

Embargoed until Wednesday 2 May 2018

Media release

Linda Burney and June Oscar to address global gathering in Sydney

Prominent Australian politician Linda Burney and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner June Oscar will address a gathering of up to 2,000 Indigenous people from around the world in November.

[Healing Our Spirit Worldwide](#) is considered an epicentre of Indigenous culture, community and activism. Co-hosted by the [University of Sydney](#) and [The Healing Foundation](#), the Eighth Gathering will focus on the overarching theme 'For our grandchildren's grandchildren'.

The Hon Linda Burney MP, of the Wiradjuri Nation from New South Wales and the first Aboriginal woman elected to the House of Representatives, will give the opening address. She said the gathering would provide timely international perspectives as Australia considers enshrining a First Nations voice in the constitution.

June Oscar AO, a proud Bunuba woman, has advocated for Indigenous Australian languages, social justice and women's issues throughout her career and will present the closing address at the gathering.

"The Healing Our Spirit Worldwide gathering offers an exciting opportunity to join with Indigenous people from around the world to celebrate our collective resilience and strength and share stories of success," Ms Oscar said. "We come from the oldest continuous civilisation on earth and our very survival in this country is testament to our knowledge systems, identity and strength as a people. When we take the time to listen to the truth of Indigenous peoples, we can move forward and truly realise our visions for building a better future for our children and grandchildren."

Maggie Hodgson, the director of Healing Our Spirit Worldwide's governing body the International Indigenous Council, said focusing on the future was essential to improving the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people globally.

"Hundreds of years of colonialism has disrupted knowledge gathering, sharing and remembering," she said. "We look to the Eighth Gathering to renew the power of this knowledge and wisdom to sustain our identity, culture, families and communities."

The University of Sydney's acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor ([Indigenous Strategy and Services](#)), [Professor Juanita Sherwood](#), said the University was honoured to co-host Healing Our Spirit Worldwide - the first to be co-hosted by a University - on the lands of the Cadigal people of the Eora Nation.

"On behalf of the University, and with the Indigenous community of Sydney, I warmly welcome our local and international guests. The gathering presents an opportunity to involve our community - both on campus and in broader society - in the issues and concerns facing Indigenous people in this country," Professor Sherwood, a descendant of the Wiradjuri Nation, said.

HEALING OUR SPIRIT WORLDWIDE

THE
EIGHTH
GATHERING

Richard Weston, a descendant of the Meriam people of the Torres Strait and CEO of The Healing Foundation, which partners with communities to address ongoing trauma caused by the disruption and mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over the past 230 years, said the gathering offered an important opportunity for Indigenous people to share knowledge and experiences.

“Acknowledging and harnessing the ancient wisdom passed down through generations is key,” Mr Weston said. “The Healing Foundation’s work has shown that the best results can be achieved when communities are empowered to identify and address the challenges they face.”

About Healing Our Spirit Worldwide

[Healing Our Spirit Worldwide](#) began in Canada in the 1980s to address substance abuse and dependence among the world’s Indigenous people. Gatherings have been held approximately every four years since 1992, in different parts of the world, focusing on a diverse range of topics relevant to Indigenous lives.

The Eighth Gathering will be held from 26 - 29 November 2018, at Sydney’s International Convention Centre. It is the second time Sydney has hosted the gathering; the Second Gathering was also held in Sydney in 1994.

Workshops, plenary sessions and activities will address topics relevant to Indigenous people including: Healing & Health; Land & Language; Learning, Education & Employment; Lore, Law & Justice; and Our Future.

A Gathering Space with free activities and performances will also be on offer to attendees and the public - including dedicated sessions for children, young people and Elders.

Explore the [program](#).

Healing Our Spirit Worldwide offers a discounted price to Elders, young people and groups, as well as a day registration option. To register to attend go to hosw.com/register.

Healing Our Spirit Worldwide welcomes abstract submissions via: hosw.com/abstract-submissions. Members of the public, community groups and others are invited to submit ideas for poster, oral and workshop presentations to be hosted by the Eighth Gathering by 30 May 2018.

For regular updates [subscribe online](#).

Media enquiries:

University of Sydney: Rachel Fergus, 0478 316 809, rachel.fergus@sydney.edu.au

The Healing Foundation: Raina Hunter, 0402 145 820, raina@healingfoundation.org.au

***Gawuwi gamarda Healing Our Spirit Worldwidegu Ngalya nangari nura
Cadigalmirung.***

***Calling our friends to come, to be at Healing Our Spirit Worldwide. We meet on the
country of the Cadigal.***