

NSW Health 2009 Aboriginal Health Awards Entry Template

ENTRY FOR NOMINATED INDIVIDUALS

Name of nominated individual

Sister Alison Bush AO, RN, CM, F.R.A.C.O.G(Hon), FRCNA(Hon), FCN (NSW) (Hon).



Relevance to entry category

HALL OF FAME

I am proud to enter Sister Alison Bush into the Hall of Fame category for the NSW Aboriginal Health Awards. Sister Bush has inputted into policy and service delivery at a local, state and national level, she has dedicated over forty years of her life to improve the outcomes for Aboriginal mothers and babies across Australia.

Alison is a descendant of the Ngalakan clan Ngukurr (Roper River) on her father's side and on her mother's side a descendant of the traditional language group of Garawa Borroloola (NT). Both her parents were members of the stolen generations, who were taken to Groote Eylandt. She grew up in Darwin where she went to school with Tom Calma.

She was a sports enthusiast, an avid cricketer in her early days when she represented NSW in the NSW Women's Cricket Junior and Senior clubs from 1963- 1977 and played state hockey from 1970 to 1975.

Sister Bush was the first Aboriginal Midwife to be based at a major maternity hospital in New South Wales.

Sister Bush has worked tirelessly over the last forty years to improve the health of Aboriginal mums and babies. She is well known around the Redfern and Marrickville area and to everyone at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital who affectionately call her Sister Bush. She has delivered over 100 Aboriginal babies.

For eight years she played a leading part, along with other former King George V staff members, in

setting up a national maternity health training program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers. This was in partnership with the Royal Australian College of Obstetrics & Gynaecology and the James Cooke University Townsville.

Sister Bush has been involved in developing policy at the local level for many years and was recently a member on the SSWAHS Advisory Committee for the Maternity Services Plan

Sister Bush has also devoted numerous years advocating for Aboriginal mums that come into RPAH, Sr Bush has done this in a quite and professional manner. Part of her advocacy role involves being a cultural broker, she displays a deep sense of social justice and 'makes sure that the Aboriginal women and babies are cared for in a culturally respectful, safe & secure way'. This also involves women and babies from all across NSW who come to RPAH for maternal care.

Sister Bush has always given leadership with competence and cared for all people with dignity, humour and compassion.

Personal development, including academic and/or formal recognised education

1964 – Registered Nurse (General training Marrickville District Hospital 1960-1964)

1966 - Midwife (Canterbury District Memorial Hospital)

1967 - Certificate in Infant Welfare

1991- Current, member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Consultative Committee (ATSIECC), Faculty of Nursing , University of Sydney.

1993 – Clinical Nurse Consultant as Aboriginal Liaison Midwife

Member of NSW Nurses Association

Member of NSW Midwives Association

Member CATSIN

Member of the Indigenous Women's Health Committee with the Royal Australia College of O&G.

Publications:

Bush, A. C and van Holst Pellekaan 1995. S.M. Footprints: a trial to survival. In Gray G and Pratt (eds) Issues in Australia Nursing 4, p 219 -234. Churchill Livingstone. Melbourne.

O'Conner M C and Bush A C. 1996, pregnancy outcomes of Australian Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. Medical Journal of Australia. 164; 516-517.

In Michels D and Fowler (Eds). 1997, Only the Beginning 2nd ed; where to and how to have your baby; looking after yourself in pregnancy. The Waterloo Girls Centre and South Sydney Youth Services Waterloo NSW.

Allnut J and Bush AC 1997. Antenatal care: a key to our survival, University of Sydney

Professional development (across the role in the workplace)

1997: Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists: This prestigious award, conferred in April 1998, recognises the contribution to Indigenous Women's Health particularly through the Maternal Skills Transfer Programme as well as to years of dedicated service to the health care system in general.

1997: Distinguished Nursing Service Award: Awarded by the Institute of Nursing Executives for contributions and dedication to the nursing profession.

1997: The Pamela Powers Nursing Service Award: Awarded by the Royal Prince Alfred Graduate Nurses' Association in "recognition of your significant contribution to the Nursing Profession"

1998: Honorary Fellowship of the New South Wales College of Nursing: Awarded in recognition of service to nursing and in particular to the indigenous people of Australia.

1998: Invited by Professor Marcia Langton to accept an Honorary Fellowship of the Centre for Indigenous Natural and Cultural Resource Management (CINCRM) Northern Territory University.

1999: 26 January, 1999 created and Officer in the General Division of The Order of Australia.

1999: 10th October, Honorary member Royal College of Nursing, Australia.

1999-2007: Cultural awareness training to medical students through Sydney University.

2007-2009: Member of SSWAHS Area Health Advisory Committee (AHAC).

Engagement with the community (negotiation, time, commitment)

Alison continues to work extensively across the community raising awareness of Aboriginal culture, liaising with the Aboriginal Medical Service and providing a link between the Women's Health Service, Maternity Services, Community Health and other Aboriginal initiatives within Sydney South West.

In recognition of Sister Bush's commitment and dedication to the support of all Aboriginal patients the "Sister Alison Bush Lounge" was dedicated at RPAH. This lounge provides a comfortable environment for the many Aboriginal patients who attend RPAH from vast distances and allows them to support each other in times of need.

Engagement with the community 'beyond the role' (negotiation, time, commitment)

Sister Bush gives freely of her time to the needs of the community not only within Women's Health but also to other medical disciplines. Sister Bush is a member of the Health Advisory Council for SSWAHS.

Involvement in other programs (programs for which the individual is not responsible)

- Maternal Health Skills Transfer Program. Principle role in theoretical and clinical teaching.
- University of Sydney: Faculty of Nursing 1992-1996 key participation in 'Aboriginal Health Workshops' in the Community Nursing component of Bachelor of Nursing program.
- Lectures to post-graduate Midwifery students.
- Participation in cultural awareness workshops with the Koori Centre.
- Lectures on Aboriginal Health issues to students in Masters of Public Health.
- Nepean Hospital 1997: Conferring in an Advisory capacity for Aboriginal Health workers on the implementation of a program in 'Basic Ultrasound (Obstetrics).
- Member of the SSWAHS Aboriginal Health Advisory Committee
- Mentors year 4 Medical students with regard to Aboriginal culture
- Attends the Indigenous Women's Health committee meetings in Darwin on behalf of RANZCOG
- Attends SSWAHS Women's Health Services Department of Community Health
- Member of SSWAHS Maternity Services Planning committee
- Provides advice and ongoing in-service to staff on Aboriginal culture
- Has been active in the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nursing