

The Yarning Circle

Spring 2020 | Edition #2

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 of its work in their lands in Greater Western Sydney and beyond.

Disclaimers

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

Publication Enquiries

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(L to R) Daliah Aggrey-Fynn, Trudy Healey, & Kristy Bell. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

Celebrating NAIDOC week at Western Sydney University

Despite official NAIDOC celebrations being postponed from 5th July to now commence on 8th November 2020, Western Sydney University continued to celebrate NAIDOC week and its 2020 theme 'Always Was, Always Will Be'. Western invited all students, staff and community members to embrace the true history of Country and First Nations people's spiritual and cultural connections that have been strong for thousands of generations.

Staff, students and community were invited to take part in events that ran throughout the week.

Students and staff were invited to test their knowledge and have fun while taking part in the annual NAIDOC Week quiz. Join us in congratulating;

The student winners

- 1st place: Matilda Harry, Master of Education (Primary)
- 2nd place: Anastasia Vickers, Bachelor of Advanced Science
- 3rd place: James Duff, Bachelor of Business/Bachelor of Law

The staff winners

- 1st place: Corrinne Sullivan, Associate Dean (Indigenous Education), School of Social Science
- 2nd place: Charlotte Farina, Senior Graphic Designer, Design Team
- 3rd place: Dr Adam Daniel, Casual Academic, School of Humanities and Communications Arts

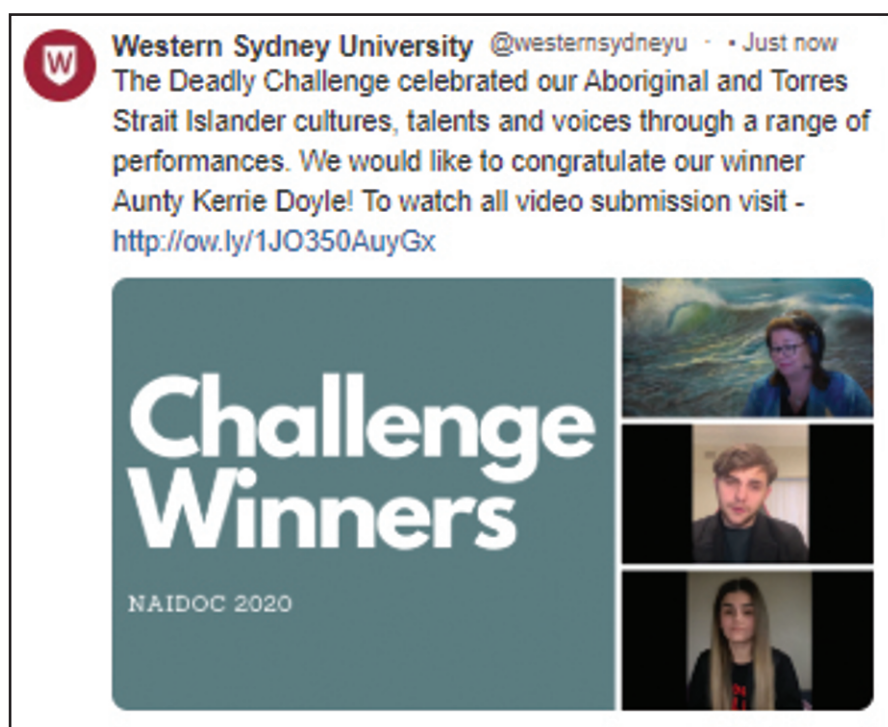
To find out more about the NAIDOC Week quiz and to hear from the winners please follow: <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/naidoc-quiz>

Our talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff competed in the [Western Sydney University Deadly Challenge](#) celebrating their cultures and voices through a range of performances. All staff and students were invited to watch the singing, dancing and slam poetry and the favourite performances were determined.

Congratulations and thank you to all who contributed. After an overwhelming number of voted the winners are:

- 1st place- Aunty Kerrie Doyle
- 2nd place- Jarred Murphy
- 3rd place- Talyssa Baker

Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff members introduced the [‘Feed Ya Mob’](#) cooking segment which featured photographic recipes and a [video](#) which taught us how to cook Semur chicken and Lemon Myrtle tart for our mobs to share at home. It was a great to learn about traditional bush tucker and



methods of cooking which have been passed down in community and are still being used.

Western promoted the [‘Yarning with the mob’](#) and [‘What does culture mean to you?’](#) short films. These showcased First Nations students educating all about their cultures, identities and a range of Aboriginal English terminologies used in community.

The Indigenous Student Council and Western Life held a free online screening of ‘The Australian Dream’ film. All staff

and students were invited to watch the film which tells the remarkable story of Indigenous AFL legend Adam Goodes and explores race, identity and belonging in Australia today.

Other events held during NAIDOC week include Western Sydney University’s Centre for Educational Research held a Black Lives Matter and Education: Pathways to Action Symposium, ‘#Indigenouslivesmatter: Speaking back/ with Social Sciences’ symposium, and the inaugural Indigenous Student Council meeting.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR

Welcome to the second edition of *The Yarning Circle*, an important initiative that recognises and celebrates Indigenous excellence at Western Sydney University. It is with great pride that I can report the first edition of this important newsletter received an abundance of positive feedback from students, staff and the broader community.

This Spring 2020 edition is produced at a time when many members of our community are experiencing a strong sense of isolation and loneliness because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is heartening to know that *The Yarning Circle* can play a small part in keeping our community connected through such challenging times. This edition includes a range of great stories from Western’s ongoing commitment to social justice issues such as the Black

Lives Matter movement, through to our NAIDOC week celebrations, which for the first time were all conducted online. The ongoing commitment to advancing Indigenous education is outlined in the article on the cultural exchange program which all members of Western’s Executive team completed. It also provides a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the incredible accomplishments of our Indigenous staff, students and alumni.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our staff, students, alumni and community for their dedication to advancing Indigenous success at Western. I encourage you to contact Matilda Harry at M.Harry@westernsydney.edu.au if you have any ideas or suggestions for articles that might be included in future editions.



