



The Yarning Circle

Autumn 2023 | Edition #12

Artwork by Chris Edward (2010)
Swimmy Creek [Mixed media on Latvian
linen 100cm x 145cm Western Sydney
University Art Collection Image 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 for its work in their lands in Greater Western Sydney and beyond.

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

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Western awards an honorary fellowship to Biduginbul Elder and storyteller, Uncle Wes Marne

On the 13th of December Western Sydney University conferred the title of Honorary Fellow on Uncle Wes Marne AM, in recognition of his significant contribution as a cultural leader, an advocate, educator and mentor to the communities of Western Sydney.

Uncle Wes Marne is a Biduginbul Elder; an educator; a purveyor and champion of Aboriginal culture; an advocate for vulnerable young people; a storyteller, a poet, and artist; and a pillar of the community in Greater Western Sydney. Remarkably, he celebrated his 100th birthday earlier this year, an extraordinary feat, considering the great adversity he has experienced in his life, including living through the Stolen Generations and World War II, serving in the Korean War, being unwelcome in the education system, and recently also surviving a bout of COVID-19.

Born in 1922, Uncle Wes grew up in southern Queensland until he was nine years of age, when his family were forced to move from tribal lands and live on the Deadbird Mission on the New South Wales northern tablelands. Uncle Wes moved to Sydney in the early 1960s and



Honorary Fellow Uncle Wes Marne AM.
Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

has lived in Mt Druitt for the past 45 years, where he has become a well-regarded, senior leader in the local community.

He is described as having a “colourful” life. As a child living on a reserve, Uncle Wes began work carrying water and over the course of his life, has pursued careers as a boxer, a tobacco picker, a drover, a fencer, a miner, and has also worked in chicken factories and tanneries. Uncle Wes has for decades been a champion of Aboriginal culture, often sharing his passion for storytelling, a trait passed down by his own Elders. Uncle Wes comes from a long line of storytellers. His grandfather and father were great storytellers, and he has followed in their footsteps.

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He began sharing Aboriginal dreamtime stories in NSW public schools in 2003 and has since dedicated his life to the cultural education of young people in Greater Western Sydney. Through his work in schools, Uncle Wes has been recognised as “bringing back the Dreaming” – and ensuring that Aboriginal culture and histories are shared with and understood by young people. Uncle Wes has also worked hard to find avenues and opportunities to increase knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal histories through the arts and digital mediums. His dreamtime stories are streamed on YouTube, and he also established a community storytelling garden, ‘Kwinnies Garden’ in the grounds of Graceades Cottage in Bidwill, where he can tell his stories to the community in person.

Among his many accomplishments, in 2011, Uncle Wes was a proud recipient of the first NSW Department of Education ‘Nanga Mai Love of Learning award’, which celebrates and recognises innovation, excellence and achievement in Aboriginal education in NSW public schools, school communities and the Department of Education and Training offices. In 2016 Uncle Wes’ show *Fire Bucket* premiered to sell-out audiences at the Sydney Festival and he has also shared his stories verbally as part of the Urban Theatre’s ‘Blak Box’ project during the Sydney Festival in 2019. Earlier this year, Uncle Wes released a book of 50 poems ‘Through Old Eyes’ in celebration of his 100th birthday.

In addition to his work in education, arts and culture, Uncle Wes has been a pillar of strength for the Mount Druitt community. He has served as a long-term and founding member of the Mount Druitt and Districts Reconciliation Group, which has organised an annual Reconciliation Walk and Concert in Mount Druitt for more than 20 years. He regularly performs smoking ceremonies, Welcome to Country ceremonies and speaking at a range of community events. Uncle Wes is also a mentor to young people, often taking at-risk youth

under his wing and treating them as his own family and is a regular visitor to young Aboriginal men in prison helping them to regain confidence to advocate on their own behalf.

In recognition of his significant contributions to the community, Uncle Wes was presented with the Australia Medal at Government House in early October by the Governor General her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beasley. Blacktown City Mayor Tony Bleasdale OAM also bestowed a ‘Key to the City’ on Uncle Wes in April of this year, to mark his 100th birthday. Uncle Wes also received a ‘UWS Community Award’ during the University’s Autumn graduation ceremonies in 2012.

Uncle Wes, Honorary Fellow and Aboriginal Elder, said that he feels incredibly privileged and honoured to have received such recognition for his commitment to community and culture.

“I am proud to be recognised as an Honorary Fellow by Western Sydney University. This fellowship celebrates my knowledge and the knowledge my Old People shared,” said Uncle Wes.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, thanks Uncle Wes for his distinguished service to Western Sydney’s Indigenous communities and acknowledges that being awarded an Honorary Fellowship is a significant achievement.

“Western Sydney University is proud to have the continued support, guidance and leadership of Uncle Wes Marne who is an incredibly worthy recipient of an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of his knowledge and contributions towards cultural education and communities. He has made significant and sustained contributions to Western Sydney’s Indigenous communities, and for this we offer him our appreciation and thanks,” said Professor Trudgett.

Western Sydney University would once again like to congratulate Uncle Wes and thank him for his leadership and sharing of cultural knowledge.



Professor Michelle Trudgett.
Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR, INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

It gives me great pleasure to present the Autumn 2023 edition of The Yarning Circle, our newsletter that celebrates Indigenous excellence at Western Sydney University. No doubt this year will be another outstanding year for Western and the broader communities which we proudly serve.

A matter of national significance is the upcoming Referendum on the Voice to Parliament. One aspect I find fascinating is that many of our younger students were not alive when the last referendum was held in 1999 and as such, this will be the first time they have had the opportunity to vote in a referendum. The higher education sector has a pivotal role to play in providing platforms and facilitating robust discussion about the topic, and I look forward to creating opportunities for staff and students to participate in these important conversations.

Finally, I would like to welcome all Indigenous students to Western. For those of you who are returning students, welcome back after what I hope was a lovely holiday break. To our new students, welcome! We are so pleased you decided to undertake your studies with us. I encourage all our students to reach out to the wonderful team at Badanami to see how they can support your academic journey. I would also like to welcome Indigenous staff back and thank you for your continuous dedication to Western, together we are making a difference in our communities. I am certain that 2023 will be a fantastic year for everyone.

