The Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (Murdi Paaki) is the peak governance body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the west, north-west and far west of NSW. It is made up of representatives from 16 communities, as well as Murdi Paaki Aboriginal Young and Emerging Leaders, and NSW Aboriginal Land Council Councillors from across the region.

While considered to be an under-estimation, the Aboriginal population of the Murdi Paaki region at the 2011 Census was 18 per cent of the total population. As a result, effective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation in this region is crucial for service delivery, and Murdi Paaki is the peak body which engages with government and agencies at all levels. Murdi Paaki’s major role is facilitating a more strategic emphasis on engagement, responsiveness, co-ordination and accountability from government and non-government agencies.

The story of Murdi Paaki is a story of sovereign rights, which lie at the heart of the initiative. The Murdi Paaki charter of governance expresses ‘resolve to manage our own affairs, build sustainable communities and determine our own future’. Murdi Paaki promotes the practices of good governance, responsible leadership and empowerment, which together are driving change in regional NSW.

“Murdi Paaki came from ideas about having all communities represented in a model that would ensure equality and equity was able to be reached amongst Aboriginal people through western NSW.”

Sam Jeffries, Former Chairman Murdi Paaki

“Their power to advocate comes from the fact they’re made up of community members. They’re community people talking on their own behalf.”

Prof Mick Dodson, IGA Chair

Opposite: William Johnson (left) of Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly and Sam Jeffries (right), Former Chairman of Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly.
Professor Mick Dodson AM – Chair
Professor Mick Dodson is a member of the Yawuru peoples, the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of land and waters around Broome. He is Director of the National Centre for Indigenous Studies at the Australian National University (ANU) and Professor of Law at the ANU College of Law. He was formerly Malcolm Fraser and Gough Whitlam Harvard Chair in Australian Studies at Harvard University and the Director of the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of New South Wales.

Professor Dodson has been a prominent advocate on land rights and other issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. He was Australia’s first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner and in 2009 he was awarded Australian of the Year.

Professor Gary Banks AO
Professor Gary Banks has spent most of his professional life in organisations devoted to improving policy outcomes for society. He is Dean and CEO of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG), having previously been Chairman of the Productivity Commission since its inception in 1998. In that capacity, he chaired COAG’s Review of Government Services and was the inaugural convenor for its biennial report Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage.

Professor Banks has worked for international organisations and in economic consultancy and currently chairs the OECD’s Regulatory Policy Committee. He holds a Professorial Fellowship at Melbourne University and is an Adjunct Professor at the Australian National University. He was awarded Australia’s highest honour, the Order of Australia, in 2007 in recognition of his service to public policy.

Eddie Cubillo
Mr Eddie Cubillo is an Aboriginal man with strong family links throughout the Northern Territory. His mother is of Lakamia/Wadjigan descent and his father is Central Arrente. Mr Cubillo’s family has experienced the intergenerational effects of the policy of forced removal of children from their family and Country.

Mr Cubillo has over 20 years’ experience working at the grassroots of Aboriginal affairs. In 2001 he obtained a Bachelor of Law and in 2002 he was admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory. In 2009 Mr Cubillo completed a Masters of Law (International Law and International Relations) at Flinders University. Mr Cubillo served as the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner of the Northern Territory from 2010 until October 2012, when he assumed the role of Executive Officer with National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service.

Jason Glanville
Mr Jason Glanville is a member of the Wiradjuri peoples from south-western New South Wales. He was the inaugural CEO of the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) based in Redfern. Prior to joining the NCIE, Jason was Director of Programs and Strategy at Reconciliation Australia.

Over the last twenty years Mr Glanville has worked in a range of community-based Indigenous organisations, state and federal governments and non-government peak organisations. Jason is Chair of the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute and sits on the boards of the National Australia Day Council, Carriageworks and the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre.

Glenda Humes
Ms Glenda Humes is a descendant of the Gunditjmara people from the Western Districts of Victoria, and her grandmother’s people the Jawoyn from the Northern Territory.

Ms Humes has had more than thirty years of working in senior management roles in Aboriginal Affairs at the local, state and commonwealth levels. With a law degree and a master degree in Indigenous Social Policy, Ms Humes has been a director on many boards across diverse sectors. Ms Humes has a great interest in how organisations are managed and the role of boards. Ms Humes was the CEO of the South West Aboriginal Medical Service when they received a High Commendation in the 2008 Indigenous Governance Awards.

Glen Kelly
Mr Glen Kelly is a Noongar man and served as the CEO of the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council from April 2006 to April 2015.

