



# The Yarning Circle

Spring 2021 | Edition #6

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

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

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

## Publication Enquiries

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## Celebrating NAIDOC week at Western Sydney University



HEAL  
COUNTRY!  
4-11 JULY 2021

From the 4th-11th of July, Western honoured the rich cultures and histories of Australia's Indigenous Peoples during NAIDOC Week. The stories, cultures and achievements of our country's First Nation Peoples were celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by all Australians. This year's theme for NAIDOC Week is 'Heal Country', which calls for stronger measures to recognise, protect, and maintain all aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage.

The Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership team originally had a number of face-to-face events planned, however following health and government advice, we instead celebrated online.

Our talented Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff competed in the [Western Sydney University Deadly](#)

[Challenge](#) wherein they celebrated their cultures and voices through a range of performances. Over 150 staff and students watched and voted for their favourite performances and the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership would like to thank all who entered and congratulate the following winners:

- 1st Prize, Leanne Markovic a proud Darug woman and staff member at Western Sydney University.
- 2nd Prize, Matilda Harry a proud Wiradjuri woman, staff member and student at Western Sydney University studying her PhD in Indigenous Education.
- 3rd Prize, Luke Hodge a proud Dunghutti man and student at Western Sydney University studying a Bachelor of Communication, majoring in Journalism and Media Arts Production.

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Congratulations again to all who participated, to watch all video submissions please visit: [westernsydney.edu.au/form/deadly-challenge-2021](https://westernsydney.edu.au/form/deadly-challenge-2021)

Western's students and staff were also invited to test their knowledge and have fun while taking part in the annual [NAIDOC Week quiz](#). Over 115 Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals answered multiple choice quiz questions and reflected on the significance of NAIDOC week and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in short answer responses. The Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership would like to thank you for your entries and congratulate the following:

Western Sydney University Staff Winners:

- 1st Prize, Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan receiving Beats Headphones.
- 2nd Prize, Emma Rich receiving a \$200 Coles/Myer voucher.
- 3rd Prize, Kam Yuk Lai receiving a \$100 Coles/Myer voucher.

Western Sydney University Student Winners:

- 1st Prize, Jessica Wellington receiving Beats Headphones.
- 2nd Prize, Matilda Harry receiving a \$200 Coles/Myer voucher.
- 3rd Prize, Sarah Loft receiving a \$100 Coles/Myer voucher.

On the 7th of July, Western students, staff, and community members yarned and engaged in cultural performances during Bankstown Provost's online event. Uncle Harry Allie Acknowledged Country, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Michelle Trudgett made a NAIDOC Week address and Koomurri founder, Russell Dawson, who is an Aboriginal advocate and performer, played the yidaki, sang healing songs, and taught aspects of language.

Several Schools across the University also celebrated discipline-specific events, including the School of Medicine which held traditional weaving workshops, smoking ceremonies, and other online activities.

Throughout NAIDOC Week, Western supported calls for greater awareness of traditional place names by demonstrating our support for Australia Post's recent announcement to prompt mail senders to include traditional place names when addressing letters and parcels, and their goal in developing a national database of traditional place names. Read more about [Australia Post's Announcement here](#). Western invited all staff to edit their email signature to acknowledge how Western Sydney University campuses occupy multiple lands and include the Aboriginal nation of which their campus of work is located.

To find out more about NAIDOC Week 2021 and our online activities, please visit the [Western NAIDOC Week webpage](#).

## Western Sydney University appoints new Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership

Western Sydney University has announced the appointment of Professor Michelle Trudgett as the University's inaugural Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership.

The University's Board of Trustees resolved at its August meeting to create the new position, elevating the voice of Indigenous leadership within the University.

Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Barney Glover AO, said the creation of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership is important for the University, the higher education sector and our community.

"On behalf of the University community, I warmly congratulate Professor Trudgett on her appointment. I know in this portfolio she will further deliver on her outstanding leadership and advocacy for Indigenous Australians, enriching our University and our communities," said Professor Glover.

"The creation of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership affirms the University's strong commitment to ensuring Indigenous people take up their rightful place at the centre of decision-making – not just at our University, but across our region and the nation."

Professor Trudgett joined Western Sydney University in 2019 as the Pro Vice-Chancellor Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Strategy and Consultation. She is a proud Wiradjuri woman, a national leader in Indigenous education and an outstanding researcher and academic.

She has led the University's ambitious Indigenous Strategy, galvanised study and pastoral support for Indigenous students and provided invaluable counsel to the Executive and Senior Executive.

"Throughout my career, my work has been dedicated to the core principle that Indigenous communities thrive when there are Indigenous leaders at the apex of our institutions," said Professor Trudgett.

"I am very much looking forward to continuing to work with the wonderful staff and students of this University and the communities of Greater Western Sydney to celebrate, protect and share Indigenous knowledge, culture, and heritage and embed those experiences at the heart of our University."

Professor Trudgett commenced in the position on Monday 16 August, 2021.

## MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR, INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Welcome to the Spring 2021 edition of *The Yarning Circle* – this marks the sixth edition of this incredible newsletter which celebrates Indigenous excellence at Western. It is difficult to comprehend that we are now in the final quarter of 2021, a year that in many ways resembled 2020 but with new challenges. We have shown ourselves to be highly resilient and demonstrated outstanding care and support to each other as well as the broader community. For this, I am extremely grateful to everyone – thank you!

Prior to the second wave of the pandemic, we were fortunate to witness several significant achievements by our Indigenous Western Sydney University community. During winter we saw 81 Indigenous students graduate with degrees across a range of disciplines. We also witnessed Aunty Fran Bodkin receive her Honorary Doctor of Letters honoris causa in recognition of her service to the community and for the teaching and promotion of Aboriginal culture, native plants and bush medicine. In addition, a fabulous group of Indigenous students competed at the Indigenous National Games where they proudly represented Western in basketball, netball, touch football and volleyball. I'm pleased to report that we placed 5th overall which was a great effort by the students and Badanami team. Finally, Western also held several successful online events that celebrated NAIDOC Week and International Day of World's Indigenous People.

In closing, I want to take a moment to remind our students that the wonderful team at Badanami are available to support you. I would strongly encourage you to reach out to them if you haven't already. In the meantime, I hope everyone keeps safe and well.

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



Professor Michelle Trudgett.  
Photography: Sally Tsoutas

# BOLD

## conversations

with Paul Saunders

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.