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

**Professor Michelle Trudgett
(BA, MPS, EdD)**

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



Black Lives Matter Rally. Photography: Western Sydney University Indigenous Academic

Western pledges support to the Black Lives Matter movement

Western Sydney University commits to stand in solidarity with Indigenous Australians and people of colour through supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. The Black Lives Matter campaign has sparked widespread interest and support in the long-running movement in Australia and overseas. The protests have been a catalyst for critical conversations around racial justice and the need to address systemic and institutional racism in all spaces.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation, is proud to belong to an institution that actively practices zero tolerance of racism.

“Western Sydney University deeply values and respects the cultural diversity of all students and staff. Through the sharing of culture, stories and knowledge we continue to learn from one another. As an academic community, we also seek to work with Indigenous people and others to tackle the persistent tragedy of Indigenous deaths in custody, the scourge of Indigenous incarceration, and the many biases within the justice and legal systems,” said Professor Trudgett.

“Western Sydney University supports efforts to advance Indigenous self-determination and recognises the urgent need to do so, as recommended by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Western extends our sincerest

condolences to the families and friends of the many Indigenous people who have passed whilst in custody. Indigenous staff, students and Elders are valued and respected members of our community. We thank them for their ongoing contributions and hope that in these challenging times, and beyond, we come together in solidarity and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to Indigenous Australians and other people of colour who are subjected to racism.”

Ms Michelle Falconer, Senior Manager of Equity and Diversity, said it is important that universities challenge injustices and take a stand on the discrimination and harassment facing First Australians.

“Western has a proud history of tackling inequalities and the Australian Black Lives Matter movement is an historical opportunity to catch mainstream attention and highlight the life and death struggles of Indigenous Australians. The Office of Equity and Diversity is proud to contribute to the University’s Black Lives Matter action and to stand side by side with Professor Michelle Trudgett and her team. We are very grateful for the opportunity and the support shown by Western’s students and staff,” said Ms Falconer.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, the University’s Library, and the Office of Equity and Diversity have worked together to create opportunities for students and staff to demonstrate their support and better understand the issues driving the Black Lives Matter movement in Australia.

One way to get involved is by signing the Western Sydney University Black Lives Matter Pledge. [See the University’s invitation to sign the pledge](#) to stand against racism and show your support for the campaign. To date, 1,300 students

and staff have signed the pledge. Clearly, many staff and students at Western share a strong commitment to call out racism and actively remedy social injustices.

Western Sydney University has also curated a [new collection](#) of resources for Western students and staff on critical issues underpinning the Australian Black Live Matter campaign, including films, books and academic literature.

Western Sydney University’s Centre for Educational Research also held a [Black Lives Matter and Education: Pathways to Action Symposium](#) to discuss the implications of the movement on all sectors of Education. This online symposium featured research from Higher Education, Initial Teacher Education, Schools, Early Learning and community education.

Furthermore, the School of Social Sciences also held the ‘#Indigenouslivesmatter: Speaking back/ with Social Sciences’ symposium on Friday 17th of July. The highly successful event included an opening address by Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro-Vice Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation. The presenters were School of Social Sciences Indigenous academics including, Associate Dean Indigenous Education Corrinne Sullivan, Senior Lecturer Dr Scott Avery, and Lecturer Robyn Oxley. Responding to the presentations was Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Professor Brian Stout.

We understand that action is even more important than words when tackling ongoing inequalities. To see the practical steps the University commits to take over the next five years check out [Western’s Indigenous Strategy 2020-2025](#).



Photography: Sally Tsoutas

Western leaders participate in Indigenous cultural exchange

Earlier in the year all members of the Western Sydney University Executive team, together with a group of academics and professional staff, participated in a full day cultural exchange workshop to enhance their understanding of Country and culture.

Facilitated by Shannon Barnes-McKenzie and Allan McKenzie from Boomalli Consulting, attendees learnt about the creation of the land, waterways, plants, animals, people, lore and language, and the responsibilities of Traditional Custodians.

The group explored the social, political and community structures within Aboriginal Affairs in New South Wales alongside the historical and contemporary environments First Nation people exist in. Engaging in yarning circles and artefact information sessions, attendees listened to traditional instruments and jointly created a journeyed art-piece which will be displayed in the University's Chancellery.

Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Barney Glover AO said the cultural exchange was an important opportunity to connect with the world's oldest continuous culture, and to learn about new ways to better engage with and support Indigenous students, staff and community members.

"Western Sydney University recognises Indigenous Australians have a deep and rich culture that has existed for tens of thousands of years. We are committed to working in partnership with Indigenous people and continuing to build our knowledge of their culture," said Professor Glover.

Proud Ngiyampaa woman and Managing Director and Founder of Boomalli Consulting, Shannon Barnes-McKenzie, said education is an important part of every individual's journey to understanding and participating in Indigenous culture.

"Boomalli is proud to collaborate with Western Sydney University. It's through ongoing education, commitment and respect that institutions like Western will continue to support the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people," said Mrs Barnes-McKenzie.

Increased educational opportunities for staff, such as the cultural exchange workshop, are one component of the University's broader Indigenous Strategy. The strategy, led by Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro Vice Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation, underscores Western Sydney University's commitment to increasing Indigenous employment, education, research and engagement.

Students

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Leanne Markovic

Who are you?

I'm Leanne Markovic, I'm currently studying Bachelor of Business/ Bachelor of Applied Leadership and Critical Thinking. I'm a PASS Facilitator, MATES mentor and Online Student Representative for 2020. This year I am also an Academy Ambassador. In this role I'm not only focused on leadership and academic achievement, but on working closely with our PVC to look at opportunities for our Indigenous students to become more involved. This involvement is not just through study but also workshops, panel discussions and even immersion activities. I'm also working hard on a series of events in which we can educate our non-Indigenous students on who we are and why we're deadly in everything we do!

Who is your mob?

My mob is from Western Sydney – Darug, with ties to Eora. Many of my family were adopted, both legally and illegally so working out our full tree is still a work in progress. I grew up mostly in Redfern and then Western Sydney.