In this capacity he was the Chief Negotiator of the Noongar Native Title Settlement and oversaw the authorisation of the agreement by all of the Noongar native title claim groups in early 2015. He has over 20 years’ experience in Native Title and Indigenous land related issues, and has held a number of senior positions in community organisations and government agencies. Mr Kelly sits on a number of committees and statutory authorities at a state and commonwealth level.
Dr Simon Longstaff AO
Dr Longstaff’s distinguished career began on Groote Eylandt (Anindilyakwa) in the Northern Territory working in the Safety Department of the then BHP subsidiary, GEMCO. He is proud of his kinship ties with members of the island’s Indigenous community.
Dr Longstaff undertook postgraduate studies in philosophy as a Member of Magdalene College, Cambridge. He commenced his work as the first Executive Director of The Ethics Centre in 1991. Dr Longstaff is a Fellow of CPA Australia and in June 2016, was appointed an Honorary Professor at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies. He was the inaugural President of The Australian Association for Professional & Applied Ethics, serves on a number of diverse boards and committees, and was formerly a Fellow of the World Economic Forum.

Ms Diane Smith-Gander
Ms Diane Smith-Gander is non-Executive director AGL Energy, Wesfarmers Limited, Chair of Safe Work Australia, and President of Chief Executive Women.
Ms Smith-Gander has held a wide range of non-executive roles in the past, including Chairman of Broadspectrum, Deputy Chairperson of NBNCs, non-executive director of the CBH Group, commissioner of Tourism WA and board member of the Committee for Perth. Ms Smith-Gander holds an MBA from the University of Sydney and a BEc from the University of Western Australia (UWA). She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Governance Institute of Australia, and an adjunct professor of corporate governance at UWA.

Paul Travers
Mr Paul Travers is Principal Indigenous Affairs for BHP Billiton in Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia. Raised in Belfast, he studied law at Cambridge University and worked as a barrister in private practice in London prior to moving to Australia in 1983. Mr Travers has since worked in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs and held senior roles in the Queensland Public Service and BHP Billiton. He has led significant reviews of state legislation, including Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage legislation. He also negotiated some of the first Indigenous Land Use Agreements to be registered in Australia, and was the lead state negotiator for the Saibai Island native title claim.

Finalists site visit locations

Locations are:

- Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa (Newman, WA)
- Mallee District Aboriginal Services (Mildura, VIC)
- Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women’s Resource Centre (Fitzroy Crossing, WA)
- Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre (Castlereagh, NSW)
- Tangentyere Council (Alice Springs, NT)
- Warlpiri Youth Development Aboriginal Corporation (Yendumu, NT)
- Western Desert Dialysis (Yendumu, NT)
- Ara Irititja (Adelaide, SA)
- Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly (Broken Hill, NSW)
Acknowledgments

Firstly, Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities would like to acknowledge all of the applicants in the Indigenous Governance Awards 2016 and thank them for the time and effort invested in their applications. Together, they formed the largest cohort of applicants we’ve seen in the Indigenous Governance Awards, and the strength of applications is testament to the outstanding work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and initiatives.

We’d particularly like to thank the nine 2016 finalists. Each finalist went to extraordinary efforts welcoming the judging panel on the site visits and sharing their work with us. This publication, and the Indigenous Governance Awards more broadly, provides opportunities to showcase the finalists’ governance practices, share their stories of success and assists them to achieve the recognition deserved.

The dedicated members of the judging panel are essential to the success of the Indigenous Governance Awards. Each judge commits significant time in their busy schedules to contribute to the rigorous judging process. As Chair of the judging panel for twelve years, Professor Mick Dodson has been to every site visit since the Awards began and guides the process with a steady hand. We are immensely grateful for his insight, knowledge and commitment to the Awards process, and for championing the Awards as a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander success.

Reconciliation Australia and BHP Billiton Sustainable Communities thank the Koori Mail and the National Indigenous Radio Service for their support as media partners of the Indigenous Governance Awards. We would also like to thank the Australian Indigenous Governance Institute, which will once again be conducting research on the Awards to build the body of knowledge on Indigenous governance in Australia.

Thank you to Dr Diane Smith, who, as a member of the Review Committee, has lent her extensive knowledge of Indigenous governance to the Awards for a number of years. We would also like to thank Tamai Heaton, Wayne Quilliam, Luke Barrowcliffe, Frank Winters, Marcus Lee Design, and Wayne and Lucy McGiness.

Finally, a special thank you to Eunice Porter from Warakuna Artists, a 2008 Awards finalists, for allowing us to use her beautiful artwork in the design of the Indigenous Governance Awards logo.

Reconciliation Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia, and particularly thanks all those on whose land we have travelled over the last twelve months.
Reconciliation Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders both past and present.