Chancellor Professor Peter Shergold and Paul Saunders. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

**Dr Saunders is a proud Biripi PhD student from the School of Medicine. He recently received the Yarramundi Scholarship and graduated in June from a Master of Public Health with distinction. Dr Saunders reflects on how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governance in healthcare is essential to help 'Close the Gap'.**

Much effort has been exerted by government and non-government agencies alike to help 'Close the gap' in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, with little progress made relative to the financial and strategic investment applied. While there are many reasons for this, one aspect stands out greater than all others: an evident power-imbalance in healthcare decision making between First Nations and White Australian communities, the long echo of colonisation as Professor Aunty Kerrie Doyle would assert.

Considering the gaps in many other areas depicted within the annual Close the Gap report, I reflect on the previous articles enunciated by Dr Scott Avery and Robyn Oxley, both of which portray the enduring

theme of 'controlled deliverance' by overly paternalistic administrations, all too often resulting in inadequate and ineffective interventions that perpetuate the health deficits seen in First Nations communities.

Many would argue that great strides have been made to address the issue of control over First Nations communities and historical evidence certainly supports this, however while we may have completed the run, there remains the ride and the swim in the metaphorical triathlon to genuine self-determination for First Nations people. Such an endeavour requires ongoing humility, transparency, and collaboration, as well as a willingness of Commonwealth and state powers to hand over greater control at all levels within our public systems.

This perpetual cycle of White governance is not novel, nor does it necessarily endeavour to bring about change, but rather exacerbate inequities and the ongoing social Darwinism present in contemporary Australia. First Nations communities have triumphed against all odds over the past 230 years and while the many accomplishments have been noteworthy, the lingering stain of

colonisation continues to prevent our communities from fulfilling long and healthy lives, constantly aware of the low ceiling that restricts our success.

To address such a 'wicked' problem in our society, a profound and drastic solution is necessary, reconceptualising the concept of health issues in First Nations communities, and opening our eyes to the underlying factors that drive and sustain these issues. It is feasible to consider that addressing this dilemma would require greater power and control by First Nations communities, embedding a First Nations controlled governance structure across the health system. Such a model that includes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at various levels of the decision-making pathway would undoubtedly have significant impacts on health outcomes.

It is not adequate to merely right the wrongs of the past; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and health practices must stand on their own with equal value and dignity, to have a place in Australian society as a respected practice that bear benefits to a range of communities both domestically and internationally.

## School of Law calls for a fair, just, and equitable justice system in Australia

**Readers are advised that this story does contain the names of an individual who has passed away and discussions of traumatic experiences of Indigenous people in custody. If this story raises issues for you, contact Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14 for 24/7 crisis support.**

On the 12th of May Western Sydney University's School of Law's Network for Law and Human Rights held an online and in person event in the Moot Court at Parramatta South campus in response to the disproportionate number of Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and in particular to raise discussions around the recent passing of David Dungay Jr. The Network for Law and Human Rights aspires to create the resources that will enable people to lead dignified lives and to flourish; to recognise and challenge inequality and injustice; and to empower communities to achieve human rights for all.

The Network has a specific commitment to supporting Indigenous research, leadership, representation, and access to justice initiatives. The event follows several other events on Indigenous justice with Indigenous speakers held in the School of Law by the Network for Law and Human Rights, including a talk on 'Indigenous Disability' by Dr Scott Avery and 'Black Lives Matter in Australia' by Robyn Oxley. Recordings of these prior events can be found at: [westernsydney.edu.au/network-for-law-and-human-rights/events](https://westernsydney.edu.au/network-for-law-and-human-rights/events)

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Photography: The Guardian

Throughout the event, the suffering and story of David Dungay Jr, a 26-year-old Dunghutti man from Kempsey who died in Sydney's Long Bay jail on 29 December 2015 after five prison guards held him face down and had him injected with a sedative during a cell transfer was discussed. The cell transfer was undertaken after Dungay, who was also a diabetic, refused to stop eating a packet of biscuits. Footage of the incident shown to a court revealed that before losing consciousness, David could be heard repeating multiple times that he couldn't breathe. However, these calls went unanswered by the prison staff who restrained him.

The event raised discussions about the urgent need for reform to address the disproportionate rates of Indigenous Australians incarcerated and the devastating number who die in prison custody. Academics and special guests advocated for the development of law and a justice system which is fair, just, and equitable. Guest speakers included:

- Auntie Lizzy Jarrett, a Gumbaynggirr, Bundjalung and Dunghutti poet, educator and activist who plays a central role in protest movements for First Nations justice, including the recent Black Lives Matter protests on Gadigal land (Sydney). Lizzie advocates every day for First Nations families facing oppression and violence.
- Paul Silva, a proud Dunghutti man from Kempsey NSW and the nephew of David Dungay Jnr. He has fought tirelessly for the establishment of an independent body to investigate deaths in custody, and for those responsible for the death of Mr Dungay to be held accountable.

- George Newhouse, an Adjunct Professor of Law at Macquarie University and the Principal Solicitor of the National Justice Project a not-for-profit law firm he co-founded in 2016. George's life's work centres on fighting institutional racism and giving voice and legal support to the most vulnerable. George acts for the Dungay family.

Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan, Associate Dean (Indigenous Education) School of Social Science, said the event really brought the realities of deaths in custody in Australia to the fore.

"The event highlighted the desperate need to raise awareness of why Black Lives Matter. The speakers who generously shared their time presented a call to action to address this crisis that continues to kill and oppress Indigenous peoples in custody. I applaud the Law School for actioning this important truth telling conversation", said Associate Professor Sullivan.

Associate Professor Azadeh Dastyari in the School of Law said that as a response to the powerful presentations in the seminar on 'David David Dungay Jr and Black Deaths in Custody' the School of Law has established a Black Lives Matter group advocating for Indigenous justice through the School's teaching, research and community partnerships.

"The group meets regularly and is made up of both students and academics. The School of Law and the Network for Law and Human Rights remain deeply committed to supporting Indigenous leaders in ending institutional injustice and fighting for equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples," said Associate Professor Dastyari.

To show your support for advancing human rights and social justice in Australia and to find out more about the National Justice Project please visit [www.justice.org.au](http://www.justice.org.au)



## Western urges the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action

Western Sydney University celebrated National Reconciliation Week from the 27th of May to 3rd of June to honour Indigenous history and cultures and foster reconciliation discussion and activities. The dates for National Reconciliation Week remain the same each year to commemorate two significant milestones in Australia's reconciliation journey — the successful 1967 referendum, and the High Court Mabo decision respectively. 2021 marks twenty years of Reconciliation Australia and almost three decades of Australia's formal reconciliation process.