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

In October 2019, I attended the conference for the Union of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students on Ngunnawal country. I got to spend four days with other mob from around Australia who like me, are studying at university, college or TAFE. It was a great opportunity to share stories, learn from each other and develop deep connections to our heritage through our experiences with studying. The diversity



Leanne Markovic

in ages, areas of study and our heritage was vast. It was great to hear from students who are fortunate enough to live on their own countries and who are achieving so much for their families.

Why did you choose to study at Western Sydney University?

I chose to study at Western because the vast courses and flexibility offered at this university, suited me. I work full time, so I needed to be able to study online to try and balance my family, work and study commitments. I originally studied here in 1998 and it was very different then, but I like the closeness to home and the variety it offers.

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

I have only had a few interactions that I would deem unfavourable. If I witness anything First Nations related being misquoted, I feel compelled to educate the room as respectfully as I can. This is often met with "oh you don't look black" or "where were you stolen from?" Yes, some people are that simple and disrespectful. I try to educate people and give them the benefit of the doubt, but some are just plain stupid.

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

My goals have changed over the years. I am a mature aged student, a Mum of 6 and I have 2 children also studying at Western. Years ago, I wanted to go into the corporate world and take on the big wigs. After my awesome experiences as a mentor, tutor and PASS facilitator, I'm now thinking I'd love to do a PhD and become an academic. Working toward educating and supporting other students, especially First Nations Students on their education journey.

You are clearly a busy person with lots of commitments! What are your top 5 tips towards success for other Indigenous Western Sydney University students?

1. Don't let anyone tell you 'you can't'. Be the leader of your own journey and if you see an opportunity and things that pique your interest, go for it!
2. Learn to say 'no' occasionally. As much as we all love to take on so much, we need to make sure we leave enough time to take care of ourselves and take time out. We can achieve everything we want, but maybe not all in one day.
3. Ask questions and ask for help. I learnt this the hard way, but the academics and Badanami staff can be amazingly supportive and helpful. Make sure you talk to people and ask for help before things become too overwhelming. Get familiar with the programs and supports on offer.
4. Get involved! University has a lot of amazing things up for offer. I found that once I became involved in a few things, my marks got better. I think this was because I gained confidence in knowing how to navigate my way through the University maze.
5. Keep your mob in your heart and mind at all times. I think we are blessed in our position knowing we can make positive changes in this crazy world. If you do things with the right intentions, you can grow yourself and your culture at the same time.

Western students awarded Lorna Earl and William Woodberry Scholarships

The Lorna Earl and William Woodberry Scholarship program encourages Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students to further their education. In 2020 ten individual scholarships valued at \$15,000pa for the duration of a student's degree were offered state wide.

Of the ten scholarships that were available four Western Sydney University Indigenous students were the deserving recipients. This is a fantastic result for our mob, and a clear testament to the quality of our students and our teaching and learning at Western.

- Please join us in congratulating the recipients:
 - Brodie Harris, a Bachelor of Social Work student.

- Jessie Browne, a Doctor of Medicine student.
- Mason Smith, a Bachelor of Physiotherapy student.
- Tayoni Webber-Travers, a Bachelor of Criminology student.

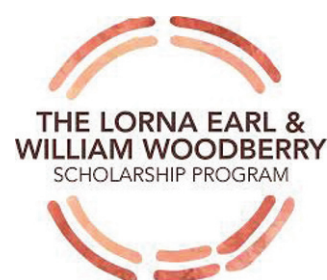
Brodie Harris, a proud Wodi Wodi student, expressed that she was beyond surprised when she was awarded the scholarship.

"I will be the first in my family to complete an undergraduate degree at University, the importance of education is foundational and has the potential to transform my life and those of others that have experienced significant disadvantage and oppression within their life. The scholarship has allowed me to purchase much needed equipment for my studies and has enabled me to remain financially stable even after becoming unemployed due to COVID-19," said Ms Harris.

To find out more about the Lorna Earl and William Woodberry scholarships please follow: <https://good2give.ngo/resources/case-studies/lorna-earl-william-woodberry-leww-scholarships/>



Brodie Harris



Kobi Whalan

Rural student kicks goals at Western

Kobi Whalan, a proud Gamilaraay student, is studying in his 4th year of a Bachelor of Health Science, majoring in Sports and Exercise Science. Kobi grew up in Singleton, a little town in the Hunter Valley, with his mob coming from Coonabarabran. Kobi went to Singleton High School and was provided the opportunity to attend a camp, the Rural

Indigenous Student visit at Western Sydney University. The visit included a wide range of academic workshops held on various Western campuses throughout the week. Kobi learnt about the range of degrees offered and the potential career pathways available to him.

"The camp gave me clarity on what future career pathways were available to me. Coming from a small community it definitely was a big eye opener. It helped me understand that university is a viable option and has plenty of support services and alternative pathways to assist," said Kobi.

In November of 2016 Kobi attended the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathway Program, a two-day program where his literacy and numeracy skills were assessed. Kobi also had an informal group interview with academics in his chosen area of study. In early January 2017 he received an offer for his dream degree and soon made the trip down to live on campus and study.

Kobi said, "I was worried after receiving my HSC results, but after completing the Pathway Program, I was relieved as I was provided with an offer into my degree. I would encourage anyone in community to apply for the Pathway program. The

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement team at Western are super supportive and will assist you to not only get into your desired course but they will try to assist you throughout your degree. Uni is an option for all of our mob. If you have a goal Western will help you achieve it."

Kobi's highlights of his time at Western have been campus life, competing in the Indigenous national uni games and also giving back to the young mob by mentoring for the Western Sydney University's Rural Indigenous Student visits, Heartbeat and Pathways to Dreaming programs.

Kobi has big hopes for the future as he aims to improve the health status of our mob by working in the sport and exercise field, particularly in strength and conditioning.

Congratulations on your achievements thus far, Western Sydney University cannot wait to hear about your future achievements and successes, we are very proud of you Kobi.

