**Media Release 21st September 2016**

**Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) win significant NSW Multicultural grant endorsed by NSW Ministers inclusive of Linda Burney MP the first**[**Aboriginal**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Aborigine)**woman to serve in the House of Representatives**

Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) have been funded by NSW Multicultural minister Mr.John Ajaka MP to deliver two youth workshops in NSW starting with Western Sydney - Mount Druitt Hub on the 22nd and 23rd October 2016 and Tweed Heads, Northern NSW (29th-30th October). The workshop titled B.L.A.C.K stands for Bold Leadership Awareness Cultural Knowledge. Held over two days, the workshops will include sessions on leadership, ASSI and broader community culture, stori and panel discussions as well as performances by local voices. B.LA.C.K is aimed at young people from all cultures between the ages of 17-30 and will provide the opportunity to share diverse insights to education, training, wellness including creating and sustaining a strong sense of community, confronting common challenges, developing leadership skills and promoting social enterprise.

The first [Aboriginal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australian_Aborigine) woman to serve in the House of Representatives – Ms.Linda Burney MP supported the ASSIPJ application along with other state members of parliament such as Mr.Alex Greenwich - Member for Sydney, Mr.Jamie Parker - Greens and Mr.Gary Bagnall - Tweed Heads Shire Council. Other endorsements from leading grass roots organisations were state body NSW Council for Pacific Communities, Fiji Youth Initiative (FYI), Pacifika ASSI Communities and ETM Perspectives delivery partner.

Ms.Burney wrote "ASSIPJ have provided vital and much needed education and representation for its community since its establishment and has successfully campaigned for greater recognition of Australian South Sea Islander people." Ms Burney followed in a public speech on Saturday 17th September 2016 as she opened the Women of Diversity Dinner 2016 saying... "I wanted to not only recognised and pay respect to traditional owners. I wanted to share the story of three remarkable women here tonight Emelda Davis, Shireen Malamoo and Lola Forester. They are Indigenous women that live here on this land but come from descendants of South Sea Islands. Part of that story is that the forebears of these three remarkable women share something that is an untold story in this country. It related to the era of slavery when people were stolen from Vanuatu, Solomon's and many other Pacific islands to endure slave-like conditions when they came to this country to work".

The overarching theme of the workshops will be the history sharing of the descendants of blackbirding, Pacific diversity and broader community commonality. Examples of leadership will facilitate through a diversity of keynote volunteer speakers such as Shireen Malamoo – Aboriginal / Kanak Activist and recipient of this years NSWCPC ‘Overall Outstanding Award’, Director and Indigenous/ASSI Community Leader workshop facilitator Duane Vickery of ETM Perspectives, Dr Jioji Ravulo - Senior Lecturer (Social Work) at Western Sydney University, South Sudanese child soldier-turned-Blacktown lawyer and the subject for 2016 portrait winner of the People's Choice award Deng Adut, James Pitts former CEO Odyssey House – drug and rehabilitation centre, former Director of Vanuatu Museum Professor Kirk Huffman, Emelda Davis President of ASSIPJ and Master of ceremonies and project coordinator Zachary Wone – NSWCPC ‘Community Youth’ award recipient. To register for the workshops visit www.assipj.com.au

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