



The Yarning Circle

Winter 2020 | Edition #1

Artwork by Chris Edward (2010) *Swimmy Creek* [Mixed media on Latvian linen 100cm x 145cm in Western Red].

Acknowledgement

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands in Greater Western Sydney and beyond.

Disclaimers

The opinions expressed in these articles are those of the authors and contributors, and do not necessarily reflect those of the University or the organization to which the authors are affiliated. Statements of fact are believed to be true as at the date of publication, and the University accepts no liability for the truth or accuracy of such statements.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following magazine may contain images or names of deceased persons.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRO VICE- CHANCELLOR

It is with great pleasure I present you with the inaugural edition of *The Yarning Circle*, our new newsletter that celebrates Indigenous excellence at Western Sydney University.

I commenced as Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation in July 2019 and have since been inspired by the body of incredible work conducted by our staff and students.

There are so many powerful stories that need to be shared amongst our community. Hence, *The Yarning Circle* was born as a way to celebrate Indigenous success at Western Sydney University.

On that note, it is imperative that I take a moment to thank Matilda (Tilly) Harry who has done an outstanding job bringing this newsletter to life. *The Yarning Circle* will be published quarterly, and I encourage each of you to contact Tilly at M.Harry@westernsydney.edu.au if you have any ideas or suggestions for articles that might be included in future editions.

This edition comes at an important time for society - one where we have been challenged in so many ways.



Pro Vice Chancellor, Professor Michelle Trudgett.
Photography: Sally Tsoutas

COVID-19 has changed the way we work, study, socialise and communicate. I am incredibly proud of how our staff have come together to support our Elders, students and each other. The genuine care, compassion and kindness demonstrated by the team has been outstanding. I trust that you will enjoy reading the many terrific stories located in this edition. In the meantime, please stay safe and take care.

Professor Michelle Trudgett (BA, MPS, EdD)

Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation

New strategy to empower Indigenous success

Western Sydney University has launched a new Indigenous strategy, reflecting a renewed commitment to Indigenous Australians and an expansion of educational, leadership and Indigenous-led research opportunities at the University over the next five years.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Barney Glover AO said the new strategy embodied the University's longstanding commitment to and learning from the world's oldest continuous culture, and recognised the University's campuses are hosted on the lands of the Darug, Tharawal, Eora and Wiradjuri nations.

"Western Sydney University is enriched by our Elders and valued Indigenous community. And when we foster Indigenous excellence in education and research, all the members of our community benefit. This Strategy is a priority for the University and will open up opportunity here in Greater Western Sydney," said Professor Glover.

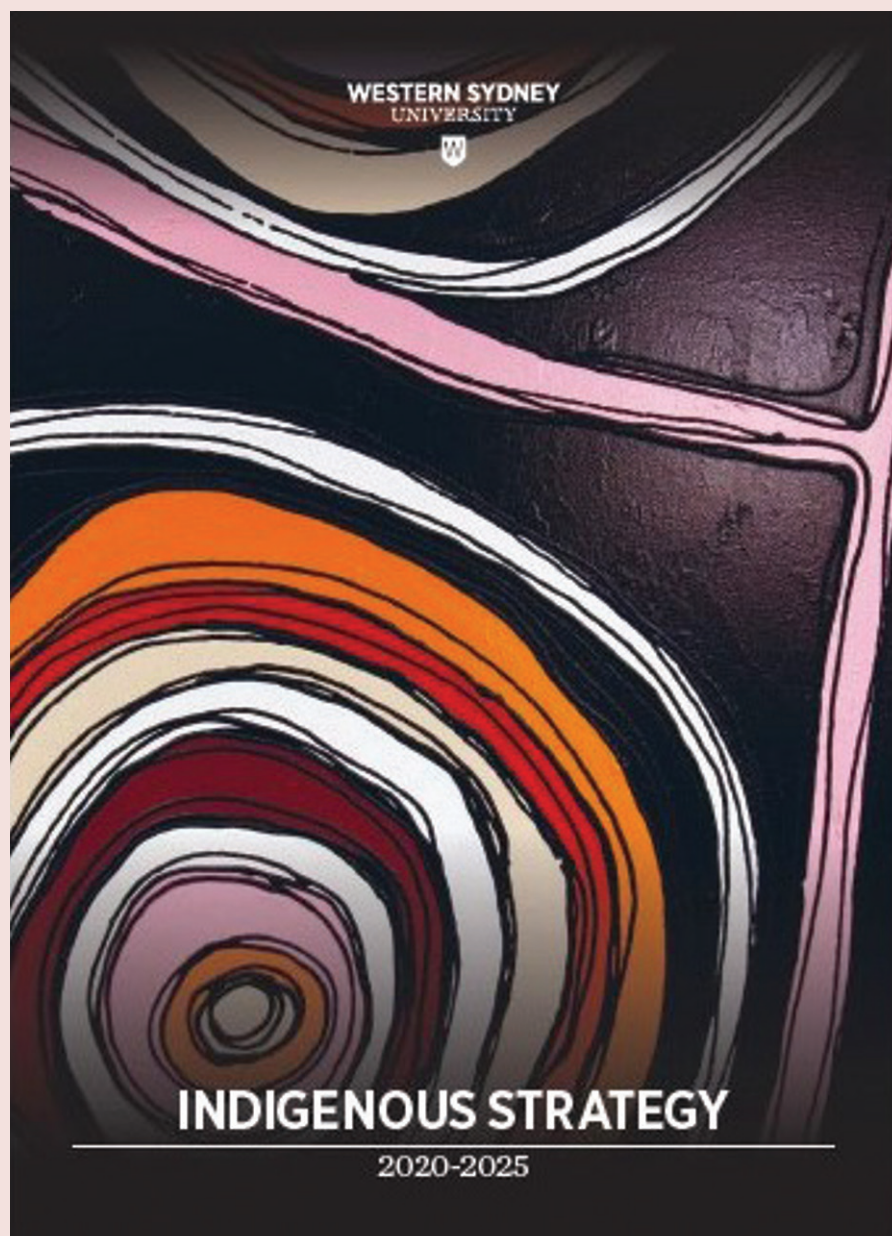
Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation, said the strategy will serve as a conduit for progress in a region that is home to one of the largest urban Indigenous populations in the country.