To find out more about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathway Program visit: www.westernsydney.edu.au/pathwayprogram

College students receive recognition for academic excellence

The academic rigour, leadership and community engagement of two outstanding Indigenous College students has been recognised in their achievement of the Ngaramada Indigenous Student Scholarship.

We would like to congratulate Jamaica Lopes and Jamie Murray on their recent achievement, and we cannot wait to see what the future holds for them.

Jamaica is a proud Aboriginal woman studying a Diploma in Social Science Extended at Western Sydney University's College. She hopes to work in the community and expresses how overwhelmed and excited she was to receive this recognition.

Jamie is a proud Darug man from the Boorooberongal clan studying a Diploma in Social Science Extended at Western Sydney University's College. He is passionate about making positive social change for our mob in the future and explains how grateful he is to be awarded the scholarship.

"I cannot thank the University enough for offering me this support. The financial assistance has relieved a lot of my pressures and provided me with many opportunities. I haven't had to spend all my hours working, instead I am able to put more time into studying and achieving desirable grades. It has changed my whole experience at University," said Mr Murray.

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>.



Jamie Murray



Shayne Miller

Aspiring doctor paves way for greater representation

Gomeri-Ngarabul man and trainee doctor, Shayne Miller, recently delivered his first baby at Campbelltown Hospital.

"It was an amazing experience – there's a lot we can learn from birthing women: tenacity, courage, strength, comfortability in one's own limits, the list goes on."

When he's not bringing a new life into the world, Dr Shayne Miller is also nurturing Indigenous representation in health care – and he's calling for others to join him. The 22-year-old is happily into his fourth year of a medicine degree, but he wasn't always so sure of his path.

"Like many Indigenous students, I'm the first in my immediate family to go to university so there's this common idea that we don't belong or fit in. I don't think that's fair, we put that on ourselves a lot of the time. The truth is we're all capable of whatever we set our minds to; after all, we've got 60,000 plus years of ancestors cheering us on."

Shayne grew up in a single-parent household in Aboriginal Housing and says the experience, although challenging, grounded him in the real world.

"I know what it's like to struggle and to see those closest to you struggle. My background has given me a huge amount of determination to create a better future for myself, my family and our community."

Attending Liverpool Boys High School in South Western Sydney, Shayne studied hard and was the first Aboriginal Captain at the school. His interest in physical education and science led him to enrol in a 'first aid to medicine' program.

"Finding this course was a complete game-changer for me. I realised it was possible to go on to further education. So I did alternative entry testing for nursing while I was doing my HSC, and I also sat the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admission Test."

Shayne was offered an interview for the Bachelor of Medicine/Bachelor of Surgery at Western Sydney University. After sitting the interview, he received a phone call from the panel that same afternoon.

"There were shouts of pure joy, a flood of congratulations and many tears. I'll never forget the smile on my mum's face."

Shayne is advocating for a future where it's not uncommon to be treated by an Indigenous health care professional – be it a doctor, nurse, pathologist, radiologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist or psychologist. He also says, spiritual healing and staying connected to the Dreaming are vital for Indigenous wellbeing.

"The Dreaming is a constant state, we are continuously connected to our dreaming and each of us is at a different point in our journey. We must not lose sight of that and who we are. The Dhinawan (Emu) dreaming of the Gomeri and the Boorabee (Koala) dreaming of the Ngarabul carry me through my life."

Staff

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S PASSIONATE INDIGENOUS STAFF

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Fiona Towney

Who are you?

Like most of us now, I am of mixed heritage. I had one Aboriginal grandparent and three Irish grandparents. My paternal grandfather, Sam Towney, was a lovely gentle man who was born on Bulgandramine Mission, north west of Peak Hill NSW. My father was Frank Towney (also known as Shearer Frank), he was born in Peak Hill. I have very fond memories of them both.

Who is your mob?

I am Wiradjuri. I was born in Coolah NSW. I grew up in Stuart Town, then Wellington, and moved to Sydney when I was commencing year 6.

What community/cultural events have you been to lately?

I am often asked to Acknowledge Country at events held within Western Sydney University. I always use this as an educational opportunity – for example, advising the difference between a Welcome and an Acknowledgement and how to think about introducing inclusive practices into the workplace. Over the last five or six years I have been asked to Acknowledge Country at the Westmead Hospital's annual New Graduate Information night. I remind our prospective nurses that they can contribute to the lifelong outcomes of our children by treating us with respect and empathy. This will mean that we are more likely to seek assistance when we are ill – leading to better health, leading to increased attendance and retention at school. I was one of the team that worked on the Back to Bulgandramine reunion held last year. My role was to collate the Towney family tree. I really enjoyed it. It took me about four months. I learnt a lot of our history and plenty of interesting information. COVID has meant we are meeting in different ways. This year I



Fiona Towney, Director of Badanami. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

have attended a number of online cultural activities, presented by various hosts, within and outside of Western.

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

I am the Director of the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education. I commenced this role on 3 September 2018, so I am just reaching my two-year anniversary.

Have you always aspired to work in tertiary education?

No. My first job was with the Commonwealth Bank (because my dad bought home the application form and got me to fill it in). I started there about four months after I left school and was there for the next 15 years and was an Assistant Manager on the CBA IT Help Desk when I resigned. I then worked for the NSW Department of Education for 24 years. It was there where I became interested in education as a tool to increase opportunities. I worked in Orange for eight years which is where I initiated the first mentor group in NSW for our Aboriginal Education Assistants (now Officers). I watched as the children of these staff started to come through as teachers in the NSW system – I participated in the development of proactive practices by the department in relation to targeted employment of our people. It really looks quite different now to what it did back in the day. All of my employment with the DET was in HR in one area or another and I loved every

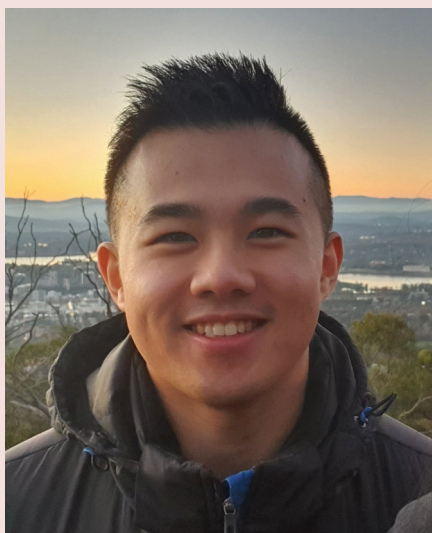
minute of it (well – mostly). When I left there I was the Leader of the Probity team – my team looked after the WWCC compliance (we verified around 110,000 WWCCs per year), criminal histories and the Not to be Employed data base. Moving to the tertiary sector was a natural progression.