Professor Michelle Trudgett
(BA, MPS, EdD)
Deputy Vice-Chancellor,
Indigenous Leadership



Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

BOLD

conversations

Gabrielle Talbot-Mundine

The Bold Conservation segment encourages Indigenous staff and students to share their honest perspectives and opinions about key topics and current issues in order to promote discussions in a culturally safe environment.

Gabrielle Talbot-Mundine. Photography: Sally Tsoutas.



Gabrielle Talbot-Mundine is a proud Bundjalung woman born, living, and working on Darug country. Gabrielle started working with Western Sydney University as a Business Administration Trainee in the Graduation Team in 2014. Since commencing with Western Sydney University, she has been committed to her career progression, securing roles in the Badanami Team, Future Student Engagement Team, and the Indigenous Employment Team. Gabrielle is an alumna and current student at Western Sydney University, placed on the Dean's Merit List for 2020 and 2021, holding a Graduate Certificate in Business and completing a Master of Business Administration. Gabrielle has extensive knowledge of university systems and processes, developing a wide range of skills, knowledge and capabilities that allow her to deliver exceptional outcomes toward the institution's strategic direction. Her involvement in the Western Sydney University community has enabled Gabrielle to create strong and fruitful connections with the institution's key stakeholders. In this issue of Bold Conversations, Gabrielle will be diving into the importance of career progression and thoughtful planning.

In the following segment Gabrielle offers insights into the importance of career progressions for personal and organisational growth. She discusses starting points and strategies to ensure your success, noting the endless opportunities at Western. Gabrielle hopes this article invites Indigenous communities to reflect on how far they have come in their professional journey and start to prepare for what their future can bring.

Moving forward in your career does not necessarily mean getting a promotion or a higher-paying job. Career progression is growth in your personal circumstances

that directly affects your career journey. It is how you can be the best possible version of yourself and reach your full capacity in the professional context. As an individual, we contribute to our career progression by taking on new tasks, networking with staff at all levels – internal and external to your organisation, finding new opportunities to better the way we carry out our daily duties at work or home and finally, enrolling in a course, whether it be a short course, vocational education and training (VET) or higher education. These types of activities encourage individuals to take advantage of new opportunities. It promotes a strong work ethic and workplace motivation, positively impacting employee outputs for the organisation. From the organisation's viewpoint, the concept of 'training our own' means positions can be recruited internally, reducing recruitment costs and ensuring better utilisation of employee skills and increasing employee satisfaction.

When thinking about career progression, it is essential always to be learning. But how do we do this without burning out or becoming fatigued, leading to adverse outcomes? There are many techniques to planning your career progression; I personally start with a goal; where do I want to end up? I then give myself a realistic timeline for that goal; when do I want to achieve this by? I determine how I hope to accomplish this; what do I need to do to get there? After determining the activities I need to complete, I set myself a plan to achieve these prior to the initial timeline. Finally, I act and start my career progression journey. These five steps help me stay on track and provide structure and guidance to my career progression journey. The goal, the timeline, the how, the plan, and the action are my steps to thoughtful planning and career progression. These steps can be

used for goals that are years, months, or even just weeks away and can be vital to the outcome of your journey. You may be asking why I plan to finish everything before the initial goal timeline. I think by now, we know anything can happen to disrupt our plans. Planning to finish earlier means you are not left disheartened when you do not get there by the initial timelines. Alternatively, achieving your goal earlier will only contribute to your personal growth and motivation.

When I was asked to write the Bold Conversations article for this issue of the Yarning Circle, it was suggested that I write about a key topic that was a personal passion. This is harder than you would think. Nonetheless, with the help of some fantastic colleagues, I concluded to break down the importance of career progression. This I would consider a personal passion; daily, I work towards my career progression goal. I have made strategic decisions that align with organisational and individual goals throughout my employment. I hope this article guides my colleagues and encourages personal growth within our Indigenous community at Western.

Upcoming events

Western Sydney University has planned a number of face-to-face and digital events in the coming months to showcase Indigenous knowledges, success and stories and empower networking and learning opportunities across all teams and Schools. All events may be subject to change. Please follow the link for updates on Western's calendar and upcoming events: westernsydney.edu.au/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander/events

Western students are the first Indigenous Australian group to travel overseas with the assistance of funding from the New Colombo Plan

On Saturday the 3rd of December 2022, a group of seven Indigenous Western students flew together on the trip of a lifetime to Taiwan. Professor Yi-Chen Lan, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Development and Indigenous staff members Fiona Towney, Director of the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education and Kylie Beerens, Executive Assistant and Project Officer with the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Development) joined this group. The Indigenous students who travelled included Sarah Loft, Courtney Miller, Ally Milson, Sam Morris, Kobi Newell, Fia Semisi and Kirralaa Williams. They were the first ever Indigenous Australian group to travel overseas with assistance of funding from the New Colombo Plan.

It is important to acknowledge Professor Yi-Chen Lan support as he and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership Professor Michelle Trudgett, initiated the conversation about this trip, via the New Colombo plan, around 18 months prior to the departure. Professor Lan's leadership and support of our staff and students was second to none.

At the start of trip, the group attended a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Study Mission and Field Trip hosted by Green Enterprises and Sustainable Vocation. They joined a two-day co-hosted Taiwan and Australia Sustainable Development Goals Summit at Taipei Medical University where they worked in teams to deliver a SDG pitch project.

After a couple of days in Taipei, the group caught the Puyuma express train from Taipei to Zhixue for an 11-day cultural immersion program hosted by National Dong Hwa University (NDHU), College of Indigenous Studies (CIS). At NDHU they were welcomed at a gathering of traditional song and dance. The group were given push bikes to ride to and from their classes and around NDHU's 250-hectare campus (thanks to Bill Parasiris for supplying our Western high viz vests to make our bike riding a little safer). The group joined the CIS Dance Troop's rehearsal, learning traditional song and dance and were given the opportunity to share Australian Indigenous song and dance. Over the 11 days students enjoyed lectures on some very interesting topics including Cultural Safety And Indigenous Long Term Care In Taiwan; Indigenous Natural Resource Governance; Rights, Institutions, And Transformations

In The Context Of Cultural Conflict; Indigenous Transformational Justice; Indigenous Health And Well-Beings; and Forced Resettlement, Social Shifts, And Returning To Homeland. The students also played traditional Paiwan Tribe board games developed by Professor Lo Yong-qin and participated in a hands-on class about Taiwan jade – learning about the historical and cultural significance of the Taiwan jade stone. The group learned how to cut, polish and sand their own pieces of jade into a unique statement jewellery piece to take back home to Australia.