Western organised several events throughout National Reconciliation Week where all students and staff were invited to join for lunch and yarn and learn about Australia's shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

On the 27th of May the Badanami Centre of Indigenous Education in partnership with the Parramatta South Provost committee held a barbecue event where all students and staff were invited to yarn about what actions could be taken to bring everyone together while enjoying a meal. All staff and students were also invited to attend pizza meet and greets at Badanami Centres of Indigenous Education across Hawkesbury, Campbelltown, Bankstown, and Kingswood campuses from the 24th to 29th of May. Further on the 2nd of June Western's School of Social Science held a closing morning tea at Liverpool campus for students and staff. Key guest speakers were invited to yarn about our national and more specifically Western's, commitment to reconciliation processes.

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Josh Mason, Academic Literacy and Learning Advisor in the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, made an address at several Reconciliation Week events.

“To mark and celebrate Reconciliation Week for 2021, a number of events were held across Western to promote the importance for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how everyone has a role to playing in accomplishing reconciliation in Australia and in playing part in collectively build relationships and communities that value First Nations people, histories, culture, and futures. This year’s theme was ‘More than a word. Reconciliation takes action’ and saw events hosted by Liverpool and Bankstown Provost Committees, the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership as well as Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education. The theme urges the reconciliation movement towards braver and more impactful action,” said Mr Mason.

Western Sydney University acknowledges that reconciliation must live in the hearts, minds, and actions of all as we as a nation move forward and strengthen respectful relationships between the wider Australian community, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

To find out more about National Reconciliation Week and the actions you can take towards national reconciliation, please visit <https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au/about-nrw/>



Reconciliation Week. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

## Auntie Fran Bodkin receives an Honorary Doctorate of Letters for her service to community and Country

Western Sydney University celebrated the achievements of more than 4,300 graduands as part of its June graduation ceremonies held at the Parramatta South campus from the 18th to the 25th of June. Across 19 ceremonies 81 Indigenous students graduated receiving degrees from a range of disciplines, including nursing and midwifery, business, social science, education, engineering, law, psychology, arts and communication. As part of graduation celebrations, Western Sydney University also honoured a number of outstanding individuals for their significant contributions to the Greater Western Sydney community and Australian public life.

On the 25th of June, Auntie Fran Bodkin received a Doctor of Letters honoris causa in recognition of her tireless service to the community and for the teaching and promotion of Aboriginal culture, native plants and bush medicine. Dr Auntie Fran Bodkin is a valuable member of Western’s Elders Advisory Committee and D’harawal Elder of the Bidjigal clan. She is a qualified ethnobotanist and environmental scientist.

As a parliamentary secretary and researcher for 28 years, Dr Auntie Fran Bodkin has worked with members of state and federal parliament on matters relating to environment, welfare, and crime. During this time, she shared with Prime Minister Gough Whitlam her dream of having a botanic garden, a university and a hospital working together to understand, develop and use the medicinal properties of Australian native plants. This dream led to funds being set aside to purchase the land where Campbelltown Hospital, Western Sydney University Campbelltown campus and the Australian Botanic Gardens at Mt Annan are today.

Since her retirement from parliamentary service, Auntie Fran has served as a founding member on several boards and committees, including the Campbelltown Hospital Board, Australian Indigenous Medicines Committee, Wollondilly Regional Disadvantaged Youth Committee and Banyadjaminga South Western Sydney Aboriginal Action Corporation. She has completed a Bachelor’s Degree from Macquarie University, with five majors in Environmental Sciences, Geomorphology, Palaeontology, Climatology, and Marine Studies, and holds a post-graduate Diploma in Environmental Studies. She has been a guest lecturer at Macquarie University, University of Newcastle, Canberra University, Charles Sturt University and Western Sydney University, and since 2021, has been an Adjunct Fellow of this university.

Through mentoring programs tailored for Aboriginal primary and high school students, such as Heartbeat, the Koori Flow Project, Bulbuwil Bangawarra and Twugia, Dr Auntie Fran continues to inspire the next generation of school and university students, Landcare groups and the general community.

Dr Auntie Fran Bodkin thanks Western for their recognition. She believes it is her curiosity that drives her hunger for knowledge and education.

“Watch. Be patient. Learn from nature itself. We all have the freedom to think and be curious. Follow where life takes you. Do not be afraid to dream big and work towards your aspirations,” said Dr Bodkin.

Professor Clare Pollock, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, acknowledges that being awarded a Doctor of Letters honoris causa is a significant achievement.

“Western Sydney University honours and respects the wisdom and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Elders and is proud to have the continued support, guidance, and leadership of Dr Auntie Fran Bodkin.”

“It was Western Sydney University’s great privilege to award Auntie Fran with a Doctor of Letters honoris causa and to be the Senior Executive Group member who presided over the ceremony where her knowledge, and contributions to academia and community were recognised,” said Professor Pollock.

To find the full list of honorary awardees for the June graduation ceremonies, please follow [westernsydney.edu.au/newscentre/news\\_centre/more\\_news\\_stories/western\\_sydney\\_university\\_celebrates\\_june\\_graduation](https://westernsydney.edu.au/newscentre/news_centre/more_news_stories/western_sydney_university_celebrates_june_graduation).



Auntie Fran Bodkin. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

# Students

## WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS

### Seven deadly questions: Introducing Stephanie Swannell

#### Who are you?

My name is Stephanie Swannell and I am a proud Indigenous woman born and raised in Western Sydney. I have a small tight-knit family with one younger sister. I'm currently in my final year of my Bachelor of Business (Advanced Business Leadership) degree majoring in Accounting. Upon graduating, I will be looking to kickstart my career within the Banking and Financial Services Industry while undertaking the Chartered Accountants program.

I have always had a burning passion to help others succeed which is why I take great pride in my roles as a PASS Facilitator and a Volunteer Karate Instructor. When I am not studying, you will more than likely find me in the Karate Dojo or on the Softball field.

#### Who is your mob?

This question has always been difficult for me to answer as my late grandmother was stolen at a very young age. In recent years, I have become extremely interested in tracing my family's origins. I suspect that I am a descendant of either the Jingilu or Mudburra tribe in the Northern Territory. While I am still trying to piece together my cultural roots, I am and have always been extremely proud to be an Aboriginal woman.