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

I have met so many welcoming and interesting people. I really enjoy getting to know people and I am starting to understand the collegiate atmosphere. I am really amazed at the amount of research that goes on in universities – to be honest I had never really thought about it before. I am so happy to see our young mob coming through – there are so many exciting opportunities ahead of them and I feel privileged to be part of their journey.

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

Throw your hat in the ring. There are so many opportunities if you are prepared to work hard. We are always on the lookout for great staff and role models.



Jackie Wu

Meet Jackie Wu, one of Western Sydney University's Super Tutors

Who are you?

I'm currently a final year student studying the Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery program. Prior to my time at Western, I spent a year 'abroad' in Queensland—I mean it's not technically 'abroad' but during State of Origin time it might as well be—studying a Bachelor of Science, but thankfully I was able to come back home to study the degree that will shape my future. Throughout my time as a student, I've been exposed to many of the physical, mental, and social health issues faced by people living in Western Sydney, and I'm hoping to stay (or come back to) both the region and the University to practise and teach medicine in the future. With the conclusion of the main written exams this year, I've been juggling an Honours project and discovering the wonders of the Nintendo Switch, as well as starting work as an Assistant in Medicine at Bathurst Base Hospital. I'm also very much a fan of learning challenging bodyweight exercise movements, though I'm not particularly good at any of them.

Who are you tutoring and what are they studying?

I've tutored medical students in the first and second year of their MBBS program. Medicine is an extremely challenging degree which involves learning firstly about how the body works in terms of its structure (anatomy) and function (physiology), and then applying these concepts to how various bodily functions may fail in different disease processes. Students are also exposed to real-life hospital and clinic-based medicine early in Western Sydney University's program, adding a further layer to their studies. Needless to say, all students will have struggles with different aspects of the program, be it a specialty or body system they're having trouble understanding, applying the foundational knowledge to real life patients, or remembering the important concepts among all the information they're taught. My job as a tutor with Badanami is to work with my students to identify which aspects of the program they're struggling with, and then working with them to help bridge gaps in knowledge, improve study techniques, introduce resources, and work on a structured and logical way to approach clinical problems. For example, we might work on identifying the key anatomical and physiological concepts relevant to a particular disease, and then look at exactly how the body fails to do what it normally does. I might also act as a

patient in a simulated clinical encounter to help my students learn to structure their thinking in the moment.

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

I first heard of the Tutoring for Success program when one of the School of Medicine PhD students mentioned it as one of the ways they were able to do formal teaching while studying their PhD. Soon after this, I was invited to apply as I was one of the PASS facilitators for Medicine and we were recruited to help due to tutor shortages. I became a tutor through Badanami because I knew that the MBBS is an extremely tough degree and it could be immensely frustrating for a deficit in knowledge or understanding in one aspect of the program could carry over into other areas. This would allow me to provide support for the program's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, especially those who might be struggling.

Why is tutoring important?

I think tutoring is important because at the end of the day, it helps develop problem-solving skills. In medicine, I think students are generally able to retain information better if they are able to think logically and approach their study systematically. Additionally, we work on being able to effectively seek answers when they don't know something, which is an essential skill in their future practice.

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

I think that if you have developed a way of learning and problem solving that you believe would be useful to others, you should look into the possibility of becoming a tutor. It certainly helps if you are confident in your coursework and have achieved good results in the past (or have improved a lot), but even as a tutor you would be hard-pressed to know everything there is to know. You can also use the preparation and execution of the session as part of your own learning and self-development as you will be revising and consolidating important content, as well as your communication skills.



Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

School of Medicine appoints new Associate Dean of Indigenous Health

Western Sydney University is pleased to announce Winninninni woman Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle as the new Associate Dean Indigenous Health within the School of Medicine.

Professor Doyle was among the first cohort of Aboriginal people to graduate from Oxford University, and is the second Indigenous woman to be appointed as Associate Dean at the University. As a Professor of Indigenous Health, she brings a wealth of research and advocacy expertise to the School, with much of her work dedicated to improving outcomes for Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

Professor Doyle believes Western Sydney University is playing a vital role in supporting the aspirations of Indigenous people in the region, but more can be done to increase their participation in higher education and research.

"To be instrumental in closing the gap, we must listen to and privilege Indigenous voices. I believe it's through listening that we can truly reflect Indigenous' concerns and knowledge, and work towards improving health and educational outcomes for our mobs," said Professor Doyle.

"Knowledge sharing and increasing the efficacy of decision making are components of Indigenous communities that have always inspired me. A priority for me in my new role will be to empower young people and to strengthen connections with our Elders."

Distinguished Professor Annemarie Hennessy AM, Dean of the School of Medicine, welcomed the appointment of Professor Doyle.

"The School is greatly benefitting from Professor Doyle's appointment and her implementation of new initiatives in medical education," said Distinguished Professor Hennessy.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation, said Professor Doyle will provide outstanding leadership to the School and the wider University community.

"Professor Doyle is deeply committed to our students, staff and our communities within Greater Western Sydney. Her appointment to the Associate Dean position is well deserved and I look forward to continuing to work with her," said Professor Trudgett.