Towards the end of the trip, the group visited the Truku tribal village of Qowgan to participate in a lesson with an Elder, who shared his cultural knowledge and traditions. They also visited the Hualien County Stone Sculpture Museum and engaged in discussions how certain elements embedded within current healthcare frameworks do not always leave room for Indigenous frameworks of wellness. The group engaged in tours to learn about local languages, wild vegetables and foraging. They visited a museum exhibition in Fata'an to learn

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about Pangcah artifacts and had the privilege of visiting the Amis Kakita'an ancestral house reconstruction project where they learnt about rebuilding traditional homes and the complicated repatriation process of lost artifacts.

On the final day they visited the Amis communities along the Eastern Coastline learning about community based local tourism, food justice, land issues and they engaged in a tree climbing experience to spot eagles and locate their nests. They visited Taroko National Park and enjoyed a farewell lunch of traditional Taiwanese cuisine before heading to the airport for departure.

Fiona Towney, Director of the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, said it was a privilege to take part in this inaugural trip.

"It was jam packed and our days were full. Our students represented our mob and our university in an outstanding manner and made many new friends during our stay. A special thank you to Professor Chien-Huang Lin, President and Professor Elsa, Yi-Hsin Hsu, Taipei Medical University, together with Professor Josh Han-Chieh Chao, President and Professor Jolan Hsieh, National Dong Hwa University and their respective teams. The logistical coordination relating to organisation of lectures, tours, meals and accommodation was superb. We couldn't

have been welcomed in a warmer manner than we experienced, and conversations have already commenced in relation to a future tour – so watch this space," said Fiona Towney.

Courtney Miller, an Indigenous Western student who attended the exchange, said she is very grateful to have been given the opportunity to finish 2022 with an overseas trip to remember and cherish forever.

"Never did I imagine that throughout my university journey I would be offered to participate in such an amazing opportunity. All events scheduled for us to participate in allowed us to work collaboratively with numerous universities across Taiwan, who welcomed us openly. What a beautiful culture the people of Taiwan have; I feel privileged to have been able to experience and gain knowledge of the way in which they practice their ways and celebrate their culture. Throughout the trip, we were exposed to both the western and Indigenous cultures of Taiwan. Being of Australian Indigenous decent, I found it particularly interesting to learn how similar the Indigenous peoples of Australia and Taiwan are. Similarities are highlighted within the impacts of colonisation, language and language revitalization, storytelling, and ceremonies with traditional dancing and singing," said Courtney Miller.



The winning team; Dr Dean Norris, Korinne Bargiel, Shawn Micallef, Emily Gilligan and Dr Sarah Kennedy (from left to right).

End of year staff networking event

On Friday the 9th of December, the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership warmly invited all Indigenous staff to come together for an end of year networking event. Indigenous staff from across all schools and institutes came together to celebrate all the achievements in the Indigenous space for 2022. The staff enjoyed a lunch followed by barefoot bowls.

The luncheon provided Indigenous staff at Western Sydney University the opportunity to network with other Indigenous staff members and learn about the ongoing developments in all Indigenous portfolios. Western's Indigenous staff continue to demonstrate outstanding collegiality, teamwork and commitment. The end of year luncheon was a lovely way to celebrate the outstanding year Western's Indigenous portfolio had in 2022.

The Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor would like to provide a special congratulations to the winning barefoot bowling team:

- Dr Dean Norris, Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Science
- Dr Sarah Kennedy, Lecturer in Sport, Health & Physical Education
- Emily Gilligan, Western Sydney University IGNITE Trainee
- Korinne Bargiel, Western Sydney University IGNITE Trainee
- Shawn Micallef, Western Sydney University IGNITE Trainee



Mr Allan McKenzie, Professor Michelle Trudgett, Dr Michelle Locke, Dr Angela Dos Santos, Mrs Brooke Tooli and Dr Scott Avery (from left to right).
Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

Yarramundi Lecture encourages people to 'Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!'

Western Sydney University proudly hosted its annual Yarramundi Lecture exploring the 2022 NAIDOC theme 'Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!' on Thursday, 8th of December. The lecture provided a forum for the discussion of issues of local and national importance. It was a celebration of Indigenous history, culture and achievements that brought together students, staff and members of the community.

The Yarramundi Lecture was established out of respect for First Nations People and has become central to the University's longstanding commitment to its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Aunty Pearl Wymarra developed the idea of an annual lecture from her appointment to establish the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Liaison Unit at the University in 1992. The lecture was named after one of the leaders of the local Aboriginal clan when the British arrived in the Sydney region. The lecture was established in special recognition of Yarramundi's leadership and the long unbroken connection of his people to their land, which now includes the Hawkesbury campus. Yarramundi House was built as the residence of Hawkesbury College's

first Principal in the 1890's when the campus was founded as the Hawkesbury Agricultural College in 1891.

This year's event brought together students, staff and members of the community to hear from a group of esteemed guest speakers including:

- Dr Angela Dos Santos, an Australian Stroke Alliance Fellow. Dr Dos Santos is Australia's first Indigenous neurologist and a key clinical expert on aeromedical plans at Melbourne Brain Centre. Dr Dos Santos is a Western alumni and the co-chair of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Leadership Council.
- Mr Allan McKenzie, a proud Gamilaroi/Wiradjuri man who possesses a powerful combination of strong cultural knowledge, respect, and cultural awareness training techniques. A new age contemporary Aboriginal artist that is known for his vibrant and contemporary colour palette captivating audiences here and internationally, moving them in a narration across land, water, language into a pool of cultural immersion.
- Brooke Toli, a Western Sydney University student, Student

Ambassador for the Office of Marketing and a casual tutor for the Badanami Centre of Indigenous Education.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, said Western Sydney University is proud to host the Yarramundi Lecture.