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

My passion to help others to succeed is what fuelled my decision to register for Western's Tutoring for Success program. Through the program, I hope to inspire other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve their personal best and accomplish their goals. The best experience to date would have to be my participation in the 2021 Indigenous Nationals. Not only have I been able to compete in the sports that I love, but I've also been fortunate to meet and connect with a great bunch of Western mob.



Stephanie Swannell

#### Why did you choose to study at Western Sydney University?

I always wanted to study somewhere close to home so when I heard about the new state-of-the-art Business campus in Parramatta City, it was a no brainer for me. What really sealed the deal was being offered to undertake the Advanced Business Leadership Business Degree. I am so grateful to Western for giving me this opportunity as it has played a significant role in enhancing my transferrable skills, particularly when it comes to my presentation skills and confidence.

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

The biggest challenge that I faced was the initial transition from high school to university. This was an especially challenging time for me as I had also just started my first job. At the time, I felt extremely overwhelmed by the workload and was struggling to find the best way to study. To overcome this hurdle, I took a step back, a deep breath and planned out my time to ensure I had a sufficient balance between all of my commitments. I also made sure I scheduled in time to rest and do the things I love.

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

My next step as a graduate is to become a Chartered Accountant while finding my passion within the accounting and finance field. My biggest hope is that wherever I end up, I can make a meaningful impact, whether that be on the organisation I work for, or the people I work with. As a proud alumnus of the Career Trackers Indigenous Internship Program, I hope to give back by mentoring and guiding future Career Trackers students to find success in their own careers.

#### 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?

I have many tips for other deadly students:

1. Get organised! Plan out your time and map out your deadlines. This will help to establish clear priorities.
2. Don't compare yourself to others! Set your own goals and work towards them at your own pace. As they say, slow and steady wins the race.
3. Take time out to rest and do the things that you love! Life isn't all about studying and working. I found this out the hard way.
4. Don't be afraid to jump outside of your comfort zone! The only way that you will grow is by pushing yourself. In the famous words of Michael Jordan, "Never say never, because limits, like fears, are often just an illusion".
5. Connect! I highly recommend popping into the Badanami Centre to say hello and have a yarn. There are so many Western Mob here to support you.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduation Sash

## Outstandingly academic Indigenous students are recognised on the Dean's Merit List

The Dean's Merit List recognises students for their outstanding academic achievement over the calendar year of study. The Dean's Merit list is compiled at the end of each academic year once final grades have been processed and recognises high-achieving students who are within the top 10% of their overall School cohort.

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate the following Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students for their academic achievement and for being recognised on Dean's lists:

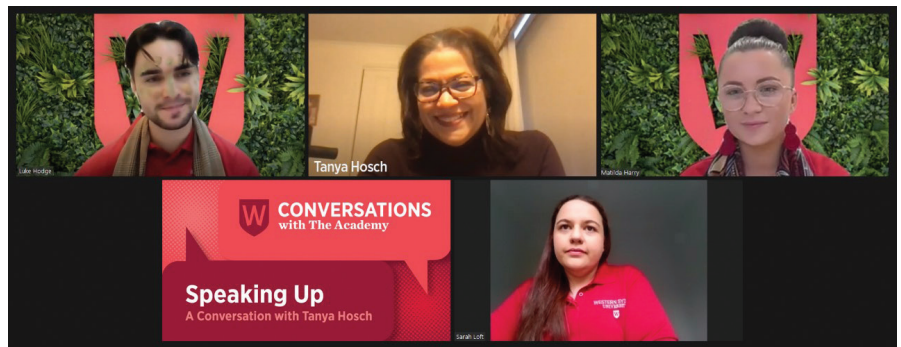
- Amber Gane – Bachelor of Science
- Amy McGarva – Bachelor of Psychology (Honours)
- Anna Dasler – Bachelor of Health Science
- Elizabeth Martin – Bachelor of Nursing – Western Sydney University Online
- Emily Vella – Graduate Diploma in Child and Family Health (Karitane)
- Erin Rae – Master of Teaching (Secondary)
- Gabrielle Talbot-Mundine – Graduate Certificate in Business
- Jazz Money – Master of Arts in Literature and Creative Writing
- Jessica Nakhoul – Bachelor of Arts (Pathway to Teaching Primary)
- Jessica-Lee Arnott – Bachelor of Nursing
- Katherine Grant – Master of Teaching (Secondary)
- Kathy Roach – Undergraduate Certificate in Counselling and Mental Health
- Leanne Markovic – Bachelor of Business
- Luke Hodge – Bachelor of Communication
- Mahlie Jewell – Master of Art Therapy
- Mark Lee – Diploma in Design/Bachelor of Graphic Design (Pathway to Teaching Secondary)
- Matilda Harry – Master of Teaching (Primary)
- Meg Flavell – Bachelor of Design (Visual Communication)
- Paul Saunders – Master of Public Health
- Phillip Nixon – Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws
- Preston Fisher – Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)
- Sarah Bates – Bachelor of Social Work
- Scott Bradbery – Diploma in Communication/Bachelor of Screen Media (Arts and Production)
- Stephanie Swannell – Bachelor of Business (Advanced Business Leadership)
- Suzanne Hegarty – Bachelor of Arts
- Taje Fowler – Bachelor of Community and Social Development
- Tayla Rae – Bachelor of Planning (Pathway to Master of Urban Management and Planning)
- Ted Vanderfeen – Bachelor of Engineering (Honours)
- Zoe Makkink – Master of Teaching (Secondary)

To find the full list of students who were awarded a place on Dean's Lists across all Schools at Western Sydney University, please follow: [westernsydney.edu.au/deans-awards](https://westernsydney.edu.au/deans-awards)

## The Academy and Western Indigenous students' yarn with South Australian of the Year – Tanya Hosch

On the 30th of June Western Sydney University's The Academy hosted the online event *Conversation with Tanya Hosch – Speaking Up*. Sarah Loft, Luke Hodge and Matilda Harry were invited to engage in and facilitate the yarn with Tanya who has a long and distinguished history in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy, advocacy, governance and is an accomplished public speaker.

