

The Australian Women's Register

Entry type: Person

Entry ID: AWE5575

Williams, Tammy

Occupation Aboriginal rights activist, Barrister, Human rights activist, Human rights lawyer, Lawyer, Solicitor

Summary

Tammy Williams is a trailblazing Indigenous and human rights advocate. She is a practising barrister, founding director of Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, and a leading advisor on Indigenous issues.

Admitted as a barrister in 2002, her legal career includes Commonwealth prosecutor and appointments to quasi-judicial bodies. She has been a member of the National Human Rights Consultative Committee and in 2003 was named the Queensland Women Lawyers Association Emergent Lawyer of the Year.

Details

Tammy Williams is a Murri Lawyer whose family is originally from the Cherbourg Aboriginal Community. She grew up on a farm on the outskirts of Gympie, Queensland. After her father's tragic death by suicide when she was six years old, she moved with her family into a Queensland housing commission home.

When she was seventeen, Williams wrote an award-winning essay on injustice for an international competition. The prize included travelling to the USA to meet Michael Jackson at his Neverland Ranch for a youth conference, a defining experience for her. During these years, she helped her mother, Lesley Williams, to win her stolen wages claim against the Queensland government .

In 1995, Tammy was a delegate to the United Nations World Summit of Children and its Committee on the Rights of the Child. She attended the State of the World forum the following year and in 1997 was awarded the National Human Rights (Youth) Award. In 2000 Tammy received the Law Council of Australia's Koowarta Reconciliation Scholarship, and was guest speaker at the opening ceremony of the Australian Reconciliation Convention.

Tammy was awarded her law degree in 2001 from the Queensland University of Technology and was admitted to the Queensland Bar the following year. Between 2003 and 2007, Tammy was a founding member of the federal government's National Indigenous Council which provided advice on Indigenous issues to Minister Mal Brough and the Ministerial Taskforce on Indigenous Affairs. In 2003 Tammy was awarded by the Queensland Women Law Association, the "Emergent Lawyer of the Year". She was a member of Senator Vanstone's Indigenous Women's Advisory Group and the Youth Pathways Action Plan of Public Prosecutions in Queensland.

In 2004, Tammy took leave from her position at the Department of Public Prosecutions to take up a scholarship at Indigenous Enterprise Partnerships, where she is director and legal and strategic manager. The following year, Tammy was part of the Australian delegation to the UN committee on the Status of Women in New York. Tammy served as a Member of the National Indigenous Council and National Human Rights Consultation Committee before moving into Tribunal work in 2008 with the Children Services Tribunal. She has been a Sessional Member of the Queensland Civil and Administration Tribunal (QCAT) since 2009. Tammy won Queensland University of Technology's 2009 Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

In 2015, Tammy co-authored 'Not Just Black and White' with her mother, a memoir of their fight against the injustices and discrimination faced by Indigenous Australians. Tammy is married with one child.

Published resources

Edited Book

A Woman's Place: 100 Years of Queensland Women Lawyers, Purdon, Susan and Rahemtula, Aladin, 2005

Book

Not Just Black and White: A conversation between a mother and daughter, Williams, Lesley and Tammy, 2015

Site Exhibition

Australian Women Lawyers as Active Citizens, Trailblazing Women Lawyers Project Team, 2016,
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/lawyers>

Author Details

Nicola Silbert

Created 22 February 2016

Last modified 12 February 2019