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The Australian Academy of Law awards inaugural First Nations Scholarship

A law student who grew up in Alice Springs is the recipient of the Australian Academy of Law's inaugural First Nations Scholarship.

AAL President the Hon Alan Robertson SC says the Academy was inspired to introduce the scholarship for a final year Indigenous law student by the generosity of two donors to the Academy's Public Fund:

"We recognise that the last year of a law degree can be particularly arduous and we wanted to provide some extra assistance to ease the burden for a promising student. As well as the scholarship of \$5000, the Academy will offer a mentor for the 12-month period."

23-year-old Mikeyli Hendry is in the final year of a double degree in Arts and Law at the University of Adelaide.

A proud Arrernte woman, Mikeyli developed a keen interest in the law from a young age and is now looking to concentrate on Criminal Law, Human Rights Law and Family Law.

She says she really appreciates the commitment the AAL is making to an Indigenous student:

"This scholarship means so much for me. Not only will it give me the financial freedom to concentrate fully on my studies and afford the textbooks and support I need for my final year, but it will also help me afford to get back to Alice Springs to visit my family and maintain connections with my community."

Anthony McAvoy SC is Australia's first Indigenous Senior Counsel. He was part of the Academy's three-person scholarship selection panel along with Southern Cross University Professor Bee Chen Goh and UTS Law Professor, Larissa Behrendt AO. Each member of the panel is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.

Mr McAvoy says all nine applicants were impressive:

"I left the interviews feeling inspired and reminded that we have come a long way since I was in their position as a young student. I am sure Mikeyli will benefit greatly from the AAL's generosity and go on to be a fantastic advocate for her people and thereby add significantly to the justice system as a whole."

Mikeyli is determined to practise law and is happy to work anywhere when she graduates, but her ultimate goal is to return to her community and to use her legal skills to help First Nations Peoples.

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