"The Indigenous Strategy articulates an ambitious platform that seeks to celebrate Indigenous culture, people and knowledge. Importantly, this Strategy is

of relevance to every student and staff member at the University, as well as our wider community," said Professor Trudgett.

Through a multifaceted approach, the Strategy identifies seven key areas: students, employment, research, learning and teaching, community engagement, leadership, and cultural viability and knowledge. Implementation will be led by the University's Office of PVC Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation.

Download the Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025 [here](#).



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Professor Barney Glover AO
Vice-Chancellor and President
Western Sydney University

Students

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS

Seven deadly questions: Shayne Miller

Who are you? And what degree are you studying?

My name is Shayne Miller, I'm currently in my fourth year of studying a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS). I was Western Sydney University's 2019 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Representative

Who is your mob?

My mob are northern NSW people, I'm a Gomeroi - Ngarabul man with ties to the Blacklock, Tribe, Wallace, and Marno families.

What community/cultural events have you been to lately?

Since I've been quite restricted in time with uni this semester, I haven't been to much, but I definitely did head out on Invasion / Survival day (January 26th) to Barangaroo for the morning ceremony and Yabun festival later in the day. If you haven't been to Yabun or to Barangaroo for the morning ceremony before I'd highly recommend these deadly events! I go every year as my family are in the Koomurri corroboree group that do the smoking ceremony and opening welcome for the morning.

Why did you choose to study at Western Sydney University?

I grew up in Western Sydney, South Western Sydney specifically (Liverpool), as a local I couldn't think of going to a different university. Not many people in my family, and none in my immediate family had ever gone to university before, I felt I would've been out of place at the other universities. I'm not too fond of the city and those "sandstone" universities, they make me feel claustrophobic. Western Sydney University has a good amount of nature on most campuses as well, which made it feel like the most comfortable fit for me.



Shayne Miller

Have you faced any challenges as an Indigenous student at WSU? If so, how did you overcome them?

There were a few instances of scenarios in class not being culturally sensitive; for example, stereotypical Aboriginal patients being presented. As a collective, the first Indigenous medical student council of Australia was formed and we addressed these issues with the school, which then rectified them.

There have been a few little instances of comments that I am a "fair skin" Aboriginal man and people have said intolerable things or "congratulate" me for "not being like most".

Thankfully those moments don't happen too often, but when / if they do happen to you, my advice is to stay grounded. You know who you are and who your mob is, be proud in that and don't shake for anyone.

There was also some imposter syndrome like feelings attached to studying at university and feeling like I didn't truly belong here. If you ever feel that, I completely understand what it's like and how troubling it can be, but trust me, you're here because you're capable, and because you're worth it. As Indigenous people we have 60,000+ years of ancestors behind us, they believe in you.

When you graduate from Western Sydney University what do you hope to achieve?

I hope to pursue a longstanding career in community medicine, delivering a holistic patient-centred approach to

healthcare, not just in the clinic, but in the broader community. I want to elevate people's health not only physically, but emotionally and spiritually as well.

The goal is to deliver a form of healthcare that offers more than a conventional modern doctor, without sacrificing those essentials of course. I'd love one day to have a clinical workplace that blends traditional culture with modern medicine, having traditional healers and other forms of medicine involved alongside Western modern medicine. Whether this be in the field as a General Practitioner, an Obstetrician, or another form of medical professional is unknown at this stage.

You seem to juggle a lot of responsibilities! What are your top 5 tips towards success for other Indigenous Western Sydney University students?

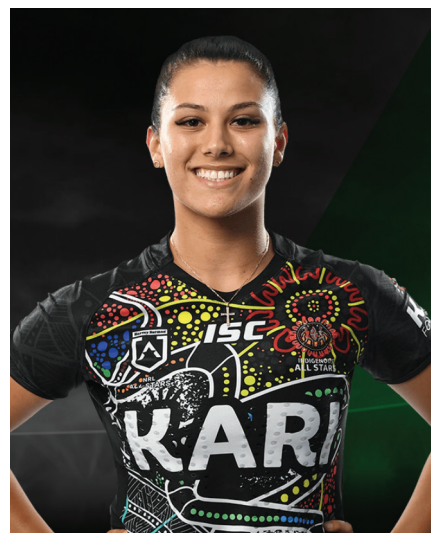
1. Have achievable short term and long-term goals – it helps you stay focused on the tasks you need to overcome and allows you to set deadlines for yourself. Ticking something off a list is also an extremely satisfying feeling!
2. Avoid overwhelming yourself with taking on too many things at once – this is important and I have been guilty of doing this. We need to be aware of how much we can place upon ourselves, otherwise it's extremely easy to feel like you're out of control and cannot regain momentum.
3. Look after your health in all aspects – I cannot stress this enough, it can be extremely draining to study at university. Failing my first year in medicine with 49.50% taught me a lot about how much you should recognise your internal health. If you maintain your happiness and health, it can make the world of difference.
4. Speak up if you need help – the staff and tutors are here to train professionals in their field. They care about your success and want you to get through. If you're struggling with something or are having trouble understanding, there is no shame in seeking assistance. I did not do this enough sometimes, but I learned from my mistakes. It doesn't pay to be stoic.
5. Have fun – seriously though, it's challenging and difficult, but university life and independence is extremely fun! You'll grow an incredible amount and experience so many things if you allow yourself out of your comfort zone.