Tanya is a change leader, challenging social and political constructs within the Indigenous civil rights movement and women's liberation, with recognition through being named South Australian of the year 2021. She has long fought for Indigenous people, their rights and constitutional reform, serving as the joint campaign director of the Recognise movement. The Recognise movement pursued the acknowledgement and recognition of First Australian's in our constitution. Tanya has challenged the status quo in the arena of Australian sports management, becoming the first Indigenous person and second female employed in the AFL executive body,



Conversation with Tanya Hosch

championing equity and fairness through her role as the Executive General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy.

“It was a great opportunity to be provocative, talk about the issues that most people are afraid to talk about, be bold and ask key questions about her journey in becoming the South Australian–Australian of the Year, and Executive General Manager of Inclusion and Social Policy at the Australian Football League,” said the Indigenous student facilitators.

Professor Alpha Possamai-Inesedy, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Engagement and Advancement, highlights how The Academy is committed to providing opportunities to support and foster leadership in the University's Indigenous students.

“It was an honour to have Western Sydney University Indigenous students involved in developing and facilitating the ‘Conversations’ session with inspirational Indigenous leader, Tanya Hosch. The Academy is dedicated to ensuring its members grow their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous culture, and importantly connect with and learn from First Nations People. We are proud to have delivered two open and honest ‘Conversations’ with Indigenous guest speakers, with more to come,” said Professor Possamai-Inesedy.

To watch the Conversation with Tanya Hosch please follow <https://youtu.be/PweCyl2T-P0>

And to access the other Conversations with The Academy visit [westernsydney.edu.au/the\\_academy/inside\\_the\\_academy/events/conversations\\_with\\_the\\_academy](https://westernsydney.edu.au/the_academy/inside_the_academy/events/conversations_with_the_academy).



Matilda Harry

## Young Wiradjuri Student is the finalist in Channel 7 Young Achiever Awards

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate Matilda Harry on being a finalist in the 7 News Young Achiever Awards for the second year in a row. The Awards acknowledge, encourage, and most importantly promote the positive achievements of all young people in NSW. On the 30th of April the award ceremony was held in Sydney with Professor Michelle Trudgett, Fiona Towney, Professor Gregory Kolt, Professor Simeon Simoff, Dr Jeff Foster, Dr Emma George, Dr Anton Bogdanovych, Ray Frangie and several students and their families representing Western at the event.

Matilda is a proud Wiradjuri woman and was recognised as a top four finalist in the TransGrid Indigenous Achievement Award for the second year in a row for her advocacy, community work, and vision to make positive social change through education. Matilda is a high achieving PhD candidate at Western Sydney University and her life experiences and ongoing involvement with community, has led

her work in grassroots and peak body initiatives and institutions across local, state, and national platforms. Matilda believes that education is key for our young mob's success and in the future, she hopes to find a balance between Western pedagogy and traditional Aboriginal ways of teaching, wherein Aboriginal cultures, languages and connections to Country and community are at the forefront of every classroom in the nation.

Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, said it is terrific to see Tilly's significant service and commitment to the community recognised through the 7News Awards.

“As both a staff member and student, she is a great asset to Western Sydney University and the broader community. Please join me in congratulating Tilly on this recognition her outstanding achievements,” said Professor Trudgett.

If you know of any exceptional young people who should be recognised in the 7News Young Achievers Awards, please nominate them in one of the many categories. Nominations close on the 10th of December, please visit <https://awardsaustralia.com/appl/nomination-aas.php?program=young-achiever-awards&state=nsw>



## Western's team succeeded at the 2021 Indigenous University Nationals

Western Sydney University's Indigenous student team participated in the Indigenous National Uni Games which were held in Newcastle from the 20-24th June. The event was a week-long multisport competition for Indigenous student-athletes. The annual event aims to bring together student-athletes from universities across Australia to compete in a variety of sports and ultimately crown one university team the champion of the games. Indigenous Nationals is an amazing environment to not only celebrate the rich sporting culture of Indigenous Australia but to also acknowledge the heritage and history of the participating student-athletes.

Western Sydney University is incredibly proud of the team efforts, commitment, and dedication to the training sessions prior to the Nationals, and the team spirit displayed throughout the whole week. Overall, Western's team placed 5th out of 22 teams which was an outstanding effort from the students and Badanami team. Stacey Elliott took out the 'Most Valuable Player' for volleyball across the entire competition for female players. The team's Most Valuable Female Player was awarded to Abbey Zabielo. Abbey showed great skill across all sports especially touch football. The Male Most Valuable Player was awarded to Bailey Sims. Bailey has brought a high level of sportsmanship to the team and is an excellent basketball player. The Team Spirit Award was received by Kayden Edwards who not only brought so many laughs to the team but kindness, optimism, and encouragement. Kayden uplifted every player when feeling exhausted and tired from the long days and was always keen to get involved and help when needed.

Western is proud of all students who were involved, each brought a range of outstanding skills, talent, laughter, and fun to the team. The team not only supported each other but also other teams when competing.

Emma Pagett, Western Sydney University's Co-Captain of the Indigenous team acknowledged how the National Indigenous Uni Games has been a huge part of her University journey and personal growth journey.

"We went away to play sports and have fun, however it was much more to us than that. We are not only given the opportunity to represent our University but given the privilege to represent our people, our mob, and all of Western Sydney. Being co-captain for the last three Uni Games has given me the opportunity to lead the most amazing bunch of people and together create a culture that isn't just about being a part of a team, but mostly feeling like family by the end of the week. It's tiring, exhausting, draining, emotional (and painful for my old bones!), but the best week away anyone



Western Sydney University's Indigenous National team



Kobi Whalan

could have with mob and I would encourage everyone to do it every year possible while studying. No matter your age, degree, or what walk of life you come from, you will be a part of the Western sporting family."

"Creating relationships and bonds that will last a lifetime are priceless, not to mention the many 'belly laughs' we have had along the way. Newcastle 2021 was my final year with Western, however I would love to spectate and cheer on the many talented athletes if it were ever in our state again," said Ms Pagett.

Tiah Vocale, Badanami Student Success Officer, put in a huge effort in organising, supporting and managing the Indigenous Uni Games team's journey from try-outs and training sessions through to the weeklong competition.

"Indigenous Nationals was an exciting experience! Western's team was made up of players who worked together and supported each other on and off the field. Every individual gave it their all when playing and each were incredibly encouraging considering most of the games

were close scoring and competitive. I am so proud of everyone who represented their family, mob, and the University. I was very lucky to manage a team full of kind-hearted, funny and genuine players," said Ms Vocale.