Professor Doyle has previously lectured at RMIT University and Charles Sturt University. In addition to her role with Western Sydney University, she is the Co-Chair and Research Lead of the Aboriginal Health and Wellbeing Clinical Academic Group at Maridulu Budyari Gumal, the Sydney Partnership for Health, Education, Research and Enterprise (SPHERE).

New appointment to strengthen School's Indigenous engagement

Western Sydney University is pleased to welcome criminology researcher and Tharawal and Yorta Yorta woman, Robyn Oxley to the School of Social Sciences, bringing with her outstanding contributions to Indigenous research, criminal justice and engagement efforts.

With a background in Aboriginal affairs within the criminal justice system and self-determination, Ms Oxley lectures in social sciences, policing and criminology. As one of the few Indigenous criminologists in Australia, Ms Oxley hopes more Indigenous people will explore this career path.

"I am proud to be part of a University that prioritises Indigenous education and understanding. I am looking forward to engaging with local Aboriginal organisations to bring Aboriginal

knowledge into the classrooms at Western Sydney University," said Ms Oxley.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation noted Ms Oxley's deep understanding of the criminal justice system would benefit the growing discipline.

"As an emerging criminologist, Robyn will provide outstanding contributions. I am incredibly excited that she has joined the team at the University and look forward to working with her in the future," said Professor Trudgett.

Notably, the School has achieved three percent parity of total Indigenous students enrolled, and is working to support a new University-wide Indigenous Strategy to foster Indigenous employment, education, research and engagement.

Associate Dean of Indigenous Education at the School of Social Sciences, Corrinne Sullivan, said the School is a sector-leader in the Indigenous education space.



Robyn Oxley

"I am pleased with the progress we are making in regard to Indigenous employment and education. Our recent appointments will ensure that as a School, and as a University, we can continue to build an environment that encourages Indigenous success," said Ms Sullivan.

Western Sydney University welcomes Indigenous Research Fellow Dr Paul Saunders

Dr Paul Saunders has recently been appointed to Western Sydney University as an Indigenous Research Fellow within both the School of Medicine and the Translational Health Research Institute.



Dr Paul Saunders

He is passionate about Indigenous health research and is due to complete a Master of Public Health at Western this year, culminating in a dissertation on cultural proficiency in health research.

Dr Saunders is a proud Biripi man with connections to the Kamilaroi nation and his mob are from Taree on the Mid-North coast of New South Wales. He was born and raised in Campbelltown on Tharawal Country and has strong connections to Greater Sydney's Indigenous communities.

He completed a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at Western Sydney University and after engaging in an internship in clinical medicine and working in the medical devices field, Dr Saunders decided to come back to study.

"I have developed a passion for research as a tool that can be used to affect positive change for people and communities regardless of race, gender, social class, or educational attainment. Having an ability to use evidence to create equity in people's lives is so very important, not just for health, but for life in its most holistic sense, so that everyone has the opportunity to be the best they can be," said Dr Saunders.

Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle, Associate Dean of Indigenous Education and Professor in Indigenous Health in the School of Medicine said Dr Saunders' extensive academic and professional experience enriches the University.

"Western Sydney University is fortunate to appoint Dr Paul Saunders. He is one of Western's Medical School's alumni and has since been working as a researcher in Indigenous health in order to more effectively bridge the gap in health and healthcare. His experience as a clinician adds to his life-long learning as an Indigenous man. He brings honesty and integrity to his role and adds to our team with his generosity of spirit, unconditional positive regard for others, and willingness to go the extra mile for mob, family, colleagues, and friends," said Aunty Kerrie.

Dr Saunders is planning to commence his PhD next year within the School of Medicine focussing on cultural proficiency in medical education. One day he hopes to become a Professor of Indigenous health to carry on the legacy of strong Indigenous medical researchers.

Alumni

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS ALUMNI

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews

Who are you?

Wadayeo, waranara wingara
Dadjariguru'o'wa. Galumban D'harawal
bidigal'o'nattaimatagal djurali'dya'wa.
Naraguying'o'wa Bidiga meyrani barkalo
– wiritjiribin waratah. Naraguying
'o'wa midan'duragai naba Appin bugra
bulbuwil'dya. Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews
Gibara'o'wa

Hello (my spirit is open to you), and I thank you for seeking to understand me. I was born and raised on my D'harawal homelands of both the Bitter-water and Sweet-water peoples. My blood is connected to the first two Grandmothers – Wiritjiribin and Waratah, and I am descended from the survivors of the Appin Massacre – eight generations ago. My name is Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews.

What community/cultural events have you been to lately?

Things have quietened a lot of late with the pandemic, but I have been in constant contact with my parents and Elders who are part of the D'harawal Traditional Descendants and Knowledge Holders Circle, keeping them updated on what is happening, and making sure their voices are heard when needed. Just prior to all the social isolation, I had the honour of being given permission to share some of our Ancestral Stories mostly to children, students, and teachers. My proudest moment was when I told the Wattun'goori Story—how the Banksia came to be—at my daughter's pre-school, and she was standing next to me—and acting out parts—the whole time.

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

I'm now a 'professor' in the Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges, and I'm doing my best to fight colonial storytelling and Eurocentrism within academia and research. This basically means I'm privileging and centring the voices of Aboriginal Elders, community representatives, students, scholars, and our Ancestors in the (re)production of knowledges that seek to represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

What degree did you study at Western Sydney University?

I started my studies at Western Sydney University in 1996 and I had a dream to become an author in sci-fi and fantasy. I started Bachelor of Arts at Campbelltown campus hoping to major in creative writing and literature but finished with majors in psychology and sociology. Then I completed my Honours of Psychology at the Bankstown campus and finished in 2002. Then I finally received my PhD where I focused on Indigenous Education and Psychology in 2008.

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

Although my time at Western was not that long ago, it was a different place—as were most universities. One thing I always tell Indigenous students is that I came out of my PhD very well versed in Western research methods—mostly quantitative—and I was almost completely trapped in these methods. Thankfully I was given some freedom at Western Sydney University to then explore and connect with Indigenous Research Methodologies, which completely broadened the lens with which I approached research.

