

Honouring Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue.

Reflections from Aunty Dulcie Flower

CATSINaM's elder, Aunty Dulcie Flower shares her reflections on Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, and the sorrow of learning of her passing:

"Lowitja was Lois when I met her for the first time in mid-1968, she was a public servant in South Australia during the reign of the late Don Dunstan's premiership of South Australia.

The parliament of South Australia had made a statement recognising Aboriginal Land in the state, and it was the first time in Australia that an official statement had been made.

Lois said, "It doesn't go far enough, it's not legislation, nothing's changed".

She would attend the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders annual conferences (FCAATSI), as a delegate.

She organised a gathering on the history of FCAATSI a few years ago.

Lois became a Registered Nurse and worked tirelessly on improving the health status of Aboriginal people.

At the time, ATSIC leadership was a huge challenge, but she managed to ensure positive and lasting changes were made to many people's lives.

Lois later chose the name Lowitja and became a founding patron of numerous organisations, one of which was CATSIN - now CATSINaM.

Lowitja attended the inaugural meeting of Aboriginal Nurses organised by Sally Goold (Bamblett) and her team, I was the only Torres Strait Islander Nurse there and was so pleased to have TI Nurses included.

Dr O'Donoghue mentored Sally and many others, and she was known to stay for the full conference (when it was customary for dignitaries to just put in an appearance).

She had a great love for Aboriginal people and took pride in being an Aboriginal woman able to achieve the best possible outcomes she could for people.

She was humble, had a good sense of humour, and was loyal, a busy woman, yet always making time to mentor others, so they could achieve their goals."

Dr Lowitja's life is to be celebrated, and her legacy will live on.

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