

# 2023 John Koowarta Reconciliation

## LAW SCHOLARSHIP

Closing date: 30 September 2022

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are advised this document contains an image of a deceased person.*



**Law Council**  
OF AUSTRALIA



The John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship is available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in an approved course of study provided by an Australian tertiary institute, which is a prerequisite to admission as a legal practitioner in any Australian jurisdiction.

The John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship commemorates John Koowarta, a member of the Winychanam community at Aurukun and a traditional owner of the Archer River region on Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. Mr Koowarta challenged the Queensland Government under the Federal *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* after its decision to prevent the Aboriginal Land Fund from acquiring a crown lease on a pastoral property for the Winychanam people. The decision by the Bjelke-Peterson Government was based on cabinet policy at the time, which opposed ownership of large tracts of land by Aboriginal peoples. The Queensland Government challenged the validity of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* in the High Court and was defeated. The High Court's decision was later pivotal in the recognition of native title in *Mabo v Queensland (No.2)*.

Mr Koowarta was described by Robert Tickner, the former Commonwealth Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs (1991-96), as "an Australian hero who was a courageous fighter against Governments which discriminate against people on the basis of race." John Koowarta died in 1991 without fulfilling his dream of seeing his traditional lands returned.

The John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship Trust was established by the Law Council in 1994, with a \$200,000 contribution from the Federal Government. The Law Council of Australia continues to act as trustee and administrator, with the aim of building the scholarship and promoting the study and practice of the law by more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Law Council is proud of the outstanding success of the John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship, which has assisted several Indigenous Australians in completing their legal studies, many of whom have gone on to make valuable contributions to their communities, the legal profession and Australia.

## Last Year's Recipient

**Mr Cameron Downey and Ms Michelle Burchill**

Mr Cameron Downey and Ms Michelle Burchill were both awarded the Law Council's 2022 John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship.

Mr Downey is a proud Ghungalu man and is currently studying a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) and a Bachelor of Information Technology (Computer Science) at the Queensland University of Technology. Ms Burchill is a proud Kuku Yalanji woman and is in her first year of law as a mature student.

## Previous Recipients

The John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship has assisted a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander law students across Australia to complete their legal studies. See list of previous award winners below:

Ms Terri Janke	Ms Krista McMeeken
Mr Nathan Jarro	Ms Aurora Milroy
Ms Gina Masterton	Mr Ashley Walker
Mr Jason Briggs	Mr Peter Dawson
Ms June Kenny	Ms Melinda Mitchell
Mr Matthew Karakoulakis	Ms Danielle Davis
Ms Tammy Williams	Mr Corey Smith
Ms Corina Martin	Ms Samara Hand
Ms Leanne Liddle	Ms Laura Vincent
Mr Terrence Stedman	Ms Alison Boland
Mr Bruce Rudeforth	Ms Tamara Kenny
Ms Stephanie Bott	Ms Mikaela French
Ms Rebecca Martin	Ms Tayla Anderson
Ms Peta MacGillivray	Ms Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts
Ms Hannah Dawson	Mr Noah Bedford
Ms Merinda Dutton	Ms Sophie Coffin

# 2023 Scholarship

Applicants must complete the attached form.

In addition, all applicants should provide a brief statement of their aspirations, describing their reasons for studying law and their objectives upon completion of your legal training. Applicants must also provide a brief curriculum vitae and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two referees. Please provide any other relevant information with the application, such as details of community or extra-curricular activities, which may also be considered by the Advisory Committee.

1. Applicants must be of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

Applicants must identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and be accepted as such within the community in which they live, or have lived. A letter or statement from the applicant's community, Land Council or cultural centre should be provided to this effect.

2. Scholarships will be awarded on the recommendation of an Advisory Committee appointed by the Law Council of Australia.

The selection of scholarship recipients will be based primarily on academic achievement and, if necessary, on reports from referees familiar with the applicant's work and suitability for a career in law. A scholarship will not be awarded to an applicant who already holds any other Australian bursary or scholarship.

3. A scholarship to the maximum value of \$5,500 will be awarded to successful applicant for the 2023 academic year.

The scholarship may be used for part-time or full-time study. The scholarship is paid directly to the student.