"The 2022 Yarramundi Lecture encouraged robust discussion from prominent Indigenous people who generously shared their vision for how we can actively embrace Indigenous knowledge. The discussions demonstrated the University's longstanding commitment to Indigenous people's aspirations across education, research and as future leaders as noted in Western's Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025. It was a great opportunity to catch up with mob and bring together our academics, staff, students, prominent leaders and Elders," said Professor Trudgett.

To read more about *Western Sydney University's Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025* please follow www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1672462/2020-2025_Indigenous_Strategy_FINAL.pdf.

What matters: Indigenous LGBTIQ+ Pasts, Presents and Futures Symposium

After four years of research and community collaboration, The Dalarinji Research Team in partnership with BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation, held the 'What Matters: Indigenous LGBTIQ+ Pasts, Presents and Future Symposium' on the 5th of December 2022. The symposium included presentations from across the disciplines on a wide variety of historical, contemporary, and future forward topics related to Indigenous sexuality and/or gender diverse peoples and communities.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, and Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan, Associate Dean Indigenous Education School of Social Sciences, provided opening presentations. Professor Sandy O'Sullivan, Australian Research Council Future Fellow in the Department of Indigenous Studies at Macquarie University, delivered an important keynote presentation entitled 'No Cession: queer as we are'.

Western Sydney University academics, Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan and Professor Karen Soldatic, presented some of their findings from the Darilinj Project. This New South Wales based research project aims to understand and promote the social and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning young people, and to work with services to

develop appropriate supports. Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan and Professor Karen Soldatic discussed how this research project is an opportunity to inform researchers and service providers about the needs and aspirations for support and services for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ young people. The data gathered in this project will be used to inform local health, counselling and appropriate services to develop programs that support Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander LGBTQA+ young people.

This symposium event brought together an array of esteemed presenters including Georgia Coe, Madi Day, Shakara Liddelow-Hunt, Pep Phelan, Souksavanh Keovorabouth, Leandro Wallace, and Dr Hannah Reardon-Smith.

Later in the day Shane Sturgis, the CEO of BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation, shared the *Darilinj Community report* which provided the final findings of the research. The day ended with the soft launch of the *NSW Community Roadmaps* which is a co-designed roadmap advocating for strategic policy and service delivery change to support the future pathways and journeys of Indigenous LGBTIQ+ young people from across our state.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, said it was a pleasure to be able to address this important symposium.

"Congratulations on such a wonderful event, it was such a powerful and inspirational experience. The sense of community was clearly demonstrated and felt throughout the day. It was an honour to be there for the Dalarinji roadmap soft launch," Professor Michelle Trudgett.

Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan, Associate Dean Indigenous Education School of Social Sciences, said the presentations along with the culmination of the project which was co-led and co-designed by community partners BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation.

"The symposium was a celebration of Indigenous queer research, Indigenous queer love, and Indigenous queer rage. What a special gift. What a treasure to bring such intellectual minds together in a space that was buoyed by humility, love, pleasure and pain. I am excited to commence the new Australian Research Council Linkage project in 2023 entitled 'Walking my Path- Indigenous Queer life aspirational pathways and social systems of support'. Watch this space," said Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan.

To learn out more about the BlaQ organisation follow, www.blaq.org.au/ and the Dalarinji Research Project follow, www.westernsydney.edu.au/ics/projects/Dalarinji_Your_Story.



Professor Karen Soldatic, Shane Sturgis & Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan (from left to right).
Photographer: Martina Valinger.



Some of the BlaQ staff, presenters and audience in attendance. Photographer: Martina Valinger.

Students

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Kirralaa Williams

Who are you?

My name is Kirralaa Williams, I am studying a Bachelor of Primary Education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander course.

Who is your mob?

I am a proud Ngemba - Weilwan woman, North-West New South Wales (Gulargambone/Gilgandra out to Bourke/Brewarrina/Cobar).

What community or cultural events have you been involved in lately or will you engage in this year?

At the beginning of 2022, I did the acknowledgement to country on Wiradjuri country for the Manly game in Mudgee. I organised and ran many cultural activities throughout Term 4 of 2022 at a local primary school in my hometown of Mudgee. Teaching Indigenous culture from K-6. The teachings included heritage, history, native foods, weapons, art, stories and the lessons within our Dreamtime.

My mum is Sharon Winsor (Indigiearth) and I helped organise and hosted a 6-course degustation dinner alongside my mum and Uncle Bruce Pascoe. Sharing Indigenous bush foods knowledge, sharing culture and bringing over 100 people together through food.

I went to Singapore middle of 2022, working alongside my mum, teaching, and sharing Indigenous Australian cultural knowledge about how to cook with Native bush foods with many Singaporean chefs.

At the end of 2022, I was selected by Western Sydney Uni to represent them in Taiwan, being a part of the first Indigenous group to learn about Indigenous culture and sharing knowledge from two different cultures.



Kirralaa Williams

Why did you choose to study at Western Sydney University?

Western Sydney University has a very high reputation of supporting Indigenous students throughout their course of studies. I was attracted to what they had to offer with the course I am in, as it allows me to come home, back to community and manage studies at the same time. Community is home and holds our deepest connections to land, to our people and the kinship we have with all. Having a healthy balance of both allows me to thrive in my life and as a future educator.

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

I have faced many challenges as an Indigenous student from racism through to discrimination. Other challenges include personal mental health and bullying throughout my education. I especially struggled academically, particularly in high school. I had to work twice as hard to ensure I got the grades I needed to have the chance to get into uni. I didn't end up getting the grades I needed, and I never got an ATAR. I took a gap year and worked back at my old school, working as a Trainee Educational Support Officer and studying through TAFE. I received my Cert III in the course. I got into uni at Charles Sturt University the following year but failed my subjects. This led to me transferring to Western Sydney University where I thrived so much more and am now receiving grades that I never thought I would get in a lifetime.

I come from a socio-economically disadvantaged background and faced many struggles personally, within the family and in education. I was always the student in school with the teachers aides in class and I had countless tutors to try and help me get through school. But I kept failing.

I overcame these challenges by just keeping my head down and powering through my studies. I didn't let the stereotypical name calling, labels or what I went through stop me from reaching my goals. Instead of letting it put me down, I turned it into fuel to build a fire within me to make me want to prove, not everyone wrong but prove to myself that I can do this and so much more which I have done. That was the hardest lesson I have ever faced and now I feel like anything is possible.

