Croakey Health Media appoints inaugural Board

The independent media organisation, Croakey Health Media, has announced the founding members of its inaugural board and the appointment of the board’s chair, Mrs Janine Mohamed, a Narrunga Kaurna woman and health equity advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Croakey Health Media Ltd was incorporated in August 2018 as a not-for-profit public interest journalism organisation as part of its mission to build a sustainable new model for social journalism for health. Before then, an informal network of journalists and contributors had been operating under the Croakey banner for several years (read more about Croakey’s history here).

Croakey’s Board of Directors are:
- Chair Janine Mohamed, a Narrunga Kaurna woman and CEO of the Lowitja Institute;
- Board Members
  - Dr Melissa Sweet, Founder and Managing Editor of Croakey;
  - Lyn Brodie, CEO of Optometry Australia;
  - Dr Megan Williams, Senior Lecturer and Head of the Indigenous Health Discipline at the Graduate School of Health, University of Technology, Sydney; and
  - Paula O’Connell, Director of Oconsult Business Consultancy.

Croakey Health Media’s Strategic Plan (2019-2022) sets out a vision for “A vigorous and sustainable public interest journalism sector contributes to the health and wellbeing of people, families, communities, policies, societies and the environment”.

Croakey Health Media’s interlinked strategic priorities to support healthier people, places and policies are:
1. Create a sustainable environment for public interest journalism
2. Privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ voices and expertise
3. Inform, engage and empower communities
4. Scrutinise and disrupt power constructively
5. Provide leadership through innovation.

Mrs Mohamed said media organisations like Croakey have an important role in ensuring that research makes a real and meaningful difference for the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She said: “In taking on my new role at Lowitja Institute, I’m excited about our focus on research translation, and ensuring

We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians of the country where we live, work and travel upon, and to the Elders, past, present and future.
that what works is put into policy, practice and programs, and leads to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.”

Melissa Sweet, Founder of Croakey, thanked organisations and individuals supporting the mission of Croakey, and recognising the vital role of public interest journalism as a significant social determinant of health.

“In an era of so many threats to public health, including climate change and rising inequality, it is vital that we find new ways to sustain and develop the important roles of public interest journalism,” she said. “I commend the directors and members of Croakey Health Media for their commitment and dedication to supporting public interest journalism that centres health equity concerns.”

Lyn Brodie looks to bring value with her broad business and governance skills at this exciting stage of Croakey’s evolution. She said: “I am passionate about research making a real difference on the ground and Croakey is a fantastic vehicle for translating findings.”

Dr Megan Williams said: “I was motivated to support Croakey’s development as well as its role with health and social science researchers to enable their work to be translated to wider and international audiences.”

Paula O’Connell said she had joined the board because of “the opportunity to apply my business skills in an environment that makes a difference to peoples’ lives and to work with such a talented and dedicated group of professionals”.

Members of Croakey Health Media voted for the Board Members for a term of three years. The members, who collectively contribute to Croakey’s social journalism team, are: Dr Ruth Armstrong, Amy Coopes, Jennifer Doggett, Summer May Finlay, Marie McInerney, Paula O’Connell, Dr Mark Ragg, Dr Lesley Russell, Dr Tim Senior, Dr Melissa Sweet, Mitchell Ward, and Dr Megan Williams.

Croakey Health Media acknowledges and thanks the legal firm Thomson Geer for probono work in supporting the set-up of Croakey Health Media.

About Croakey
Croakey is a social journalism initiative focussing on health and encompassing issues that are poorly served by the mainstream media, such as the social determinants of health, health inequalities, the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, climate change and health, rural and remote health, and health policy more broadly. See https://croakey.org/about-croakey-health-media/ for more information about the new Board of Directors.

For more information, or to schedule an interview with Melissa Sweet or Janine Mohamed, please call Paula O’Connell on 0456 263 334 or email paula@croakey.org.

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