

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business



Monday, 19 April 2021

## **ABORIGINAL VICTORIANS AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIPS**

Eight outstanding Aboriginal Victorians are receiving scholarships to remove barriers to education, thanks to a partnership between the Andrews Labor Government and the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association.

The recipients of Aunty Mary Atkinson scholarships will be supported with grants of \$30,000 a year for up to four years.

The program is named after Aunty Mary Atkinson, a Wiradjuri and Bangerang Elder whose tenacity and integrity made her an inspirational leader.

Mary believed all Aboriginal children had the right to a quality education and the scholarship aims to continue her belief in learning as empowerment for indigenous people.

The recipients have each had to overcome personal challenges relating to health, caring for others and unemployment and have each demonstrated tenacity and integrity in their studies.

The scholarship recipients include people like Mark Jones, who will continue to research Aboriginal enterprises as part of his studies at RMIT; and Riley Leary, who will use the scholarship to pay for travel and accommodation expenses while he develops his understanding of robotics at Swinburne University.

Recipients' studies must be aligned with portfolio areas of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Employment Jaala Pulford**

*"We're backing these smart young Victorians so they can expand their knowledge, which will open up employment pathways and boost Aboriginal voices in business and industry."*

*"Congratulations to the recipients for all their hard work and I'm looking forward to seeing them grow into business and community leaders."*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane**

*"These scholarships will help these students make a real and positive difference for our state and their communities."*

### **Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams**

*"The Aunty Mary Atkinson Scholarship Program is a powerful way to reduce barriers for Aboriginal Victorians who are aiming to pursue a career in the public service."*