There is always more than one way to achieve what you want in life. The 'norm' of struggling through high school to get the perfect ATAR is certainly a common way for everyone to get to university. Yet, I didn't receive an ATAR. I went to TAFE. I failed my first year of Uni and am soon graduating to work in my dream job. Don't let anything stop you.

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

I want to go back to university and study my Masters degree in Secondary Education (currently doing bachelor of primary education). I want to major in Modern history and go into high school to show the beauty of Indigenous heritage, and show to truth to our sad history. There's certainly more to us than our dark past. It's the same thing worldwide. There are so many things that we need to push through to our younger generations, both Non-Indigenous and Indigenous. It's their story as much as it is ours. I'm already doing it in Primary school, I want to get it through to our teenagers as well.

You are clearly a busy person with lots of commitments, what are your top tips towards success for other Indigenous Western Sydney University students?

Find time for yourself. Don't disregard university studies by doing this though. It is essential that you find a study pattern that keeps you going and gets everything done. Map out your assignments, your workload, your homework and stick to it.

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Everybody has a different study style, so once you learn the best way for you to get your work done, find time for yourself. Don't bury yourself in university. Even if you sit down and just work on something for an hour, it makes a bigger difference than pulling an all-nighter before a due assignment. It is important to have a healthy balance of study, work and a social life. You must

put your mental health and well-being in the mix as well as it is vital to keep you going through uni.

Personally, to release that stress I go to the gym early mornings or late nights, go for a ride on my horse or simply lay on the grass and watch the clouds or stargaze. Your mind needs time to relax and adjust to everything you are learning. Find that time. Western has ways of helping you break things down

to help you get through your course. There is free tutoring as well, use that advantage!

My favourite high school teacher taught me that once you finish classes and lectures, spend 2 hours max doing nothing, watching a movie or cathart in that time. Then focus on putting in the time to keep going on study. It will make a massive difference! It has certainly helped me.

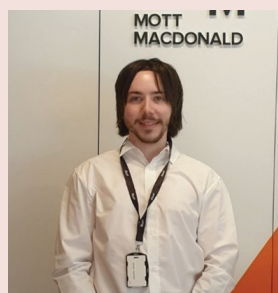
Western Sydney University's ASPIRE Program improves the promotion and retention of Indigenous people in Technology and Engineering

The ASPIRE Program began in 2020 and aims to support the career development of Indigenous students studying in Engineering and increase the representation of Indigenous students in this sector. The Western Sydney University ASPIRE Program is unique. The program connects students with industry partners to enhance their professional skills and networks while undertaking their Engineering degree.

The ASPIRE program is an opportunity for industry partners to connect with a talented pool of Indigenous students through internship opportunities while they are undertaking their engineering degree at Western. This program enables industry professionals to connect with Indigenous students to provide internships and mentorship support and career advice to future employees.

Professor Olivia Mirza initiated the Aspire Program in 2020 together with three industry partners from WSP, Waco Form, and Sydney Airport. This program not only supports Indigenous students in their academic progression, but also their career progression while studying at Western. When they complete their degree, they will be offered a graduate position.

Professor Mike Kagioglou, Dean of Engineering at Western Sydney University, made an address, noting how the School of Engineering wants to build



Henry Woods, ASPIRE Intern.



Ashley Leslie, ASPIRE scholarship recipient.



Liam Jash, ASPIRE scholarship recipient.

on its track record of advancing equality and is committed to improving the promotion and retention of Indigenous people in Technology and Engineering.

"It is a pleasure to see the school's strong engagement with industry being focused on Indigenous students. Working in partnership, we can provide unique opportunities for valuable internships and placements to mobilise our Indigenous students and activate company specific goals. I know that this collaboration will bring significant benefits to all parties, and I look forward to the development of this unique national and global initiative," said Professor Mike Kagioglou.

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate the 2022 ASPIRE Interns:

- Brent Hoffman is studying a Diploma in Engineering Extended and commenced his internship in November 2022 with Bechtel.
- Henry Woods is studying a Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology and commenced his internship in November 2022 with Mott Macdonald.
- Kyle Plant commenced his internship in April 2021 interning with Multiplex.

Western Sydney University would also like to congratulate the recipients of the ASPIRE Scholarships:

- Skye-Ann Anderson, Bachelor of Science
- William Davis, Bachelor of Science
- Caitlin Etheridge, Bachelor of Science
- Brent Hoffman, Diploma of Engineering Extended
- Liam Jash, Bachelor of Engineering Science
- Ashley Leslie, Bachelor of Science
- Kristine Pestana, Bachelor of Medical Science
- Claire Simpson, Bachelor of Science
- Tristan Strange, Bachelor of Computer Science
- William Murray, Bachelor of Construction Management (Honours)

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, congratulates all Indigenous interns and scholarship recipients.

"Across the higher education sector, engineering is traditionally a discipline that has not been successful in attracting many Indigenous students. Western Sydney University seeks to change past practices by ensuring that Indigenous students are well supported throughout their entire engineering degrees. This program provides an excellent opportunity for industry partners to contribute to being part of the journey that will establish the next generation of Indigenous engineers," said Professor Michelle Trudgett.

Staff

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S PASSIONATE INDIGENOUS STAFF

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Wayne Clarke a Badanami Student Success Officer

Who are you?

My name is Wayne Clark, born in Sydney with family and Country ties to the Gamilaroi mob.

Who is your mob?

The Gamilaroi people of North-West NSW.

What community/cultural events have you been involved in lately?

I love engaging with community. Last NAIDOC week I engaged in a whole heap of events including the Western Sydney University NAIDOC week luncheon at Parramatta South. I loved meeting new mob, networking across teams and presenting at the Indigenous Professional



Wayne Clarke. Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

Staff Conference for the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors Indigenous Committee last year. I learnt a lot from Western's Indigenous Research Week event, and I look forward to engaging in the Staff vs Student Indigenous Soccer match this year.

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

I have worked at Western a few years now. In 2017 I started as a Student Ambassador with the Future Student Engagement team. I then had a couple of different roles before landing in the Pathways To Dreaming team as a Project Officer. In

early 2022, I joined the Badanami team as a Student Success Officer.

Have you always aspired to work in tertiary education?