Lucy Schulz



Luke Hodge



Shaylee Bent

Scholarships supporting our Indigenous students

We would like to congratulate our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Group A Scholarship Recipients for Autumn 2020, which include:

- Melanie Simon a Bachelor of Business and Commerce student who received the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Achievement Scholarship*.
- Arron Floyd a Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) student who received the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Achievement Scholarship*.
- Edward Vanderfeen a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) student who received the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Achievement Scholarship*.
- Paige Genner a Doctor of Medicine student who received the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Achievement Scholarship*.
- Lucy Schulz a Doctor of Medicine student who received the *School of Medicine Rural Scholarship*.

This is a great achievement and you should be incredibly proud of yourselves. We celebrate your academic rigour, leadership and community engagement and cannot wait to see what the future holds for you.

To find out more about scholarships available to you, please contact the Western Sydney University's Scholarship team on scholarships@westernsydney.edu.au and access the website via <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/future/why-western/scholarships.html>.

Western Sydney University's new First Nations student representative

Luke is as an ambitious Dunghutti man in his first year of study seeking to achieve the ultimate fulfillment within life, by striving for eternal growth, success and development in everything.

He studies a Bachelor of Communication, and is majoring in Media Arts Production, Journalism. Earlier this month, it was announced that Luke will be our new First Nations SRC Representative.

Luke will also be working closely with the Western Sydney University Indigenous Student Council and aims to create a sense of community and inclusion for all Indigenous students from all Western Sydney University campuses.

The council will manage and organise social, recreational, community and cultural activities in collaboration with members for members. The council will drive and manage dialogue on topical issues, social awareness and environmental matters.

"I look forward to engaging with each of you wonderful brothers and sisters and further exploring the depths of our relationships between our communities, our kinship and our inextricable connection to Country and Dreaming," said Luke.

If you have any questions or would like to reach out to Luke, feel free to contact the Indigenous Student Council group on [WesternLife \(opens in new window\)](#).

Young education student played a blinder in the 2020 Indigenous All Stars women's team

Nineteen-year-old proud Wiradjuri woman, Shaylee Bent, played for the second time in the Indigenous All Stars Women's Team earlier this year. She played a deadly game in the second row. She said "It really was a blessing to be given the opportunity to represent my culture and play against our Maori sisters in the NRL All Stars game. It was a feeling like was no other. Rugby League to me is more than just playing the game; footy gives me the chance to make a difference and allows me to represent my people".

Shaylee was raised in Western Sydney and Western Sydney University was always her first choice. She is currently in her first year of her Bachelor of Education (Primary) degree and is loving every moment. She has high aspirations for both her football and teaching career. She states, "The power of education is immeasurable, and I cannot wait to get out into classrooms and start to make a difference in our young mob's lives".

Congratulations Shaylee, Western Sydney University is so proud of your successes thus far and cannot wait to cheer you on in the future.

Young Wiradjuri Students to receive recognition at the Channel 7 Young Achiever Awards

Western Sydney University wishes Renee Thomson (Bachelor of Health Science student) and Matilda Harry (Master of Education student) the best of luck in their nominations for the 2020 7 News Young Achiever Awards. Both Wiradjuri students are finalists in their categories and their achievements will be announced later in the year at the awards ceremony.

Renee Thomson is a finalist in the Aboriginal Education Award for her direct involvement with community and founding of the Western Sydney Aboriginal Youth Leadership Network. Renee is devoted to increasing the economic prosperity and independence of Aboriginal communities and families across health, education, policy and reform and justice sectors. As the Sydney-Newcastle Youth Representative of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council Youth Council, Renee was selected to represent First Nations people at the United Nations, Expert Mechanisms on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva, 2019. Renee's life experiences



Renee Thomson

and ongoing involvement with community, has led her work in grass-roots and peak body initiatives and institutions across local, state and international platforms.

Matilda Harry is a finalist in the Transgrid Indigenous Achievement Award for her advocacy, community work, and vision to make positive social change through education. Her involvement in leadership positions and community service is recognised nationally as she was awarded as the Young Woman of the West and Premier's Young Volunteer of the Year. Matilda believes that education

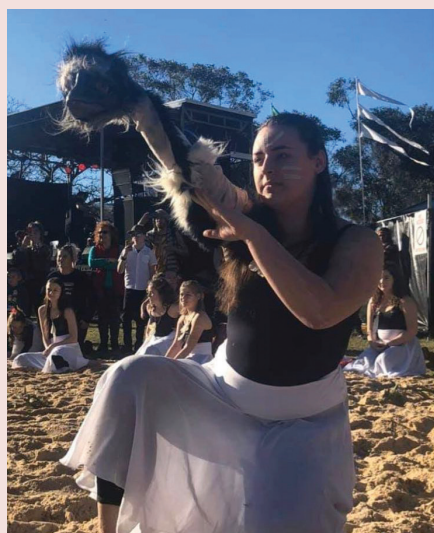


Matilda Harry. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

is key for our young mob's success and has mentored young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Western Sydney and nationally, especially in remote Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory. In the future, she hopes to find a balance between Western pedagogy and traditional Aboriginal ways of teaching, wherein Aboriginal cultures, languages and connections to Country and community are at the forefront of every classroom in the nation.

Congratulations and best of luck Renee and Matilda, Western Sydney University is very proud of your achievements.

Western Sydney University Indigenous students and Badanami staff yarn together weekly



Jess Oehm. Photography: Katrina Chalker

Yarning circles are significantly important processes within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Yarning practices have been passed down by our peoples for thousands of years to ensure we all learn as a collective group, build respectful relationships, and to preserve and pass on our cultural knowledges.

Over the past couple of months during social isolation, the Badanami Team and Indigenous students from different schools and stages in their degrees have met every Wednesday at noon to yarn together. The weekly discussions have proved vital for maintaining the mob's wellbeing, and cultural and community connections.

For Nggunnawal woman and Law and Business student, Jess Oehm, the University's Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education is like a second home – a place where she would usually spend her days on campus and access a close network of students, support officers and Elders.