Fiona Towney, Director of Badanami, said that after being cancelled in 2020 due to COVID19, the Indigenous Nationals were back in 2021.

"The 2021 Indigenous Nationals saw a total of 17 universities competing in netball, touch football, volleyball and basketball. Badanami sent a team of 15 student athletes who represented Western, themselves and our communities extremely well. A huge congratulations and thanks to the students, staff, hosts, and organisers. The 2022 Indigenous Nationals will be hosted by Queensland University of Technology with everyone already looking forward to doing it all again next year," said Ms Towney.

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate the Indigenous Uni Games team and thank all who supported the team once again.

# Staff

## WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S PASSIONATE INDIGENOUS STAFF

### Seven deadly questions: Introducing Lazarus Brown

#### Who are you?

My name is Lazarus Brown, but my family and friends know me as Laz. I was born in Kempsey, New South Wales and am one of seven children (five sisters and a brother). I have grown up and completed all my schooling in the Blacktown area of Western Sydney. I enjoy playing and watching rugby league, being a father and spending time with family.

#### Who is your mob?

I am a proud Aboriginal man, and I acknowledge both my Gumbaynggirr and Arrernte ancestry. My mum was born in Badili, Papua New Guinea and is of Papuan/Aboriginal background. My dad was born in Macksville, New South Wales and is of Aboriginal/English background. My mum and dad are very proud Aboriginal people, which has been instilled in us as kids.

My last name- Brown originates from my paternal grandfather, Roger Brown, who is originally from Wollomombi, NSW and has family ties to Moree and Armidale. My paternal grandmother's maiden name is Janice Buchanan, and she has strong ties to Karuah, South-West Rocks and Nambucca Heads. My maternal grandmother, Joyce Turner is an Arrernte woman from Alice Springs. My maternal grandfather, Paul Hohora is from Papua New Guinea.



Laz Brown

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

Due to COVID I have not been to many events, although I recently attended a couple of Reconciliation events at Western Sydney University Liverpool and Bankstown campuses which was great to be invited to. I do regularly participate at the New South Wales Annual Koori Knockout each year which is a huge event and something I very much look forward to with my family. I ensure that I stay in contact and catch up with my family as it's the best way for me to stay connected with my identity.

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

I am the Indigenous Employment Coordinator here at Western Sydney University, a role that I'm super excited about and determined to achieve results in.

#### Have you always aspired to work in tertiary education?

I would say no, although I have always valued education. My parents encouraged me to finish school and give university a go. Once I got into university the plan was to become a PDHPE secondary school teacher, but I decided to put this on hold once I finished my bachelor's degree and start working. Since this time, I have been a teacher's aide at my old high school, worked for the Clontarf Foundation as a mentor at Mount Druitt High School and have been an Indigenous employment caseworker. So, for most of my working life I have been in and around education. This experience has given me the opportunity to now be employed at Western Sydney University within the higher education sector.

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

My favourite thing about working at Western Sydney University so far, is the countless opportunities I can see that the University can offer to our people via the continuous growth of the organisation. For me as a former Western Sydney University student, I was so focused on just finishing my degree that I didn't realise how much of a big network Western Sydney University is until I started working here. To be able to provide sustainable employment opportunities and outcomes through this huge network for Indigenous people both inside and outside of the University setting is a great privilege.

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

I would say go for it, be confident and back yourself. Employing more Indigenous people in different positions across the University will not only help to further strengthen Western Sydney University and the greater Western Sydney community, but will also strengthen the communities that Indigenous staff specifically come from.



Aunty Sandra Lee and Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

### Seven deadly questions: Auntie Sandra Lee of Western's Elders Advisory Committee

#### Please tell us about yourself.

I am 71 and an active member of Western Sydney's Aboriginal Community.

#### Who is your mob, and where are you from?

My family is descended from Maria Locke. The first Aboriginal to marry a European and own property.

#### What does it mean to be an Elder?

To look after the people and teach them what is right and wrong.

#### Who inspires you?

My parents inspire me and my family.

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

To be able to share my background and knowledge with the Aboriginal Community.

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

I hope they keep spreading and teaching our culture to the community and be heard.

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

Be respectful to your Elders and to everyone at all times.



Fiona Towner, Vice-Chancellor Professor Barney Glover, and Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan.  
Photography: Sally Tsoutas

## Indigenous staff graduate from Western's Inspire Leadership Program

Western Sydney University's Inspire Leadership Program which is designed to develop and enhance the leadership skills and capabilities of Academic and Professional managers and leaders to influence, motivate and inspire others. The program is endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor and Executive and is funded by the University through Talent and Leadership Development. It supports the Western's commitment to value, recognise and develop staff.

On Thursday the 27th of May Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan, Associate Dean (Indigenous Education) School of Social Science, and Fiona Towner, Director of Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education were awarded a Certificate of Completion at a ceremony held on Hawkesbury campus. They successfully completed the blended learning program which applies theory to practice, and explores the principles and models of leadership relevant to academic and higher education settings. The program includes highly relevant and informative content and activities delivered through participative workshops, a 360 degree feedback on leadership roles, access to online learning resources, peer mentoring, guest speakers, completion of a reflective learning journal and an action learning project on leadership.

Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan, Associate Dean (Indigenous Education) School of Social Science, said that the Inspire Program gave her the opportunity to think and reflect upon her leadership style within the academy.

"The program requires participants to implement their own project, I decided to try and form a network with other Associate Deans (Indigenous) across the country. We now have a national network who meet regularly to discuss matters relevant to our local, state, and national interests in Higher Education. Undertaking the Inspire program and working with other participants deepened my knowledge and emboldened me to walk my own path, it was truly a wonderful experience," said Associate Professor Sullivan.

Fiona Towner, Director of Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, said the Inspire program demonstrated the importance of effective leadership.

"The 360 questionnaire provided me with the courage to continue on my journey that started with Western in 2018. It is motivating to learn of the positive outcomes of effective leadership, including nurturing future leaders, increasing team member engagement and improving productivity. The program offered me the opportunity to formalise the reform of the TFS project. It is significant to note the increased uptake of the TFS program over the last three years. From Semester 1 2019, up until Semester 1 2021, engagement by Indigenous Students in the TFS has increased by more than 25%. This shows a clear improvement in engagement, no doubt as a result of the reform and efficiencies that have been introduced over the last 2.5 years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all involved in the delivery of this valuable program," said Ms Towner.

Congratulations again to all staff who graduated from the Inspire Program.