No, I came to Western as a student to study a Natural Science degree in 2014. Whilst studying I did volunteer work for engagement programs and fell in love with the work that we were doing. I saw how important it was to work with an inspire younger generations, I also found it very rewarding and fun.

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

The Western staff I work with and the students I work for. It is very rewarding to see students reach their education and career goals. Western Sydney University has a strong and proud Indigenous workforce. I enjoy working with mob for mob.

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

Put in an application. You will not regret joining Western. Our culture and management are second to none. Western Sydney University have an Indigenous family rather than an Indigenous workforce.



Dr Michelle Locke. Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

Western's School of Education appoints Dr Michelle Locke as a Senior Lecturer in Indigenous Education

Western Sydney University is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Michelle Locke who commenced her role as a

Senior Lecturer in Indigenous Education in January. In this role Dr Locke works closely with colleagues and provides leadership to the Indigenous Studies discipline in the School of Education.

Dr Michelle Locke is an Aboriginal woman from the Boorooberongal Clan of the Dharug Nation. Dr Locke has had a long relationship with Western Sydney University as she graduated from a Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood) in 1992 and a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) in 1995. Dr Locke completed her PhD entitled *Yana Jannawi: Walk with me. Centering Indigenous Knowledges in Early Education and Care Services* was conferred in early 2021. In 2020, Dr Locke was employed at Western as a Research Officer and in 2021 became a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow. Both positions involved working with Professor Michelle Trudgett, Professor Susan Page and Dr Rhonda Povey on a three-year longitudinal study funded by the Australian Research Council entitled *Developing Indigenous Early Career Researchers Project*.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, warmly congratulates Dr Locke on her appointment.

"I have had the pleasure of working with Dr Locke for the last decade and am excited by the energy, enthusiasm and knowledge that she will bring to School of Education. She is a highly respected education researcher and passionate about expanding our knowledge and understanding of Indigenous matters," said Professor Trudgett.

Dr Michelle Locke is excited to have started her new role.

"I am very excited to have joined the School of Education, where I have been warmly and enthusiastically welcomed. I am eager to share and grow Indigenous knowledges and perspectives with the support of Indigenous and non-Indigenous colleagues, communities and allies. I aim to continue building and strengthening Indigenous leadership and respectful community connections in the School of Education," said Dr Locke.



Professor Barney Glover, Vice-Chancellor and President, and Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership. Photography: Sally Tsoutas.



Amelia Corr presenting. Photography: Sally Tsoutas.



Josh Mason, Georgina West and Wayne Clarke. Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

Western hosted the inaugural Indigenous Professional Staff Conference for the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors Indigenous Committee

On Monday the 14th of November 2022, the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership proudly hosted the inaugural Indigenous Professional Staff Conference for the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors (NSWVCC) Indigenous Committee. The theme of the conference was *Sharing Good Practice*. The conference was designed to bring together Indigenous staff who work in the Indigenous student outreach/recruitment and engagement spaces.

Approximately 70 Indigenous staff representing ten universities affiliated with the NSWVCC attended the event. The universities represented at the conference included Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt University, Macquarie University, University of Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame, University of Canberra, University of New England, University of Newcastle, University of Wollongong, University of Sydney and Western Sydney University.

The day began with a lovely Acknowledgement of Country by Auntie Jean South. This was followed by an opening address by Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership. Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Barney Glover, also delivered an insightful presentation. Associate Professor

Corrinne Sullivan and Dr Scott Avery then provided a joint keynote address.

Each university then provided brief presentations to share their ideas and experiences with colleagues. The first session discussed on school and community engagement, while the second session focussed on engagement with Indigenous university students.

The afternoon session featured a Question-and-Answer session with Professor Lisa Jackson Pulver, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Service at University of Sydney, Dr Leanne Holt, Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy at Macquarie University and Mr Nathan Towney, Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Strategy and Leadership at University of Newcastle.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, said the day proved to be a great opportunity for the sector to discuss how institutions can work collegially to provide the best support to Indigenous Australian students.

“It was a great opportunity to connect with Indigenous staff from other universities, as well as share good practice in all areas of Indigenous

support and engagement. I am particularly proud of the Badanami team—Fiona Towney, Josh Mason, Georgina West, Kerry Licastro and Wayne Clark—and the Future Student Engagement Team—Amelia Corr and Tania Shepherd—for their fantastic presentations. Western was represented exceptionally well. I would like to thank all involved in organising and facilitating the day,” said Professor Trudgett.

Fiona Towney, Director of the Badanami Centre of Indigenous Education, said this one-day conference was designed to bring together Indigenous staff who work in the Indigenous student outreach/recruitment and engagement spaces.

“It was a great opportunity to connect with Indigenous staff from other universities, as well as sharing our good practice in all areas of Indigenous student support and engagement. More than 70 Indigenous staff from New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory enjoyed a great day full of informative and interesting presentations. The feedback on this conference overwhelming confirmed and those who attended will be looking forward to the 2023 conference,” said Fiona Towney.

Staff

Excellence in Indigenous Research and Teaching are celebrated at the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards



On Thursday the 8th of December 2022, Western Sydney University celebrated the Vice-Chancellor's Excellence Awards Ceremony at Parramatta South Campus. The awards provide a platform for the University to showcase some of the outstanding work being carried out in teaching, postgraduate research and supervision, professional service, engagement, sustainability, and leadership.

In 2021, Western introduced two new awards namely the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) Learning and Teaching award for Excellence in Indigenous Teaching, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise and International) Research award for Excellence in Indigenous Research.

The Excellence in Indigenous Teaching Award focusses on the development of curricula, resources, and services that embed Indigenous knowledge and understanding in meaningful, valuable, and engaging ways. In 2022 the Justice Clinic Team from the School of Law received this award as they motivate and inspire students to learn and develop a better understanding of Indigenous Australia.

The Justice Clinic Team includes Dr Jenni Whelan and Ms Rebecca Dominguez who have developed an innovative, collaborative and interdisciplinary approach to Indigenous teaching in the Justice Clinic of the School of Law. Justice Clinic students work on Indigenous access to justice projects in partner-led collaborations with grass root community partners and Not-for-profits The Justice Clinic curriculum

embeds and prioritises Indigenous issues, perspectives and knowledge. Through the curriculum and case and project work students learn how they can work to support Indigenous resilience in their future roles as lawyers in our legal system.

