Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE6108

Scott, Evelyn Ruth

(1935 - 2017)

Born	19350101, Ingham Queensland Australia
Died	20170921, Queensland Australia
Occupation	Aboriginal rights activist, Educator, Social justice advocate

Summary

Dr Evelyn Ruth Scott was an indigenous rights activist and social justice campaigner who played a pivotal role in the reconciliation process in Australia. She was a key figure in the ‘yes’ campaign of the 1967 referendum whereby 90 per cent of Australian voters chose ‘Yes’ to count Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the census, and give the Australian Government the power to make laws for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Details

Evelyn Scott began working in the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League in the 1960s after experiencing discrimination in employment, housing and health.

In 1971, she joined the Indigenous-controlled Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) as vice-president and she became the first general-secretary in 1973. Through her role at FCAATSI and as Chair of Cairns and District Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Women, Evelyn was pivotal in improving access to legal, housing, employment and medical services for communities. From 1997 to 2000, she became the chair for the National Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation.

As a passionate campaigner for the Great Barrier Reef, Evelyn served as a Marine Park Authority board member during the 1980s. She believed in the need for stronger Indigenous voices in issues regarding the land and sea.

Evelyn was awarded honorary doctorates from James Cook University (2001) and the Australian Catholic University (2000). In 1977 Evelyn received the Queen’s Jubilee Medal for her contribution to the advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and in 2001 she was awarded an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia. Evelyn was also the recipient of the Queensland Greats Award for her contribution to the history and development of the state in 2003.

A monument in Parkes, ACT, commemorates Dr Evelyn Scott and recognizes her contribution to reconciliation in Australia. The monument also honours the work of Dr Faith Bandler and Lady Jessie Street.

Archival resources

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Evelyn Scott, leader of the Aboriginal Reconciliation Council, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

National Library of Australia, Pictures Collection
Portrait of Dr. Evelyn Scott at Corroboree 2000 [picture] / Loui Seselja

Victor Vincent Julama, son of Vincent Lingiari, James Haire, head of the National Council of Churches and Evelyn Scott are seated among the guest speakers at the Reconciliation Place opening ceremony, Canberra, 28 May 2004 [picture] / Loui Seselja

John Anderson, Bob Carr, Sir Gordon Samuels, Evelyn Scott, Sir William Deane, John Howard, Sir Gustav Nossal, Kim Beazley and Meg Lees, members of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation at Corroboree 2000 [picture] / Loui Seselja

National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection
Evelyn Scott interviewed by Peter Read and Jackie Huggins [sound recording]

John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library
Hazel Hawke and Evelyn Scott. Heart on Sleeve launch, Tranby House November 1998

National Archives of Australia, National Office, Canberra
Personalities - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander - Evelyn Scott, Field Officer, Department of Aboriginal Affairs, 1974

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AIATSIS Pictorial Collection
Photographs from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League conference in Cairns, 1962 and indigent ration day 1954

Opening of a Memorial to the Stolen Generations

John Oxley Library, Manuscripts and Business Records Collection
Collection of posters on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Set 1.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
FCAATSI Oral History Project

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Created 17 November 2017
Last modified 22 March 2019