**Media Release – Feb 23, 2018**

Over 120 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation (QATSIF) scholarship recipients gathered at the Australian Catholic University recently to celebrate receiving a QATSIF QCE (Queensland Certificate of Education) scholarship.

In 2017, QATSIF provided scholarships of $1000 p.a. to around 2290 Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to support them in their year 11 & 12 studies across all Queensland education sectors – State, Catholic and Independent. Despite there being a smaller cohort of Year 11 students generally across Queensland in 2018, due to the change in Prep entry ages over a decade ago, QATSIF still has 1045 new Year 11 scholarship recipients this year.

Amongst QATSIF’s 2017 alumni is Lucinda Colbert, from Forest Lake College in Brisbane, who was named as Queensland’s top performing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student. Lucinda is taking a gap year in 2018 before beginning her studies in medicine.

Around 120 students from 36 South East Queensland schools attended QATSIF’s New Scholarship Recipients ceremony at ACU - Banyo.

Just over 300 guests were treated to performances by male and female Aboriginal dance troupes from Ambrose Treacy College, Indooroopilly and Mary MacKillop College, Nundah.

Aunty Maroochy Barambah, a renowned actress, author and operatic singer, welcomed those gathered to her Turrbal lands with a stirring rendition of Advance Australia Fair in language.

QATSIF’s patron, Aunty Ruth Hegarty, the author of “Is that you, Ruthie?” and many other books, spoke to those gathered about her deep pride in the many achievements of QATSIF’s students. She commended QATSIF’s tireless efforts in changing the lives of around 7,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across the past 9 years.

Aunty Ruth who is a major figure in the campaign for the return of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wages stolen by successive Queensland governments between the 1890s and 1970s, spoke about her tremendous pride in QATSIF’s efforts to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

QATSIF is tasked with providing educational scholarships to allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to complete year 11 & 12. Some of QATSIF’s funding comes from the interest on unspent “Stolen Wages” compensation monies held in trust by the Queensland government.

The QATSIF students speaking at this event all paid tribute to the hardship, sacrifices and great gift provided by both our Elders and particularly those who had their wages stolen.

Out of the 36 schools present, 23 students received QATSIF leadership badges to recognise their election to school leadership roles including a number of College Captains and Vice Captains.

The scholarship ceremony concluded with the presentation of QATSIF certificates and an inspirational speech by twin QATSIF graduates, Amanda and Chantelle Martin who spoke about the difference that a QATSIF scholarship had made to their lives. Both Amanda and Chantelle are currently studying dual Law degrees at Griffith University in Brisbane.

Throughout 2018, QATSIF will hold a number of events for its students at universities across Queensland.

QATSIF’s tenth round of scholarships will open for current Year 10 & 11 students in mid-June. Families need to approach their schools about applying for these scholarships.

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