The Justice Clinic Team said that they were humbled to receive the Award.

"We are incredibly grateful to our colleagues who nominated us and to our community partners and students who wrote letters of support. The Justice Clinic (<https://lnkd.in/gfJbhN3j>) was only launched in 2020. The Justice Clinic would not have achieved the impact that it has to date without the generous and genuine partner-led collaborations with our grass root community partners and not-for-profits, our interdisciplinary colleagues, the law firms that have provided outstanding pro bono assistance and taught guest seminars, and our extraordinary students that have engaged so enthusiastically with the Clinic ethos and programs. This award belongs to you all and we look forward to continuing to build an impactful, interdisciplinary, partner-led, best practice Clinical legal program and community legal service in 2023," said The Justice Clinic Team.

The Excellence in Indigenous Research award recognises the research undertaken by an academic staff member who has significantly contributed to the University's Indigenous Strategy and broader Indigenous Australian society. Dr Scott Avery from the School of Social Sciences received this award.

Dr Scott Avery is a proud Worimi man who is profoundly deaf and is a leading scholar and educator within Indigenous Disabilities research. His work focusses on the complex intersections between Indigeneity, disability, cultural inclusion, and community responsibilities. In doing so, he has key research and advocacy connections with First Peoples Disability Network and has repeatedly represented the rights of Indigenous peoples with disability at a number of United Nations forums, Royal Commissions, and pivotal expert advisory groups. He is the proud author of 'Culture is Inclusion: A narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability'.

Professor Barney Glover, Vice-Chancellor and President, highlights how these awards are important to increasing Western's capacity to attract, retain and develop talented staff, and build organisational strength.

"The University recognises that our people are our most important asset, and these awards benefit our staff by contributing to their career development. I would like to congratulate both The Justice Clinic Team and Dr Scott Avery on their awards as they have actively contributed to the development and success of the University. It is important to publicly acknowledge the outstanding endeavours and accomplishments of our staff and recognise, reward and encourage their excellence, performance and achievements more broadly now and into the future," said Professor Glover.

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate all who received and were nominated for the Excellence Awards.

Elders

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S ELDERS

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Uncle Chris Tobin

Please tell us about yourself.

I am a Dharug man from Western Sydney who feels very blessed to be working as an artist and educator sharing our people's culture, values and traditional way of life with individuals and organisations throughout the Dharug language area. I host an 'art camp' in the Blue Mountains bush most Saturday mornings (weather permitting) which I set up to provide an opportunity and a place to meet up around the campfire with local Aboriginal people and to connect more with Country. We have a dance circle there and paint the trees up in ochre as a way of sharing stories and letting others know the place in being used for Aboriginal cultural activities. I am very excited to be hosting this in Parramatta Park this year on the 1st Saturday of each month which being very accessible. This will allow us to connect with even more people from Western Sydney. I am not sure they will let us have a fire there yet, but we are working towards that slowly.

Who is your mob, and where are you from?

My family descend from the first official marriage between an Aboriginal woman (Bolognaia/'Maria') and an Englishman (Robert Lock) back in 1824. They were married in St Johns church in Parramatta with Maria's father named on her



Uncle Chris Tobin. Photography: Dhrg.uws.edu.au

marriage certificate as 'Yarramundi -Chief of the Richmond Tribes'. The family settled on land chosen by her brother Colbee in the traditional country of the Burruberongal clan into which Maria was born. Other Aboriginal families soon joined them, and the place became known as 'the Blacks' town' from which the city of Blacktown gets its name.

What does it mean to be an Elder?

I feel humbled to be carrying out the duties of an Elder in our community. There is a strong sense of responsibility to keep oneself upright and happy as many of our young people still look to their Elders for guidance and encouragement.

Who inspires you?

am inspired by our young people. I am impressed with their respectfulness and their care of one another and the pressing issues of the day. I am also impressed by how many beautiful and clever souls are still coming through. It gives me confidence for our future.

Why have you joined the Elder's Advisory Committee of Western Sydney University?

I have joined the Elders Advisory Committee to help strengthen the good direction that our culture and our people are leaning into.

What are your hopes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in years to come?

I am hoping that life returns to a more just, healthy and relaxed one as enjoyed by our Old People in traditional times.

Do you have any advice for the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are striving to make change in community?

My advice for the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are striving to make change is to not break yourself over trying to get a result or to despair over the state of things now if they are not good as they can be yet. Good things are unfolding. Stay firm and beautiful in the truths of our culture and have faith in the Great Spirit. There are still awful things playing out in our world, but I have seen miraculous changes for good in my lifetime and there is no reason to believe this will not continue.



Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

December graduates

Western Sydney University is committed to empowering and supporting Indigenous students' study and graduate from degrees of their choice. Currently, Western Sydney University has over 1,515 Indigenous alumni who have graduated from a variety of degrees across the University's range of Schools.

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.

In December 2022, we congratulate the 84 Indigenous students who completed their studies in 2020 and finally received the opportunity to graduate on stage.

Research

CELEBRATING 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 late last year or early this year.

Corrinne Sullivan, Kim Spurway, Linda Briskman, John Leha, William Trewlynn & Karen Soldatic. (2021). *Dalaringji: 'Your Story' – Roadmap & report to community*. Parramatta: Western Sydney University. <https://doi.org/10.26183/nv4p-0x86>

Michelle Locke. (2022). Asking the experts: Indigenous educators as leaders in early education and care settings in Australia. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 51(2). <https://doi.org/10.55146/ajie.v51i2.12>

Paul Saunders & Aunty Kerrie Doyle. (2023). Cultural proficiency in First Nations health research: A mixed-methods, cross-cultural evaluation of a novel resource. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 20(1), 39. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20010039>

Rhonda Povey, **Michelle Trudgett, Susan Page & Michelle Locke**. (2022). Hidden in plain view: Indigenous early career researchers' experiences and perceptions of racism in Australian universities. *Critical Studies in Education*. DOI:10.1080/17508487.2022.2159469

Western Indigenous Research Team wins the 2021 Best Article Award in the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate Professor Michelle Trudgett, Professor Susan Page and Stacey Coates on recently winning the 2021 Best Article Award for the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management. The paper, 'Talent war: Recruiting Indigenous Senior Executive in Australian Universities' (<https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2020.1765474>), was selected for its academic rigour and is a must read for all.