"Badanami is like an extended family for many Indigenous students. We were all missing this connection, so our online yarning circle has been a great mental health check," Jess said.

The weekly yarning circles have allowed Western Sydney University Indigenous students to come together to talk about any difficulties, successes and to share their stories. Jess said, "Even a few students have discovered shared history – which is amazing. We are grateful to also have the online support of our Elders as well. As Auntie Jean joins every week and shares stories, offers advice, and makes sure we all have a good laugh".

If you wish to find out more information or be involved in next week's Yarning Circle discussions, please contact the Badanami team through Badanami@westernsydney.edu.au.

Staff

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S PASSIONATE INDIGENOUS STAFF

Seven deadly questions: Aunty Jean South

Who are you?

My name is Aunty Jean South, I am the Badanami Elder in Residence at Western Sydney University. I help to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to continue to be in touch with their culture during their university journey. I am often situated at Kingswood Campus, which is lucky as my family and I have lived in Glenbrook in the Blue Mountains since 1977.

Who is your mob?

I was born in Nyngan in Northern New South Wales, I am Barkindji (taking my Grandfather's lineage, as I do not know where or when my Grandmother was born).

What community/cultural events have you been to lately?

I have been out and about lately, especially at different University events. I was privileged to be invited to Acknowledge Country and speak with students at the orientation day of the Masters of Early Childhood and Primary Education. I also attended the start of semester gathering and smoking ceremony at Parramatta, it was so lovely to start the academic year off by getting the mob together. Further, I attended the STEM and Science event at The King's School in Parramatta where I had the opportunity to meet with very talented young men.

What is your current position at Western Sydney University and how long have you worked at the University?

In 2007, I was appointed as the Badanami Elder in Residence and am Badanami's longest standing Aboriginal staff member. As an Elder, I aim to motivate, support and engage with current and prospective students, and local communities and organisations to enhance the University's commitment



Aunty Jean. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

to further education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I have a breadth of experience working in high schools and in the higher education sector and have developed strong links to local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as the international Indigenous community.

I am passionate about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and over the years I have been an active member of the following committees:

- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Elders Alliance
- Global Indigenous Nations Elders Council
- World Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Network
- National Indigenous Elders Think Tank
- World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium's Global Indigenous Elders Alliance.

Have you always aspired to work in tertiary education?

I enjoy working at the University; however, I am also an artist. I have participated and featured in many exhibitions and have been a curator at the Penrith Regional Art Gallery. I initially studied Pattern Making, Dressmaking and Design, Fabric Printing and finally Graphic Design at TAFE, before enrolling in a Bachelor of Arts at what was then the Penrith College of Advanced Education which in 1989 became Western Sydney University Nepean. Then on my graduation in 1990 I started working at Western.

What is your favourite thing about working at Western Sydney University?

My favourite thing about working at Western, of course, are the students. I love watching our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' progress through their undergraduate studies and am excited to see many return to complete their Postgraduate studies then their PhDs in many different fields. I have fond memories of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues I have worked with over the years here at Western. Together, we have worried, laughed and cried over many things, but mostly we have been so incredibly proud to see all of our students walk across the stage, having fulfilled all the requirements to be admitted to the Academic field they have chosen.

Over the many years I have worked here I have been fortunate to meet Indigenous students, staff and communities locally, nationally and internationally. I have loved every minute of my time at Western Sydney University.

Do you have any advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people wanting to work at Western Sydney University?

Our people tend to think they are not qualified to study or work at Universities and I say step up. Contact and meet with appropriate sources within the university to make yourself familiar with how and what is needed to start the processes. If at first you do not succeed, ask for feedback, enrol in suitable courses at TAFE, the College or the University and when you are ready try again.

Meet Kari Kristiansen, one of Western Sydney University's Super Tutors

Who are you?

I have spent most of my professional life working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people all over Australia, including in remote areas such as Cape York and the Torres Strait Islands, the Kimberley and Western NSW. In 2006, I received a High Commendation from the Australian Human Rights Commission for my work as an individual "in promoting and protecting the human rights of Indigenous Australians". In 2010, I was a recipient with Billard Learning Centre, WA of the national Indigenous LIFE Award for suicide prevention, in my capacity as co-founder of the Blank Page Summits on Suicide. I have a keen and enduring interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history. For relaxation, I play duplicate bridge and golf, and enjoy tending to my small "urban farm".

Who are you tutoring and what are they studying?

I tutor students studying law, business and policing. Most of my students have struggled at various stages in their

degree programs. Over time, we build strong learning relationships of trust and collaboration. Our initial goal is to pinpoint the problems and fix them. For example, in law there are a range of assessment tasks that are often new to students, such as legal problem solving and *viva voce* examinations, as well as a lot of reading. There are strategies available through targeted tuition, that can make a world of difference for students, as they set about tackling these tasks.

Why did you decide to become part of the Badanami Tutoring for Success Program?

To contribute in an area that I knew would be helpful and enjoyable. Education can be life-changing. WSU is a cornerstone for access and equity to education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across the region. Badanami provides vital practical support. I've been particularly fortunate to work closely in recent years at Badanami with Darryl Saylor who has encouraged and inspired my efforts at every turn.

Why is tutoring important?

It is a tool to improve results. To succeed at university, you need a tool bag of skills. I work with students to improve their academic skills. My goal is to encourage students to grow stronger as



Kari Kristiansen

self-generating and confident learners. I hope some students will also choose to undertake postgraduate education and become contributing researchers. The sky's the limit.

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about becoming a tutor?

If you're a resourceful, lateral thinking person with expertise in a specific field, tutoring could be a rewarding opportunity. You may well find yourself learning as much, if not more, than your students!