## Staff Updates

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate the following Indigenous staff members for their appointments and recent achievements:

- Professor Michelle Trudgett was promoted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership position at Western Sydney University. Professor Trudgett was also recently elected as the inaugural Chair of the New South Wales Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous Committee and will serve for a two-year term. She was also recently appointed as the Deputy Chair of Universities Australia Pro/Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Committee.
- Associate Professor Corrinne Sullivan was recently promoted to Associate Professor in the School of Social Sciences. She was also awarded the 2020 Institute of Australian Geographers Award for Dissertation Excellence and the 2020 Wiley Award for Best Paper in Geographical Research which were both presented earlier this year.
- Auntie Kerrie Doyle is a Chief Investigator on the National First Nations Research Network, a \$10 million NHMRC grant led by Professor Alex Brown in SAMRI.
- Alison Barnes from the SONM was awarded a Highly Commended in the Inaugural Naomi Williams Wiradjuri Poetry Prize for her poem celebrating NAIDOC week 'Heal Country'
- Laz Brown was recently appointed as Indigenous Employment Coordinator in the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership at Parramatta South campus.
- Lee Hinton joined the Western team in the position of Badanami Student Success Officer at Hawkesbury campus.
- Kaiya Aboagye appointed as a Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences at Liverpool Campus.
- Professor Susan Page commenced as Director of Indigenous Learning and Teaching
- Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews commenced as Director of Indigenous Research.

Western Sydney University would like to thank all Indigenous staff who continuously demonstrate excellence and the Universities values ensuring Western is the place to be.

# Staff

## Western Elders attended the 2021 Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Ceremony

On the 28th of May the 2021 Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service was held in Sydney to remember the service and sacrifice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans. Held annually during National Reconciliation Week and now in its fifteenth year, the 2021 service was combined conventional military protocol with Indigenous ceremonial display including a traditional smoking ceremony and featured the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, school students, current serving and veterans of the Australian Defence Force.

Uncle Harry Allie BEM was a special guest at the event as he is the Chairperson NSW Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service Coordinating Committee and a key member of Western Sydney University's Indigenous Elders Advisory Committee. Uncle Harry alongside Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC Governor of New South Wales laid wreaths to music provided by Australian Army Band Sydney accompanied by the Didgeridoo. Uncle Harry was also invited to say The



Uncle Harry Allie BEM alongside Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC Governor of New South Wales

Ode accompanied by the Didgeridoo. Aunt Norma Shelley, Aunt Rasmie Prior, and Aunt Sandra Lee also attended the event representing Western's Indigenous Elders Advisory Committee as well as Terri Keating representing the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership.

Uncle Harry Allie BEM acknowledges the incredible significance of this event for him and the many thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander veterans who have and continue to fight for our sacred country.

"This event is an opportunity for everyone to show respect, learn about and commemorate our people who fought for our Country. It is incredibly important and humbling to have the younger generations and schools involved in the proceedings



Representatives of Western's Elders Advisory

as it gives us the opportunity to tell the stories our way and to develop the next generations' understandings of Australia's real history," said Uncle Harry.

Western Sydney University remembers and commemorates the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have served in every war and conflict since the Boer War. Although they fought – and sometimes died – shoulder-to-shoulder with their fellow Australians, they returned home to a country that still refused to acknowledge them as citizens and denied them the recognition and entitlements they had earned. Although nothing can be done to change the past, services such as the Indigenous Veterans Commemoration Service provide an opportunity to recognise and honour Indigenous veterans and further the process of reconciliation.

# Research

## 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 since the beginning of the year.**

**Corrinne Sullivan.** (2021). Pussy power: A contemporaneous view of Indigenous women and their role in sex work. *Genealogy*, 5(3), 65, DOI: 10.3390/5030065

**Corrinne Sullivan.** (2021). 'Hot, Young, Buff': An Indigenous Australian gay male view of sex work. *Social Inclusion*, 9(2), 52-60, DOI: 10.17645/si.v9i2.3459

Karen Soldatic, **Corrinne Sullivan**, Linda Briskman, John Leha, William Trewlynn, & Kim Spurway. (2021). Social inclusion and exclusion for First Nations LGBTQ+ people in Australia. *Social Inclusion*, 9(2), 1-6. ISSN: 2183-2803

Lydia Haile, Kaloyan Kamenov, Paul Svitil Briant, Aislyn U Orji, Jaimie D Steinmetz, Amir Abdoli, **Kerrie Doyle**, ... & Chythra Rao. (2021). Hearing loss prevalence and years lived with disability, 1990–2019: findings from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2019. *The Lancet*, 397(10278), 996-1009, DOI: 10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00516-X.

Madhuri Venigalla, Tara Laurine Roberts, Ritesh Raju, Melissa Mrad, **Frances Bodkin**, Katja Kopp, **Kerrie Doyle**, & Gerald Münch. (2021). Identification of tetragocarbonyl C and sideroxylin as the most potent anti-inflammatory components of *Syncarpia glomulifera*. *Fitoterapia*, 150, 104843, 1-10, DOI: 10.1016/j.fitote.2021.104843

**Michelle Trudgett, Susan Page & Stacey Kim Coates.** (2021). Peak bodies: Indigenous representation in the Australian higher education sector. *Australian Journal of Education*, DOI:10.1177/00049441211011178

Rhonda Povey, **Michelle Trudgett, Susan Page & Stacey Kim Coates.** (2021). Where we're going, not where we've been: Indigenous leadership in Canadian higher education. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, DOI: 10.1080/13613324.2021.1942820

## WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS ALUMNI

### Seven deadly questions: Introducing Jill Mutton

#### Who are you?

Warami, my name is Jill Mutton. I am a proud Darug woman and descendant of Maria Lock. My grandmother is an Everingham and I am very grateful that I have lots of historical information and documents about my ancestors. I treasure everything that I have. I don't know everything about my culture that I would like to, however my cultural knowledge is growing every day.

I was born and raised in South Western Sydney and now reside in the North West of Sydney. I currently work for Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District as a Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

#### What community and cultural events have you been involved in lately?

Unfortunately, due to the current COVID-19 situation NAIDOC 2021 face-to-face celebrations within my organisation and in the community could not go ahead. My team and I have therefore designed and ordered an Acknowledgment of Country plaque for placement at the front reception of our workplace to acknowledge Traditional Custodians of the land we work on and to continue the connection of mob to Country.