In this paper Professor Trudgett, Professor Page and Stacey Coates highlight the challenges of recruiting Indigenous leaders in Australian universities. The paper was exceptionally well reviewed by the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management's Committee members across all of the key criteria for the award: Relevance, Style, Quality and Impact.

The Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management said Professor Trudgett and colleagues' research is part of an emerging and powerful line of inquiry into how to bring about greater Indigenous involvement in Australian university leadership.

"While there is common agreement on the need for more Indigenous higher education leaders, the practicalities of how to achieve this remain under-researched and profoundly misunderstood. Trudgett and colleagues' research makes a considerable advancement in our understanding by engaging with recruiter perspectives.

The uniqueness of each Indigenous senior leadership position means there is no template for recruiters. The perception of a relatively 'small pool' of potential candidates can lead to a 'talent war', but their research also suggests a fairly shallow understanding of the available Indigenous talent. The pool is wider and deeper than what many recruiters and leaders can see," said The Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management.

The feedback from the three Committee members described the article in uniformly positive ways. It was complimented for being "exciting research [that] addresses a central topic for Australian universities" and also for providing "a comparator for further studies of First Nations people in universities" elsewhere in the world. Most importantly for the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, the article is likely to have both "substantial policy impact" at a sectoral level, as well as at an institutional level with "impact on the management of human resources by Australian universities".

Once again, Western would like to congratulate Professor Michelle Trudgett, Professor Susan Page and Stacey Coates on this significant achievement.

Looking back in order to look forward – Western’s Indigenous researchers represent at the AARE Conference

From Sunday the 27th of November to Thursday the 1st of December 2022 the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) and the University of South Australia co-hosted the AARE 2022 Conference. The conference offered delegates the opportunity to connect, network, share and learn in the delightful city of Adelaide. The conference theme was *Transforming the future of education: The role of research*. The conference theme invited education researchers to be research informing, to reimagine their ways of thinking and work to interrupt or disrupt the taken-for-granted.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, provided a keynote presentation on the second day of the conference entitled ‘*Looking back in order to look forward – Reinforcing Indigenous leadership in the Australian higher education sector*’. Professor Trudgett’s keynote provided an overview of Indigenous participation in the higher education sector, noting the enormous roles that the pioneers of Indigenous education played in times when universities did not consider Indigenous Knowledges and culture to be of value. She argued that Indigenous leadership must be embedded throughout all aspects of university business in order for the sector to produce the best outcomes for Indigenous people, our communities and the nation more broadly. Professor Trudgett noted that a key piece within this equation is the need to increase the number of Indigenous Australians completing Higher Degree research qualifications as they are the next generation of academic scholars and leaders who each contribute to building on the outstanding work of the pioneers who have come before us. As a sector, she explained how universities need to look at history and examine where they are now in order to best plan for where they want to be in the future.



Professor Michelle Trudgett. Photography: AARE Conference 2022.

“The Australian higher education sector emerged over 170 years ago with many of our institutions now held in the highest regard on the global stage. Universities have made significant contributions to shaping minds across the nation while finding meaningful solutions to research problems. In most parts, the sector should be proud of the progress and contributions made. However, it would be remiss to reflect on the last 170 years solely through a lens of success as the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and Knowledges was often, and in many instances remains, absent,” said Professor Trudgett.

Professor Susan Page, Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching, said it was great to be back to attending a conference in person.

“Western’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Trudgett gave a stimulating and thought-provoking keynote address to a packed auditorium of engaged attendees. The conference had a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Special Interest Group (SIG), so we were able to connect with old colleagues doing interesting research and to hear presentations from terrific graduate students. Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews not only gave a well-received presentation, he adroitly led the SIG group for the duration of the conference, encouraging discussion and welcoming newcomers. Dr Michelle Locke garnered critical engagement with her timely presentation on micro-racism experienced by Indigenous Early Career Researchers working in the academy,” said Professor Page.

Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Director of Indigenous Research, said I had the pleasure of attending the AARE 2022 conference and witnessed many powerful and inspirational Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nations speakers present.

“Professor Trudgett’s keynote presentation on the trends of Indigenous Leadership in higher education was exceptional, as was Dr Locke’s presentation on the racism experienced by Indigenous Early Career Researchers. It was also great to see University of Queensland’s Indigenous researchers Dr Mitchell Rom and Amy Thomson be awarded the Betty Watts Indigenous Researcher Award and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Student Researcher Award respectively. As for me, my presentation was titled Indigenous Storywork and D’harawal Storytelling as Advocacy, Activism, and Resistance, where I outlined the dangers of simplistic reconciliation narratives that only serve to further alienate and silence Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Instead, we must see a commitment to a deep listening of our Stories and Knowledges. As evidence, I highlighted how the D’harawal Traditional Descendants and Knowledge Holders Circle have engaged with the Knowledges within Garuwanga (Dreaming) Stories to help try to protect and heal Country,” said Professor Bodkin-Andrews.

To learn more about the AARE Conference follow <https://aareconference.com.au/>



Photography: Sally Tsoutas.



Photography: Sally Tsoutas.

The Badanami team are back for 2023 and looking forward to the academic school year

The Badanami team are extremely excited to be back for 2023 and are really looking forward to the start of the academic school year. We want to remind all Indigenous students that our centres are open, and our staff are on deck ready to help in getting everything set up for an amazing year.

Autumn semester is also a time of year when we welcome new incoming students here at Western, so if you are one of our first-time students or even one of our returning students, please make sure you pop into your local Badanami Centre and meet the team. Our centres offer Indigenous students a culturally safe environment and countless opportunities to build connections with both Indigenous students and staff across Western.

Centres have facilities such as computer labs, kitchens, free printing, study spaces etc while Badanami staff can help with registering for tutorials, organising free one on one tutoring and much more.

Badanami Centres can be found at

- Bankstown City Campus – Level 3
- Campbelltown Campus – Building 3
- Hawkesbury Campus – Building K4 (Stable Square)
- Parramatta South Campus – Building EY
- Parramatta City – Level 2
- Penrith Campus (Kingswood) – Building N
- Liverpool City Campus – Level 1

