The Northern Territory’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners have been celebrated tonight at the annual Excellence Awards at Parliament House.

“This year there were 58 nominations - almost twice as many as last year,” Minister for Health Robyn Lambley said.

“This is a testament to the growing focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners as a crucial and highly valued part of the NT health sector.

“There were also a record number of new Practitioner nominations, which is an encouraging sign as the Territory Government works towards increasing the number of Aboriginal Health Practitioners in the NT and acknowledge this workforce’s contribution to remote health.

“In July I announced the Back On Track plan, which aims to increase our of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioner workforce by 10 per cent each year.

"We have a real opportunity to match the improvements in closing the gap in the health status of indigenous and non-indigenous people, by increasing the Aboriginal health workforce.

“As chair of the Back on Track taskforce I am acutely aware of the need to grow this profession in the NT.

“It’s important that we celebrate their achievements and use these awards to celebrate the value of Aboriginal Health Practitioners in health service delivery.

“This year’s field was highly competitive and the stories of our winners and highly commended reflect this.”

The 2014 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Practitioners Excellence Award winners are:

**Overall Legend Award:**

**Winner**

Colleen Kantilla: Julanimawu Clinic, Bathurst Island, Tiwi Islands.
Remote Award:

Winner

Colleen Kantilla: Julanimawu Clinic, Bathurst Island, Tiwi Islands.

Colleen was born in 1962 on the Tiwi Islands in the local community of Wurrumiyanga. Colleen first started working as a 16-year-old Hospital Assistant and then began a course in Aboriginal Health Workers Basic Skills. Throughout her career spanning over 30 years, Colleen has maintained her clinical skills, keeping up to date with new technologies and clinical practice. She continues to care for her community and participate in the on-call after hour’s emergency roster. Over the years Colleen has worked with many multidisciplinary health team members and has helped mentor and support them during their time on the islands. Colleen’s work colleagues say that she is an exceptional Health Practitioner, highly respected, passionate, displays great strength and ability to stay commitment and positive.

Highly Commended

Jeremy Downs: Yuendumu Health Centre

Jeremy began his training as a clinical Aboriginal Health Worker at Danila Dilba in 2000. In 2002 Jeremy moved to remote health on the Tiwi Islands then was transferred to Central Australia in 2009 where he has worked as a Health Practitioner. He is one of the Senior Health Practitioners at the Yuendumu Health Clinic and works with visiting health services. Jeremy is recognised as a positive role model within his profession, his peers and his community members. He promotes his role positively and is passionate about his work in Yuendumu Health Clinic.

Urban Category:

Winner

Cynthia Brock: Danila Dilba Aboriginal Medical Services, Darwin

Cynthia is one of two Specialist Diabetic Coordinators working in the Chronic Disease Care Coordination Team which has responsibilities for providing services to local Nursing Homes with a General Practitioner. Cynthia is also a mentor to staff at Danila Dilba. Cynthia’s professional colleagues describe her as an example of a great team player, who is multi-talented and is excellent to work with. Over time she has also built up trust and respect with her clients.”

Highly Commended

Kym Stanton: Central Australia Aboriginal Congress Association Alice Springs

Kym has worked at Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Association in Alice Springs since 2011. Kym completed her training as an Health Practitioner in 2012 and is now a very important team member in her role as a registered Health Practitioner in her local service. Kym won the 2012 NT ATSIHP Excellence Award category of New Practitioner.

New Practitioner Category:
Winner

Linda Pupangamirri: Julanimawu Clinic, Bathurst Island Tiwi Islands.

Linda is a Tiwi woman and is a role model for her community, working at Julanimawu Health Centre. Linda’s career in health began approximately 10 years ago as a Pharmacy Technician. Linda is a new graduate of the Certificate IV in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Primary Health Care Practice qualification. Since completing her training, Linda works in the Julanimawu Health Centre providing health services such as child health, acute care and also participating in on-call emergencies.

Specialist:

Winner

Elaine Campbell: Central Australian Aboriginal Congress, Alice Springs.

Elaine Campbell is a Luritja and Arrerente woman born in Alice Springs. In 2000, Elaine worked at the Central Australian Aboriginal Congress as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer and later commenced her Aboriginal Health Worker training, completing this in 2004. Elaine says that she “chose to be an Aboriginal Health Worker because she and her families have long standing relationship with the Congress Health Centre and have always felt the need to assist our struggling Aboriginal health status”.

In 2006, she was asked by her manager to assist in the running of the Frail, Aged and Disabled program. Elaine says her confidence has grown whilst working in this program as a sole provider.

She said “she feel the need to improve the health of the Aboriginal people in Central Australia so that we can ‘Close the Gap’ of Aboriginal life expectancy for our future generations”.

Highly Commended

David Cox: Primary Health Care Team Outreach Top End West Darwin

David was born in Alice Springs and has followed a family tradition of working in the health profession. David became an Aboriginal Health Worker in 2002 working in the Alice Springs Hospital. David moved to Darwin in 2011 where he worked across many Top End communities in the Primary Health Care Outreach Team, and Child Health Nurses in the Healthy School Age Kids Program. In 2012, David was appointed to a Male Health Coordinator position in the Primary Health Care Outreach Team providing essential health services to male youth and men in Top End communities. He continues to maintain and build relationships with men discussing health issues, and also promoting the Young Men’s Community Education Program working closely with the Adolescent Sexuality Project Officers. In 2013, David initiated the first inaugural Men’s Camp for youth in Borroloola combining culture and healthy lifestyle education with a focus on nutrition and disease prevention.

Other Finalist Certificates of Encouragement

Marjorie Lindner Mark Sheldon Mental Health Services Central Australia
Phyllis Gorey Mark Sheldon Mental Health Services Central Australia
Tony Duggie  Canteen Creek Clinic, Central Australian Primary Health Care Services
Dawn Daly  Batchelor Institute for Indigenous Tertiary Education Darwin
Sarah Gallagher  Utju (Areyonga) Central Australian Aboriginal Congress Association
Joseph Gideon  Julanimawu Clinic. Top End Primary Health Care Services (DOH)

2013 Legend Winner
Joyce Bohme Maningrida Clinic. Top End Primary Health Care Services (DOH)

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