

Monday 9 July 2018

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **'Reconciliation Grants Scheme' launched during NAIDOC Week 2018**

Althea Projects are proud to be strengthening their pledge to reconciliation this NAIDOC Week 2018 (8 – 15 July) with the launch of the Reconciliation Grants Scheme for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in Townsville and surrounding communities.

During Townsville's NAIDOC Week celebrations, Althea Projects will be opening the first funding round of the Reconciliation Grants Scheme and encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply.

The Reconciliation Grants Scheme aims to close the gap in equality and equity of opportunity by offering funding to those who are experiencing barriers to their educational advancement or participation inclusion due to lack of money.

The grant funding covers costs directly associated with training, study, sport or school. This includes laptops, textbooks, sporting costs, course fees, uniforms and even school activities.

This year's NAIDOC Week theme, 'Because of Her We Can' provides the perfect backdrop to the launch of Althea Projects Reconciliation Grants Scheme. The special theme acknowledges the important role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who are the unsung heroes in our families and local communities.

"A young Aboriginal woman's sporting dream motivated the need to launch a Reconciliation Grants Scheme," says Althea Projects CEO, Mandy Thompson. "At 12 years of age, Nakeisha Illin, of the Bindal tribe, is an exceptional sportswoman and she has excelled at her chosen sport of basketball. She needed a little bit of help to continue chasing her dreams."

Althea Projects proudly supported Miss Illin with a \$1000 scholarship grant. The grant enabled the young sportswoman to attend the State Titles last week in Brisbane, where she represented Townsville in the U14 Girls division. At the event, Miss Illin's team won a bronze medal and qualified for the National Junior Basketball Championships to be held in Victoria in October 2018.

"After seeing how much impact the scholarship grant made to Nakeisha Illin's life and her dreams, we felt we had to continue supporting these inspirational stories by making it a regular opportunity," says Ms Thompson.

Althea Projects' Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2016-2018 and their dedicated working group is at the heart of the organisation's work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. The Reconciliation Grants Scheme is the latest initiative as part of their journey of reconciliation.

"The Reconciliation Grants Scheme is one important way we can help First Australian's of any age reach their full potential," says RAP Working Group member, Lena Watego. "I strongly encourage First Australian's in Townsville, Palm Island, Charters Towers, Hughenden, Ayr, Home Hill and Ingham to apply."

The Althea Projects Reconciliation Grants Scheme is now open. The funding round closes 31<sup>st</sup> of August.

Community-based, not-for-profit service Althea Projects plays a vital role in the local community as a support service for vulnerable families, children and young people in the Townsville region. Their programs include *Wee Care Residential Program* - a 24-hour emergency child care service, *Emergency Relief Funding*, *Shared Family Care Program*, *Townsville Drop-In Centre*, and *First Steps* for Mum's and new born babies.

**To obtain a Reconciliation Grants Scheme information pack, call the Althea Projects team on 07 4779 3332 or visit [www.altheaprojects.org.au](http://www.altheaprojects.org.au) to find out more.**

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### **Media enquiries**

Mandy Thompson, CEO  
[ceo@altheaprojects.org.au](mailto:ceo@altheaprojects.org.au)

Mobile: 0400 735 344

### **Interview opportunities**

Mandy Thompson and Lena Watego are available for interview.

### **About Althea Projects**

Althea Projects Incorporated (Althea Projects) is a grass-roots, community based not-for-profit based in Townsville. From 1974 to present, Althea Projects (formerly known as Wee Care Family Incorporated) has been consistent in our commitment to supporting and strengthening the capacity of vulnerable families, children and young people within Townsville and surrounding regions. Althea Projects operates in an integrated, place-based approach with other service providers and key stakeholders in working with families across the full range of complex issues that face families and children. The organisation operates from a child centered family focussed and culturally inclusive framework.