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

Well first and foremost, both my parents and my D'harawal Elders who have all shared their Stories—both Ancestral and contemporary—with me throughout my life. These Stories have probably had the greatest impact on my personal development, and I will be forever grateful to them. Academically speaking,



Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews

I am deeply indebted to Professor Maggie Walter, as two research papers she wrote actually changed my whole career in research itself.

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

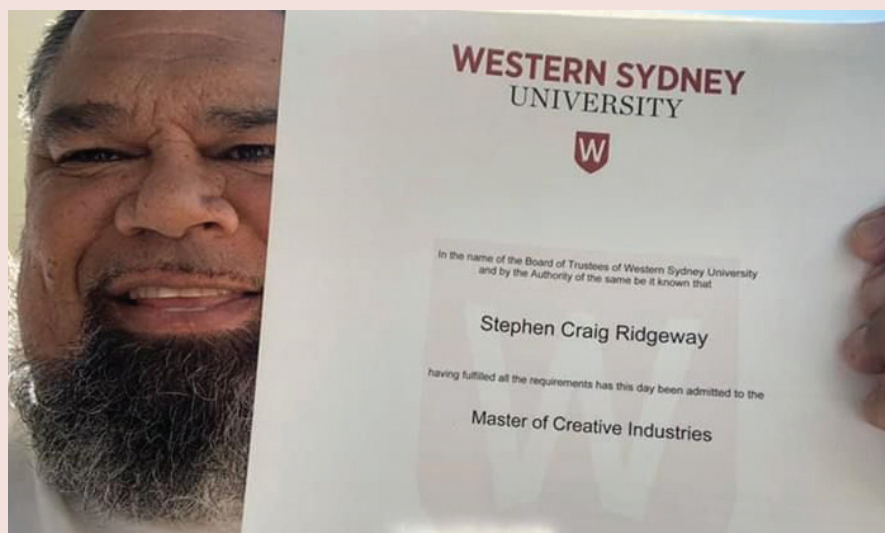
1. Do not define success solely on some institutional label or salary package.
2. Never forget who you are, your blood, and the Stories you are connected to (despite what some outsiders may whisper).
3. Honour your own Country **and** the Country you are on.
4. Try to know and respect the many ways in which one can fight systemic whiteness (and the patriarchy).
5. One piece of D'harawal philosophy that has always helped me is the five Truths. Maybe they can help you too:
 - i. Yewing nandiri'mi (the truths you see)
 - ii. Yewing nadiri'o (the truths I see)
 - iii. Yewing nandiri'marri (the truth that is)
 - iv. Yewing'dya (the truths that came before)
 - v. Yewing'ba (the truths that will be).

The first Aboriginal graduate from the Master of Creative Industry has big plans for the future

Stephen Ridgeway, a proud Biripi-Bundjalung man, is the first and only Indigenous student to have graduated from the Master of Creative Industry at Western Sydney University. He is passionate about sharing the voices and stories of our people and has continued his study at Western in a Doctorate of Creative Arts majoring in film.

"I hope to inspire blackfellas to tell their stories and teach their culture through the film medium. I am currently telling my father's story through a documentary called 'Unknown Destiny' which I hope will premiere at next year's Sydney Film Festival," said Mr Stephen Ridgeway.

Stephen was proudly the first Aboriginal Student representative at Western Sydney University, and he had the honour of representing our University at the first national Student Representative



Doctorate of Creative Arts student, Stephen Ridgeway

Council Conference in Adelaide. He also worked as an Aboriginal Liaison Officer at Western where he promoted the different pathways into the University offered to our mob and he helped create bridging courses as well.

Stephen said, "Nan inspires me every day." His grandmother, Dr Ruby (Ginibi) Langford, was and is still a big influence

on his life as he aims to continue in her legacy as she was a nationally renowned Aboriginal author, academic, Logie winner, Humanitarian Award winner and Bundjalung Elder with a double doctorate.

Western Sydney University is incredibly proud of your achievements thus far and cannot wait to see what the future holds for you.



The Academy

Future thinking. Unlimited possibilities.

Success is not just about getting a degree, but also developing the critical thinking and leadership skills to support a successful career.

It's about learning skills for your chosen life, not just a job.

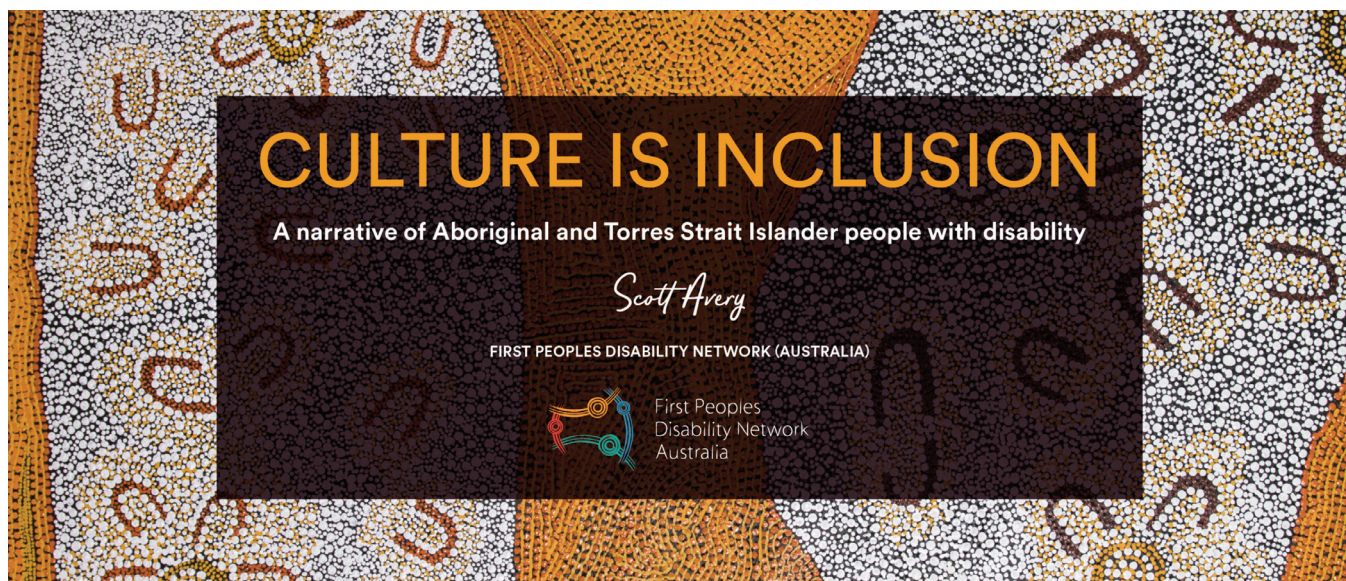
The Academy offers high-achieving students a unique, hands-on approach to learning in an interdisciplinary environment and draws on the unique experience of leading thinkers, social change agents, community leaders, and high-achieving students both past and present.