Western Sydney University announces new Associate Dean of Indigenous Education



Corrinne Sullivan. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

Western Sydney University is pleased to announce Corrinne Sullivan as inaugural Associate Dean of Indigenous Education, School of Social Sciences.

As an Aboriginal scholar from the Wiradjuri Nation in Central-West New South Wales, Ms Sullivan currently works within the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at Western Sydney University, and has published multi-disciplinary research, which broadly focuses on experiences and effects of body and identities in relation to Indigenous Australian people.

Noting the University's commitment to increasing Indigenous Australian participation in higher education, Ms Sullivan also highlighted the significant contribution Indigenous scholarship brings to higher education.

"I am proud to be appointed as the first Associate Dean of Indigenous Education and am excited about the potential of this position to enhance our University as a whole. The Western Sydney region

is home to the largest urban population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, so it is vital our community is reflected within the University," said Ms Sullivan.

Western Sydney University has seen a steady increase in the enrolment of Indigenous Australian students and actively promotes immersion and mentorship to them, many of whom are the first in their family to attend higher education.

"It is a true pleasure to welcome Corrinne as Associate Dean Indigenous Education. She has already contributed transformative research and curriculum development in her current position, which will help inform and shape this new position within the University," said Professor Brian Stout, Dean School of Social Sciences.

The appointment of the Associate Dean Indigenous Education is a part of the University's broader *Indigenous Strategy*, which was launched early this year.



Scott Avery

Western Sydney University welcomes Indigenous disability researcher and advocate

Western Sydney University is pleased to welcome Indigenous disability researcher and advocate Dr Scott Avery who joins the School of Social Sciences as a Senior Lecturer in Social Work and Community Welfare.

Dr Avery has undertaken extensive community-based research into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability, culminating in the publication of a research monograph in 2018 titled *Culture is Inclusion: A narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability*. He is an appointed member of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey and Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers and the Indigenous (Data and Statistics) Roundtable, and completed a PhD on the health and social inequalities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability.

As a proud Worimi man who is profoundly deaf himself, Dr Avery has recently given evidence at the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability calling for reform to the multi-faceted structural failings that have created health inequalities and neglect in the care of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a disability.

"The essence of the problem is that people in positions of authority within the system have refused to accept that health inequalities for peoples with a disability even exist. This seems to be more so if the person with a disability is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander," said Dr Avery.

"Within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy framework, there have been active steps to dis-acknowledge the evidence of grave health inequalities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and a need for action is hidden behind this cloak of deniability."

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation, said Dr Avery's extensive academic and professional experience would enrich the University.

"Western Sydney University is committed to increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's participation in higher education through our initiatives, programs and world-class research. Dr Avery is a leading scholar working in Indigenous disability – an important and under-researched area requiring urgent action to address the social and health inequalities facing the nation's first people," said Professor Trudgett.

Before his academic career, Dr Avery was a community-based researcher with the First Peoples Disability Network, a non-government organisation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability and their families. He will maintain a close affiliation with the First Peoples Disability Network, the disability community, and other Aboriginal community organisations in his role at Western Sydney University.

Western Sydney University students teach staff a sporting lesson

Indigenous staff and students at Western Sydney University put their pencils down and pulled their football boots on in a competitive soccer match at Kingswood Campus, a first for the uni.

Before social distancing became enforceable by law, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander undergraduate and postgraduate students tested their skills against their educator counterparts.

The staff team looked to have the pre-game edge with Frank Farina, former Socceroos coach (1999- 2005), as their coach. And he had a 'stacked' team to work with, with some of WSU's big names, including Professor Michelle Trudgett, the Pro Vice Chancellor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation, Josh Mason, WSU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement marketing project professor as skipper, Anna Cody, Dean of Law and Professor Brian Stout, Dean of Social Sciences, among others.

But the students flipped the script, and the table, defying all odds to defeat their peers 4-2, despite having a couple of yellow cards waved in their faces by the referee, Professor Kevin Dunn, Pro Vice

Chancellor of Research. Rubbing more salt into the wound for the staff team was when Kristy Bell, student success officer, was judged to be the game's best player. The fun event was designed to bring together the various mob at WSU. A good crowd of community members and university staff and students cheered the teams on from the sidelines.

"We are deeply committed to the wellbeing and success of our Indigenous students," Professor Trudgett said. "This soccer game will become an annual event in our action-packed calendar which is designed to bring our students, staff and broader Indigenous community together in a fun way that builds Indigenous excellence through positive engagement."



WSU Indigenous student team L-R: Tiah Vocale, Stacey Elliot, Jessica Oehm, Kayden Edwards, Luke Hodge, Kobi Whalan, Matilda Harry, Nicholas Locke, Lachie Beavan, Talyssa Baker and Gabby Talbot-Mundine, and (front, kneeling) Jarred Murphy.



WSU staff team Back row L-R: Frank Farina (coach), Josh Mason (ATSI Engagement Marketing Project Officer), Dr Scott Avery (Lecturer in Social Sciences), Professor Brian Stout (Dean of Social Sciences), Professor Michelle Trudgett (Pro-Vice Chancellor ATSI Education, Strategy and Consultation), Corrinne Sullivan (Assoc. Dean of Social Sciences), and Chris Youness (Director of Employability and Graduate Success). Front row L-R: Wayne Clark (ATSI Engagement Marketing Project Officer), Sophie Partridge (Senior Manager of Engagement Marketing), Ellen Karimanovic (Student Administration), Kristy Bell (Badanami Student Success Officer), Michelle Locke (Researcher), Professor Anna Cody (Dean of Law), and Djaleesa Kickett (ATSI Engagement Marketing Project Officer).

Alumni

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS ALUMNI

Seven deadly questions: Dr Anita Heiss

Who are you?