Part-time students may receive part payment (pro-rata) depending on study load. The scholarship is not means tested. For more information about the affect of a scholarship on ABSTUDY or other study assistance contact Centrelink on 132 317.

In the past, scholarships have been awarded for a full course of study, subject to review at the end of each year.

4. No scholarship will be awarded if the Advisory Committee believes there are no applicants of sufficient merit or suitability.

## Applications close 30 September 2022

Contact:

E. koowarta@lawcouncil.asn.au

T. 02 6246 3788

# Advice for Applicants

## APPLICANTS MUST BE OF ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DESCENT

For the purposes of this application, an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is someone who is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she lives, or has lived. Applicants will be asked to provide a letter from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation or community supporting their claim, or otherwise satisfy the Advisory Committee that they are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person.

## A SCHOLARSHIP WILL BE AWARDED ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE LAW COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA.

Selection of the scholarship recipient will be based primarily on academic merit judged on results achieved and, if the advisory committee thinks it necessary, on reports from referees familiar with the applicant's work and suitability for a career in the law.

The scholarship will not be awarded to an applicant who already holds any other Australian bursary or scholarship.

## APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants will need to provide a brief statement of their aspirations, describing their purpose in studying law, and outlining the uses to which they hope to put their legal training. Applicants will also need to provide a brief curriculum vitae and the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two referees. Community involvement by applicants may also be taken into consideration.

Applications must be submitted on the official John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship application form.

## THE VALUE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP GIVEN IN 2023 WILL BE UP TO \$5,500

The scholarship may be sought for part-time study or full-time study.

The scholarship will be paid direct to the student.

Part-time students may receive part payments depending on the number of units studied. Payments will not be related to, or affected by, an ABSTUDY benefit received by successful applicants. However, cash payments will be counted as income in determining ABSTUDY eligibility.

All successful applicants will receive or benefit from scholarship payments calculated on the same basis. In other words, no means tests will apply.

Scholarships will be awarded for a full course of study, subject to review at the end of each year.

If a scholarship holder fails to complete the course of study set down for any year, the scholarship must be surrendered and the payment made to the holder must be refunded on a pro-rata basis. If a holder's performance in any semester is unsatisfactory in the opinion of the head of the law school or institution, further payments under the scholarship may be withheld.

A scholarship will not be awarded if the advisory committee believes there is no applicant of sufficient merit.

# Closing date for applications is 30 September 2022

## PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU SUBMIT ALL THE ITEMS ON THIS APPLICATION FORM CHECKLIST:

- A one page curriculum vitae (including the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two referees).
- A one page statement of your aspirations, describing your purposes in studying law and the uses to which you hope to put your legal training.
- A letter from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community or organisation confirming your status as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, enabling you to apply for this scholarship.
- A transcript of your tertiary results to date, OR if you have not commenced your tertiary studies a copy of confirmation of your enrolment.
- This form, completed and signed.

## Personal Details

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address (during university semester) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (during business hours) \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

## PLEASE SEND THIS FORM AND ALL ATTACHMENTS TO:

**The Trustee**  
**John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship Trust**  
**C/- Law Council of Australia, GPO Box 1989**  
**Canberra ACT 2601**  
or email: [koowarta@lawcouncil.asn.au](mailto:koowarta@lawcouncil.asn.au)

## Academic

University (where studies will be or are being undertaken) \_\_\_\_\_

Title of course (enclose proof of enrolment) \_\_\_\_\_

Year of course you will be studying in 2022  
(eg. first year, second year...) \_\_\_\_\_

Basis of study (full time or part time) \_\_\_\_\_

Total duration of course (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

Expected year and month of  
graduation \_\_\_\_\_

Name of secondary school or institution \_\_\_\_\_

Year secondary school completed \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a copy of your Tertiary Entrance Statement and Higher School Certificate (including subjects completed and scores), OR a transcript of your tertiary education results (to date) if you have already undertaken some tertiary study.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

**E. [koowarta@lawcouncil.asn.au](mailto:koowarta@lawcouncil.asn.au)**  
**T. 02 6246 3788**

The John Koowarta Reconciliation Law Scholarship  
is proudly administered and supported  
by the Law Council of Australia

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