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Embargoed til Wednesday 18 June 2014

## Aboriginal students encouraged to work hard, achieve and contribute

Aboriginal students from across South Australia will explore future study, training and employment opportunities when they attend the SACE Aboriginal Student Pathways Conference at Flinders University today (Wednesday 18 June).

More than 150 Year 10, 11 and 12 students have registered to attend the sixth annual conference, which will be opened by the Minister for Education and Child Development, Jennifer Rankine.

As well as having the opportunity to talk to representatives from three local universities, the students will attend a mock trial, build video games, explore the brain's flexibility, and experience drama activities.

Many of the students attending are interested in higher and further education, reflecting the 2013 SACE results, where significantly more Aboriginal students achieved their SACE.

SACE Board Chief Executive, Dr Neil McGoran, said it's encouraging to see more Aboriginal students completing their SACE and moving into further study and work.

"Last year the number of Aboriginal students completing Year 12 in South Australia reached a record high, climbing to 238 students, up from 180 in 2012," Dr McGoran said.

"The SACE opens up pathways for students into tertiary study, training and good jobs, and this conference is a great chance for them to explore their future opportunities."

The theme of the conference is: *actually, I can*; a theme that is epitomised by keynote speaker Lakkari Rigney.

Lakkari is studying Speech Pathology at Flinders University, and two years ago was one of 25 recipients of a Governor's Commendation for achieving excellence in the SACE.

Lakkari said her parents and grandparents have instilled in her the importance of a good education, and she firmly believes in working hard, achieving and contributing to her family and the community.

"The opportunities are there for young Aboriginal people - study opens up those opportunities - we just have to be willing to chase them," Lakkari said.

The SACE Aboriginal Student Pathways Conference opens at Flinders University at 9.30am today. (Wednesday 18 June 2014)