



Chief Executive Women

Women leaders enabling women leaders

MEDIA RELEASE

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2018 CEW Scholars: Two Indigenous women leaders head to Harvard

Chief Executive Women (CEW) in partnership with Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation (RSIEF) announce the winners of two scholarships to attend the highly regarded Harvard Kennedy School in September and October this year.

The winners of this year's CEW & RSIEF scholarships, which were offered to middle and senior women managers who are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Heritage, are Jenni Collard of the WA Department of Justice and Lesley Nelson of South West Aboriginal Medical Service in WA.

Announcing the winners, CEW Scholarships Committee Member and General Manager of Human Resources at Westpac, Kate Aitken, says: "CEW is proud to partner with the Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation to support talented Indigenous women at critical stages in their careers.

"To realise the benefits we know that diversity can deliver, Australia must get a critical mass of women in leadership roles. CEW's scholarship program provides women executives with the skills, networks and confidence to help them take the necessary steps towards the top job" says Kate Aitken.

Richard Potok, Executive Director of the Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation and CEO of the Aurora Education Foundation, says: "These scholarships provide a fantastic opportunity for high-achieving Indigenous women to develop further the skills that are essential for leadership success."

"This year's winners – Jenni and Lesley – are outstanding candidates and I look forward to continuing to work with them as they progress in their careers and continue to create positive change for Indigenous Australians," says Richard Potok.

The winners

Jenni Collard is Executive Director Offender Management at the Western Australian Department of Justice. Jenni is an Aboriginal woman, originally from Darwin, with cultural connections to the Jawoyn-Wadaman groups in the Northern Territory and the Inginoo group in Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands.

Jenni, who will be attending the *Leadership in the 21st Century: Chaos, Conflict and Courage Program* at Harvard Kennedy School says the course will help her address the challenges that she faces daily.

"The work within the justice system can be chaotic and involve a conflict of cultures; not only care services versus security but also women versus men. I also like that the title of the course

includes 'courage' because innovations within a corrections setting can take years and require strong leadership," says Jenni Collard.

Lesley Nelson is the CEO of the South West Aboriginal Medical Service (SWAMS) in Western Australia. Lesley is a proud Noongar woman from the Balladong and Whadjuk clans.

Lesley, who will be attending the *Creating Collaborative Solutions: Innovations in Governance Program* at Harvard Kennedy School, says the course will add an international dimension to her understanding of leadership.

"I'm looking forward to engaging in intellectual dialogue at an international level with leadership experts on issues relating to health, research and education, and applying this knowledge to improve health outcomes in the Indigenous community in Australia," says Lesley Nelson.

The scholarships

The CEW & RSIEF scholarships will enable Jenni and Lesley to each attend a program at Harvard Kennedy School, a graduate and professional school that brings together students, scholars and practitioners who combine thought and action to make the world a better place.

The *Creating Collaborative Solutions: Innovations in Governance Program* is designed for leaders in the public, non-profit and corporate sectors who see their roles as reaching across these traditionally separate spheres to build new structures that can produce significant, valuable change.

The *Leadership in the 21st Century: Chaos, Conflict and Courage Program* is intended for senior executives in government, corporate and non-profit organisations who wish to better understand the personal aspects of leadership and to improve their capacity to lead.

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About CEW Scholars (www.cew.org.au/scholarships)

The CEW Scholars program enables women leaders by supporting them at critical junctures in their careers, from their first management roles to top executive positions. More than 150 women have been awarded scholarships to business schools in Australia and internationally since CEW commenced its executive program for women leaders in 1992.

CEW Scholars program is funded through the CEW annual dinner and the generosity of sponsors including:

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About Chief Executive Women (www.cew.org.au)

Chief Executive Women is the pre-eminent organisation representing more than 500 of Australia's most senior women from the corporate, public, academic and not-for-profit sectors. Its mission is "women leaders enabling women leaders". Through advocacy, targeted programs and scholarships, CEW works to remove the barriers to women's progression and ensure equal opportunity for prosperity. CEW offers innovative and substantive programs aimed at enabling women's participation and future leadership.

Award partner: Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation
www.robertasykesfoundation.com

In 1983, Roberta Sykes became the first black Australian to graduate from an American university with a PhD in Education from Harvard. She returned to Australia to take up the reins of Black Women's Action in Education, the group who had raised the funds to enable her to attend Harvard. Over the next 15 years, under Roberta's stewardship, the Foundation continued to encourage and support Indigenous students to study in Australia and overseas and was the first to offer overseas postgraduate scholarships to Indigenous Australians.

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