Yiradhu marang. Yuwin-dhu Yaaniidha Heiss. Bala-dhu Wiradjuri-giyalang. Erambii-dyi-bu Brungl-i-bu. Miyagan-dhi bala Williams. Nhadu Murun-wi-gigi garray-dya Jagera-giyalang

Hello! I am Anita Heiss, I have Wiradjuri belonging from Erambie and Brungle. I am a Williams. I live on the land of the Jagera people.

What community/cultural events have you been to lately?

The highlight for me in the last couple of months, before we all went into social isolation, was doing a tour of schools in Cowra, Bathurst and Wellington. Over a week, I ran a number of workshops with Koori kids, and had the great privilege of watching their enthusiasm and creativity produce some extraordinary pieces of writing and performance.

What is your current position and why are you passionate about what you are currently doing?

I am currently a Professor of Communications at the University of QLD (part-time) and an author working on a number of projects, including an epic novel about the Great Flood of Gundagai and the Wiradjuri heroes, Yarri and Jacky Jacky. In my writing life I am also currently passionate about working with an Elders group in Wagga Wagga, to pull some of their stories together in an anthology for young readers.

What degree did you study at Western Sydney University?

I completed a PhD in Communications and Media. My thesis was a comparative study of writing and publishing by Aboriginal authors here in Australia, Maori authors in Aotearoa / New Zealand and Native American authors in Canada. It has been published as *Dhuuluu Yala: to talk straight* (Aboriginal Studies Press, 2001).

What has your experience at Western given you that is unique compared to graduates from other universities?

I graduated from WSU almost 20 years ago, but at the time, what stood out for me when I was trying to find the right university for me, it was the very personal and considerate attention I received from the Post-Graduate office and the Faculty that I was applying to.

That interest in my educational goals, really stood out compared to other tertiary institutions I approached at the time. And because of that extra concern, and my fantastic Supervisory support from Dr Peter Kirkpatrick, I remain not only grateful for the opportunity to study at WSU, but also proud to be an Alumnae.

Who is your role model and why do they inspire you?

I have many role models in different areas of my life. Academically and in the tertiary setting, leaders in the Indigenous education space who I admire and respect include Prof Bronwyn Fredericks (PVC Indigenous Engagement, UQ), Prof Peter Radoll (PVC Indigenous, University of Canberra), Prof Michael McDaniel (PVC Indigenous Leadership and Engagement, UTS). It is their ongoing commitment to improvement outcomes for Indigenous students that inspires me the most.

In the publishing sector, my role models remain the pioneers who opened the doors for authors like me, pushing the boundaries in Australian publishing and writing across genres. Their works remain legacies for all Australian (and international readers). These authors and poets include: the late Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Ruby Langford-Ginibi and Doris Pilkington Garimara.



Anita Heiss. Photography: Helen Kassila

I took up running in my mid-40s and ran my first marathon on the eve of my 50th birthday, and so, my role model in the running space is of course, Cathy Freeman.

What would be your top 5 tips towards success for Indigenous graduates from WSU?

1. Be proud of your achievement and never underestimate your worth to any employer or team you may wish to join.
2. Maintain your personal networks from University for both social and professional potential in the future.
3. Stay connected to the University via the Alumni Team and make use of any services relevant to your future journey.
4. Create a professional profile on LinkedIn and build your online presence whatever your chosen career.
5. Share your journey with other potential graduates. A good leader will take others with them. Here's your chance to encourage others to greatness as well.

Congratulations to our quality graduates

Western Sydney University is well on its way to becoming a market leader in empowering and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to study and graduate from degrees of their choice. Currently Western Sydney University has over 1,288 Indigenous alumni who have graduated from a variety of degrees across the university's range of schools.

This April alone 51 deadly students graduated from their Bachelor's degree and six students graduated from their Master's degree, many of whom are the first in their family to attend university. Graduation is an incredibly important milestone as it celebrates all the hard work and time put into achieving a degree, marking the formal end of tertiary study and the beginning of a new career.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 April graduates are yet to attend their Graduation Ceremonies however all our staff are looking forward to hopefully celebrating with you and your closest towards the end of the year.

Congratulations to the following students, we are so proud of each of you and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours.

Aaron Scott Culican – Bachelor of Nursing

Abbie Rose Chapman – Master of Forensic Science

Alexandria Paige Petridis – Bachelor of Science

Allana Leonora Benson – Bachelor of Natural Science (Animal Science)

Allana Leonora Benson – Bachelor of Science (Zoology)

Amber Jean Moore – Bachelor of Occupational Therapy

Amy Patricia Rossiter – Bachelor of Criminology

Andrew Colin Griffiths – Bachelor of Health Science (Health and Physical Education)

Angela Yundithi Cantwell – Bachelor of Nursing

Bree-Anne Isabella Rose Kaiser – Bachelor of Nursing

Cameron Moss – Bachelor of Communication

Chantelle Jean Attard – Bachelor of Health Science (Health and Physical Education)

Dylan Heffernan – Bachelor of Policing Studies

Dylan Mottlee – Bachelor of Business and Commerce

Elise Brooke Holmes – Bachelor of Medical Science

Elise Marie Imbriotis – Graduate Diploma in Midwifery

Emillie Ann Scott – Bachelor of Nursing

Erin Rebecca Rae – Bachelor of Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security

Georgia Elizabeth Kondek – Bachelor of Natural Science (Environment and Health)

Gregory Clyde Perry – Bachelor of Natural Science (Environment and Health)

Jacquelyn Joy Yazdani – Bachelor of Science

James Dennis Nolan-Neylan – Bachelor of Screen Media (Arts and Production)

Janine Patricia Imrie – Bachelor of Arts

Jessica Fraley – Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Jessica Wellington – Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Jessie Watson – Bachelor of Social Science

Jill Ridge – Bachelor of Science (Nutrition and Food Science)

Jodie Ann Henry – Master of Management

Jordan Constantinou – Bachelor of Business

Justin Adam Lampson – Bachelor of Community Welfare

Katrina Lee McDonald – Master of Teaching (Primary)