With a focus on global citizenship, ethical leadership and critical thinking, and underpinned by the principles of community engagement, academic excellence, and personal and professional development, The Academy offers students access to:

- opportunities to engage with industry professionals and contribute to solutions for real-world problems
- world-class research, researchers, teachers, experts and innovation labs
- travel to national and international leadership experiences and conferences
- a range of professional and personal development workshops
- internship, service learning and volunteering opportunities
- applied leadership experience in student-led, community-focused projects
- multifaceted learning opportunities through immersions aimed at building your experiences and knowledge.

For more information visit: westernsydney.edu.au/myacademy

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.

Corrinne Sullivan. (2020). Who holds the key? Negotiating gatekeepers, community politics, and the "right" to research in Indigenous spaces. *Geographical Research*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-5871.12415>

Karen Menzies. (2020). A new paradigm – Bringing a historical and socio-political trauma lens to the training for welfare practitioners working with Aboriginal families. *Children and Society International Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/chso.12375>

Karen Menzies. (2020). The efficacy of a child protection training program on the historical welfare context and Aboriginal trauma. *Australian Social Work Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0312407X.2020.1745857?journalCode=rasw20>

Kerrie Doyle, Lauren Zarb, Kyar Wilkey, Kayla Sale, Chris Pitt & Dein Vindigni. (2020). Embedding Cultural Competence in Faculty: A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of an Applied Indigenous Proficiency Workshop. *In Cultural Competence and the Higher Education Sector* (pp. 277-293). Springer, Singapore.

Kerrie Doyle, Catherine Hungerford, Chris Pitt, Paul Saunders & Kyar Wilkey. (2020). Indigenist Leadership in Academia: Towards an Aspirational Model of Mindful Servant Leadership. *In Cultural Competence and the Higher Education Sector* (pp. 137-157). Springer, Singapore.

Michelle Trudgett, Susan Page & Stacey Kim Coates. (2020). Talent war: Recruiting Indigenous senior executives in Australian universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*. doi:[10.1080/1360080X.2020.1765474](https://doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2020.1765474)

Spencer James, Chris Castle, Zachary Dingels, Jack Fox, Erin Hamilton, Zichen Liu, **Kerrie Doyle**,... & Ahmed Abdelalim. (2020). Global injury morbidity and mortality from 1990 to 2017: results from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2017. *Injury Prevention*. Retrieved from: <https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/early/2020/04/23/injuryprev-2019-043494.info>



Top row, from left: Shirley Gilbert, Professor Michelle Trudgett (Pro-Vice Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation), Michelle Locke and Dmitry Cocker. Second row, from left: Cris Carriage, Stacey Kim Coates, Robyn Oxley and Paul Saunders. Third row, from left: Corrinne Sullivan (Associate Dean of Social Sciences), Dr Scott Avery and Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle (Associate Dean of Medicine).

Western Sydney University's Indigenous Research Network is established

On the 10th June Western Sydney University's inaugural Indigenous Research Network meeting was held. The establishment of this network was a key component of [Western Sydney University's Indigenous Strategy](#) as it aims to provide additional support to Indigenous Higher Degree Research (HDR) students and Indigenous academics. The group also provides an opportunity for academics and students to connect with other Indigenous researchers from a vast range of research fields in a culturally safe space.

The network's membership is growing considerably, and discussions have already taken place about promoting Indigenous knowledge systems and research methodologies, and planning is underway in regard to an event which will be run throughout Research Week in October.

Stacey Kim Coates, a proud Wiradjuri HDR student and an inaugural member of the Indigenous Research network, said the recent establishment of the Indigenous Research Network is significant as it demonstrates a strong commitment to prioritising Indigenous research.

"Indigenous research is important as it ensures our educational sovereignty and self-determination of Indigenous Australians. On a personal level, the Network provides support and encouragement to Indigenous researchers, while promoting Indigenous cultural perspectives," said Ms Coates.

Shirley Gilbert is also a proud Gunditjmara woman and HDR student in the School of Education. She said the establishment of the Indigenous Research Network has been a great space for a small but dedicated group of Indigenous researchers at various stages of their careers to have a professional yarn about their work.

"The group has a fabulous mix of Staff and HDR students as part of the circle and is led through the PVC Indigenous Professor Michelle Trudgett. As a HDR student (F/T Academic) who is post data collection and writing madly this group gave me a much needed motivation and cultural boost. This space allows for a special kind of yarn about our research, the academy and publishing challenges we all face within the Higher Education sector. The network also allows for designated writing time, cultural safety and support to improve writing/publication opportunities as well as a mentoring focus on Indigenous writing and research success," said Ms Gilbert.

Western Sydney University is incredibly proud of the research conducted by our Indigenous academics and higher degree research students. We cannot wait to hear about all that comes from this group and we look forward to reading your research papers. To learn about developing your own Indigenous Standpoint voice in your writing and learn more about publishing in the journals our communities engage with please email: pvcevents@westernsydney.edu.au

Do you know anyone looking to commence study at Western Sydney University in 2021?

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 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.

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