

John Paterson

Chancellor, I have the pleasure to present to you John Paterson, whom Council has determined should be awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts.

John, also affectionately known as Uncle Patto in Aboriginal communities, has shown leadership, commitment, and exemplary work over the last decades in the Aboriginal community-controlled health sector and advocating for Aboriginal Territorians during COVID-19.

A born and bred Territorian with ancestry links to the Ngalakan people in Ngukurr, John has spent the last four decades working closely with Aboriginal Territorians to improve their representation and wellbeing.

Working in the Aboriginal affairs portfolio in the public sector since 1979, John has been focusing on First Nations health, housing and education in his work at a local, Territory and Federal level.

In his career, John has worked as the Chief Executive Officer of the Wurlu Wurlinjang Health Service in Katherine, Manager of Regional Services at the Northern Land Council, adviser for Aboriginal development and housing at the Northern Territory Government and a wide variety of roles serving Aboriginal communities across the nation.

In his current work as the Chief Executive Officer at the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory (AMSANT), the peak body for Aboriginal community controlled health services in the Territory, John has been tirelessly advocating for Aboriginal health during COVID-19, including educating the communities about vaccination and supporting culturally safe, high quality comprehensive primary health care.

John's connection with Charles Darwin University dated back to the 1980s when he studied an Associate Diploma in Public Administration at the then Darwin Institute of Technology.

He has recently been appointed the co-chair of the new CDU-Menzies School of Medicine board and actively promotes the need to grow the Territory's own medical workforce.

Leading the new medical school board with Professor Len Notaras and Ms Donna Ah Chee, John also brings a wealth of knowledge and experience in First Nations health to develop a local medical program.

He strongly believes in the need to grow our own medical school, governed by local experts including Aboriginal health and education leaders and supported by all level of governments.

John shares the vision with the board for the health system in the NT, including primary health care, hospitals and specialist

outreach medical services that provide our health workforce with work opportunities to ensure we have an effective and efficient health system that will support us into the future.

As a leader and strong advocate for Aboriginal communities, John strongly encourages the younger generations to become leaders in their respective communities and undertake further tertiary studies, especially in medicine and health.

Chancellor,

In recognition of his significant contribution to the health and wellbeing of First Nations peoples, the Council of Charles Darwin University awards John Paterson the Honorary Degree Doctor of Arts.