

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Building strong Indigenous families

Representatives from remote Indigenous communities across Australia will journey to the University of Newcastle next week for a national conference to discuss ways to overcome challenges facing Indigenous families.

The Australian Governor General, Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC, will officially open the 2<sup>nd</sup> **National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Family & Community Strengths Conference** on Tuesday 1 December 2009.

More than 300 people will attend the conference co-hosted by the University of Newcastle and the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Inc (SNAICC).

Director of the University's Family Action Centre, Judi Geggie, said the conference would bring together Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members, community workers, researchers and policymakers.

"These representatives, including 20 from remote communities outside Alice Springs and Arnhem Land, will share stories about cultural, family and community strengths that have contributed to improving life for Australian Indigenous people," Ms Geggie said.

"Success stories will focus on how individual communities have overcome challenges that have historically faced our Indigenous people, including safety, access to education, poor nutrition and availability of health services."

Through yarning, delegates will discuss nurturing cultural identity in children, the influence of land, spirit and culture of communities, and opportunities to learn from the strength and wisdom of Indigenous Elders.

A highlight of the conference will be a performance by Shellie Morris, Ambassador for the Fred Hollows Foundation. An Indigenous singer/songwriter based in Darwin, Ms Morris will perform a song written especially for the conference on Tuesday 1 December 2009.

The conference is sponsored by the Australian Government's Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and the University of Newcastle.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Family & Community Strengths Conference will be held at the University of Newcastle from Tuesday 1 to Thursday 3 December 2009.**

For more information visit: [www.newcastle.edu.au/ifsc](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/ifsc)

To organise interviews with keynote speakers, contact Mark Maclean in the Family Action Centre on 02 4921 7014 or 0422 485 368.