Kelly Jane Micallef – Master of Teaching (Birth - 12 Years)

Kerri-Anne Lee Kendrick – Bachelor of Nursing

Linda Sainsbury – Bachelor of Social Work

Madalyn Crismale – Bachelor of Nursing

Maddison Jane Mohan – Bachelor of Social Work

Madeleine Bridge – Bachelor of Social Work

Marnie Murphy – Master of Teaching (Birth - 5 Years)

Matilda Rose Harry – Bachelor of Arts (Dean's Scholars)

Megan Josephine Lamont – Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Michael Robert Conley – Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedicine)

Monique Catherine Johnson – Bachelor of Communication

Naej Sahara Blanchard-Dunn – Bachelor of Communication

Natasha Janif – Bachelor of Community Welfare

Paul Daniel Vella – Bachelor of Business and Commerce

Rachel Ann Whiting – Bachelor of Midwifery

Raymond John Kelly – Bachelor of Research Studies

Robert Edward Chamberlain – Bachelor of Business

Ryan Andrews McCafferty – Master of Teaching (Secondary)

Sarah-Jayne Maree Humphreys – Bachelor of Nursing

Stacey Campbell Whittard – Bachelor of Health Science (Health and Physical Education)

Stephanie-Rose Fagan – Bachelor of Policing

Stephanie-Rose Fagan – Diploma in Social Science (Policing)

Swaide Rikiti – Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)

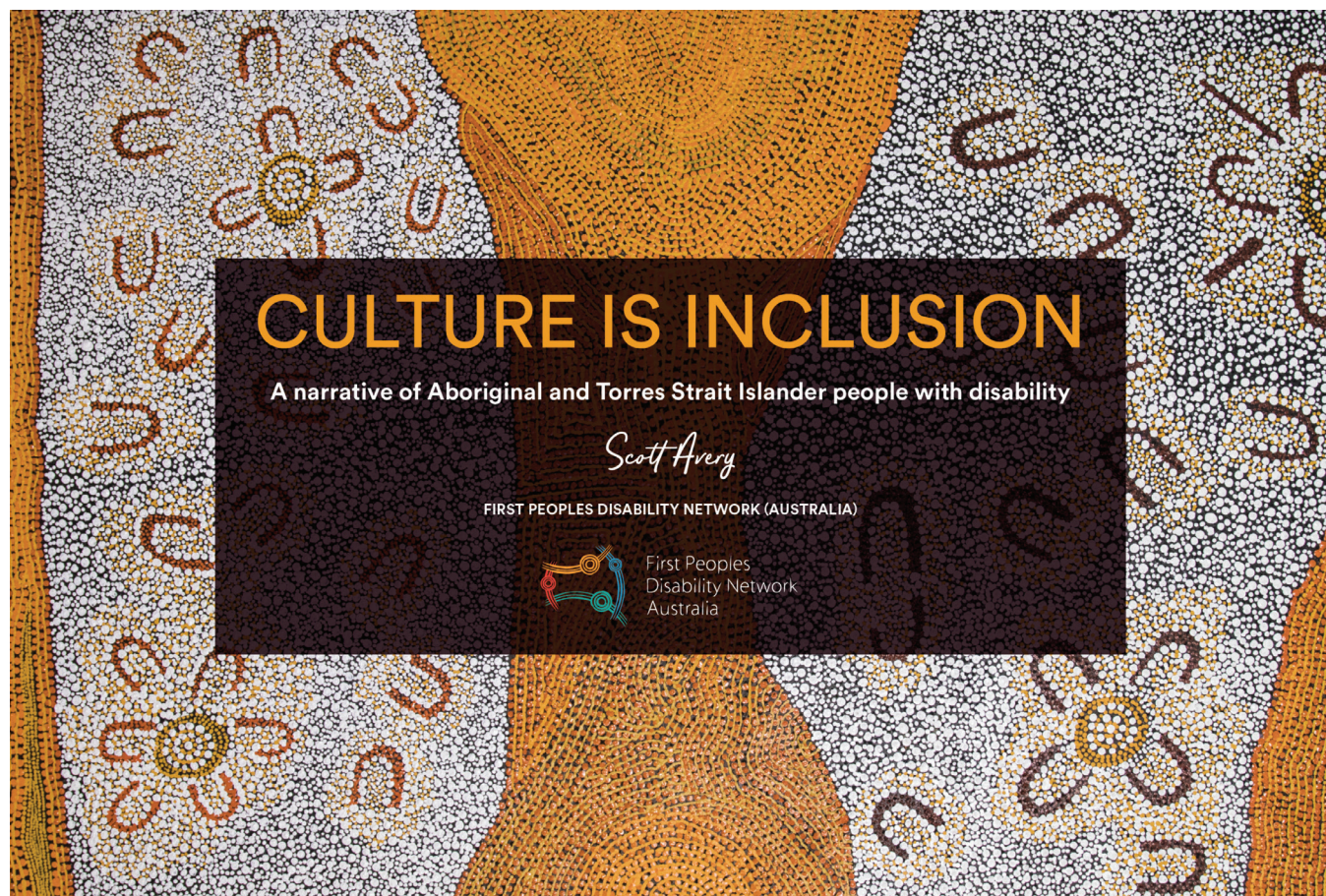
Tarren Marie Leon – Bachelor of Psychological Studies (Honours)

Tei Barbara Lawford – Bachelor of Health Science (Health and Physical Education)

Tiana Jay Parashko – Bachelor of Science (Nutrition and Food Science)

Zara Caitlin Clark – Bachelor of Education (Primary)

Research



Western Sydney University's Doctor Scott Avery's text 'Culture is Inclusion: A narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability'

CELEBRATING RECENT INDIGENOUS RESEARCH AT WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Western Sydney University is very proud of our Indigenous academics and higher degree research students. Please read about some of their outstanding research that was completed earlier this year.

