

## Giwangallani's Speech at Admiralty House January 17<sup>th</sup> 2019

Good evening.

I would first like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay my respect to elders both past and present. I would also like to acknowledge the future indigenous leaders that are here in this room today, and thank our esteemed hosts His Excellency Sir Peter and Lady Cosgrove for this special reception. All of this would not be possible without the generosity of the sponsors that allow the Indigenous Australian Engineering School program to continue each year.

My name is Giwangallani Mendez Williams and I am a proud Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta girl. This opportunity has provided guidance for me into the next important chapter of my life. I have had a wonderful week, learning, growing and connecting alongside my peers; Exploring a range of engineering career paths, endless possibilities and new skills; Being able to connect and network, not only with industry providers, but, most importantly, with a community of young, ambitious and deadly Aboriginal students, that I now call my friends.

Aboriginal people were the first Engineers of this land. We are innovators, radical thinkers, survivors and problem solvers. As an Indigenous person, I feel that it is my duty, our duty, to look after this land, this planet. This experience has inspired, motivated and strengthened my confidence to continue on in my journey in pursuing a university degree, so that one day I can be not only an industry leader but also a leader in my community.

It is thanks to Engineering Aid Australia's ongoing support that I look forward to delving into all that engineering has to offer. Our belonging to this land connect us all, it runs through our blood and shapes us as engineers to continue our custodianship of this earth. Thank you so much for this opportunity.