Caroline Jones, Eugenie Collyer, Jaidine Fejo, **Chantelle Khamchuang**, Anita Painter, Lee Rosas, Karen Mattock, Alicia Dunajcik, Paola Escudero & Anne Dwyer. (2020). Developing a parent vocabulary checklist for young Indigenous children growing up multilingual in the Katherine region of Australia's Northern Territory. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. doi: [10.1080/17549507.2020.1718209](https://doi.org/10.1080/17549507.2020.1718209)

Corrinne Sullivan. (2020). Indigenous Australian sexualities explored through the lens of sex work. In A. Datta, P. Hopkins, L. Johnston, E. Olson, & J. M. Silva (Eds.), *Routledge International Handbook of Gender and Feminist Geographies* (pp. 17-26). London: Routledge.

Renae Coleman, Donna Hartz & Hannah Dahlen. (2020). The Experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Bachelor of Midwifery Students: An Integrative Literature Review. *Women and Birth: Journal of the Australian College of Midwives*. doi:[10.1016/j.wombi.2020.02.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2020.02.008)

Stacey Coates, Michelle Trudgett & Susan Page. (2020). Indigenous higher education sector: The evolution of recognised Indigenous Leaders within Australian Universities. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 1-7. doi:[10.1017/jie.2019.30](https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2019.30)



Uncle Harry Allie

Keeping connected with our Elders during COVID-19

Western Sydney University is grateful to have such highly respected Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders as role models to all students and staff across all campuses. Our Elders on Campus are vital cultural mentors who demonstrate leadership, pass on knowledge and stories to educate our staff and students about Aboriginal and Torres Strait histories, cultures and languages. Our Elders support and guide many to strengthen their connections to Country, culture and community.

From the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, our Elder's health and wellbeing has been the priority of Western Sydney University, especially the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation. To this end, the team has purchased and delivered three essential care packages to each Elder, regularly yarning with them on the phone and supported them in any way possible. At all times the need for social distancing was adhered to by both the Elders and the team.

"The Elders are well and are extremely grateful for the support of the University, the Office Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation and the team

at Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement have provided for them," said Terri Keating (Administration assistant in the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement).

Western Sydney University appreciates the guidance our Elders on Campus provide and hopes that these small tokens of support have been beneficial.

If you wish to learn more about or get in contact with our Elders on campus, please visit: https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/oatsiee/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_employment_and_engagement



Western Sydney University's 2019 NAIDOC week celebrations at Kingswood campus, featuring education student Shaune Thompson (far left) and Badanami Student Support Officer Kerry Licastro (2nd from the right) with the Waya Marta dance group from the Central Coast.

Test Your Knowledge in Western Sydney University's Annual NAIDOC Week Quiz

NAIDOC Week is a time to honour, celebrate and learn about the rich histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation. The 2020 theme is 'Always Was, Always Will Be', which recognises that Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have occupied and cared for this continent for tens of thousands of years and will continue to do so into the future.

It also acknowledges Indigenous people's continued spiritual and cultural connections to Country and community. Unfortunately, due to escalating concerns about the COVID-19 crisis the National NAIDOC Committee has decided to postpone NAIDOC Week 2020 (5 July - 12 July) in the interest of safety for our communities.

"With so many people in the community suffering both economically and culturally – it is important we, at Western Sydney University, show solidarity and work together as we are all on this journey as one. The Office of Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation with the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement and Employment (OATSIEE) are committed in supporting NAIDOC Week in any way we can by holding this year's annual NAIDOC Week Quiz," said Trudy Healy (Project Officer in OATSIEE)

"We hope that by participating in the quiz it brings some well-deserved smiles back on your faces, even laughter and may possibly further educate our audience," Trudy said.

The quiz has 12 multiple choice questions including three short questions. To enter simply follow the link <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/naidoc-quiz>. Log in using your Western ID and complete the online quiz, remember this is a time limited quiz so good luck to all and happy NAIDOC Week.

For further information and updates about this year's NAIDOC Week and the team in OATSIEE, please visit: https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/oatsiee/aboriginal_and_torres_strait_islander_employment_and_engagement



Do you know anyone looking to commence study at Western Sydney University for mid-year 2020?

Western Sydney University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathway Program provides an alternative pathway into Western's undergraduate degree programs.

Whether you're working, unemployed, studying at TAFE or coming straight from High School, this program is a pathway into Western which does not require an ATAR.

We accept applications throughout the year with assessment workshops scheduled in June and November.

The current assessment dates at Penrith Campus are:

- Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th of June 2020 (for mid-year commencement)
- Wednesday 1st and Thursday 2nd of July 2020 (for 2021 commencement)
- Tuesday 17th and Wednesday 18th of November 2020 (for 2021 commencement)

For more information about Western Sydney University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathway Program please visit <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/application-pathways/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-pathway-program.html>, the [how to apply page](#) or call 1300 897 669.

YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS



Badanami provides support and opportunities for Indigenous Students

The Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education provides Western Sydney University's Indigenous students with support and opportunities to ensure their success throughout the course of their degree. The centres are located on six campuses which offer study areas, computers labs, printing, kitchen and lounge facilities while studying. Badanami staff provide information about the range of services available across the University from study skills, courses, careers advice, counselling and study abroad opportunities.

Badanami services include:

- Cultural support
- Culturally safe environment
- Study support and guidance
- Support through the enrolment and orientation process
- Provide information and assist with scholarships and cadetships
- Act as an advocate on behalf of students
- Tutoring for Success (TFS) Program
- Away from Base (AFB) Program (Block Mode)

If you would like to find out more information about the programs and services offered by Western Sydney University's Badanami Centres, please contact the team at Badanami@westernsydney.edu.au

Also, for regular updates and stories about Indigenous success at Western Sydney University, please join the Badanami Facebook account via <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010513178148>

Contact details

For more information regarding this publication please contact Matilda Harry

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