Again faced with the challenge of COVID-19, for NAIDOC 2020 and unable to have a large face-to-face celebration, my team and I created NAIDOC gift bags to give to staff within our organisation. The gift bags provided was our way of celebrating our history, culture and achievements with our colleagues.

I am also involved in the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) for Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. I am a member of the RAP Working Group and am committed to supporting my organisation and community in reconciliation. I also attend smoking ceremonies held across the Nepean Blue Mountains area every chance I get.



Jill Mutton

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

I am a Diversity and Inclusion Manager. I am extremely passionate about my role as I am able to influence change in the area of inclusion. I am responsible for the creation and implementation of plans and strategies that promote, attract and retain a diverse workforce. Inclusion is achieved when everyone regardless of their background, identity or circumstance feels they are accepted, supported and belong within the organisation.

It is essential that in any organisation its representation is reflective of a diversity of people. As I work in healthcare, it is so important that the diversity of our workforce reflects that of the community.

In terms of inclusion, it is essential that everyone feels equal within the organisation and that they are treated fairly and respectfully. I am passionate about making people feel culturally safe and that they are able to bring their true, unique and beautiful selves to the workplace. I am passionate about making people feel that they belong in their workplace.

#### What degree did you study at Western Sydney University?

I studied a Bachelor of Business and Commerce with a Key Program in Human Resources and Industrial Relations. I graduated in 2011. Since graduating with Western Sydney University, I have completed a Master of Health Service Management with the University of Tasmania.

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

During my time at Western Sydney University I made friendships that I still have until this day. I felt supported by the University and comfortable from the get-go. I think a lot of my comfort was because it was so local to me. I think the University is able to connect well with students residing in Western Sydney and particularly connect with mob. Knowing that I had the team from Badanami to turn to made my experience a lot more supportive and encouraging.

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

Maria Lock is my inspiration and role model. Maria was a strong Darug woman not only historically, but she would also be considered a strong and influential leader in the current times. Maria was extremely smart and had significant educational achievements. She had the first legally recognised marriage as an Aboriginal person and also was the first Aboriginal person to legally own land. Maria is an inspiration to all Aboriginal women as she was able to achieve all those things in a time when our people were severely oppressed and outcasted.

#### What would be your top 5 tips towards success for Indigenous graduates from Western Sydney University?

1. Don't give up, no matter how hard it gets you will get through it. Once it's all over you will be so happy you stuck it out.
2. Ask for help, I did. Staff at Badanami are extremely helpful and whatever the issue may be, they will provide you with guidance and support.
3. Be proud of who you are and where you come from. Learn everything about your culture that you can particularly if you still have family around.
4. For females, have confidence that you can be successful in management roles even in male-dominated fields.
5. Be a strong advocate for Aboriginal issues no matter what kind of role you go into. Think creatively and dare to make a change.

# Alumni

## Western's doctoral graduate redresses systemic failures in the attitudes and processes of Australia's child protection apparatus

During Western's recent June graduation ceremonies Dr Karen Menzies graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy from the School of Nursing and Midwifery. Dr Menzies has a Bachelor and Master of Social Work, and also a Master of Medical Science. She is an Indigenous woman from the Wonnarua people in the Hunter Valley, in New South Wales. She has both personal and professional working knowledge of the traumatic impact of forcible child removal in the Australian Indigenous community.

Dr Menzies has worked as a Social Worker on the Stolen Generations Inquiry at the Australian Human Rights Commission, where she was witness to hundreds of very personal and painful testimonies from Indigenous people who had been forcibly removed from their families. For many years, she also worked with the NSW Department of Community Services and then as a Social Work Consultant designing curriculum, delivering education, and training, and conducting research with education, health, legal and welfare organisations and practitioners across New South Wales.

Dr Menzies' PhD is titled 'And it's Not History. It's Now: Embedding a Trauma Framework into the Practice of Welfare Practitioners who work with Aboriginal Families in the NSW Child Protection



Fiona Towney, Dr Karen Menzies and Professor Michelle Trudgett. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

Sector'. Her research calls for an attitudinal shift — a systemic, national, institutional, and cultural shift where the nation becomes aware of how the past affects the present.

Dr Menzies said undertaking a PhD was not something she ever imagined was possible.

"While it is truly a life changing experience it is a shared experience and I am incredibly thankful to all of my family, friends and colleagues for your encouragement and motivation along the way. I am extremely grateful to the University of Western Sydney in particular, the support from Associate Professor Rebekah Grace. Rebekah, quite simply this thesis would not have been possible without your commitment, expertise, kindness, loyalty and willingness to assist me to resume this research following my lengthy illness and extended periods of absence. I dedicate

this thesis to you," said Dr Menzies.

Professor Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, said Dr Karen Menzies' research is powerful and makes a significant contribution to our communities.

"I would like to congratulate Dr Menzies and their supervisory team on this remarkable achievement. It is through increasing the number of Indigenous people with doctoral qualifications that we will be able to lead the Indigenous research agenda and build capacity across the nation," said Professor Trudgett.

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate Dr Menzies and wish her luck in her career. If you would like to learn more about research opportunities at Western's please follow: [westernsydney.edu.au/research](https://westernsydney.edu.au/research)

## Badanami team provides significant support to Indigenous students

Since the last edition of The Yarning Circle, the staff of Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education have been working hard to support our students and each other, with plenty going on in our space.

Badanami hosted an event to mark the beginning of Reconciliation Week 2021 at our Parramatta South Centre. The event saw a barbeque lunch attended by several staff and students to help celebrate Reconciliation Week. Badanami staff were also lucky enough to attend Reconciliation Week events at our Liverpool and Bankstown campuses.

The 2021 Indigenous Nationals were hosted by the University of Newcastle. Badanami staff accompanied a team of 15 Western student athletes who participated competitively over the week of 20-24th June 2021. We were very proud of our team, who finishing 5th on the ladder. This was an amazing result and a huge improvement from previous Nationals results.

As we moved towards July, and the 2021 NAIDOC Week, we were once again in lock down and Badanami staff promptly moved back to providing remote and online support for our Indigenous students. Since the second wave of the pandemic, Badanami staff have been working extremely hard to support our students in what have again become testing times due to COVID.

The Badanami team strives to always provide a compassionate and practical support to all our students via regular direct, ongoing, one on one communication using a combination of personal phone calls, emails and texts.

Badanami staff and our Indigenous students continue to have a weekly Zoom meeting, with the numbers of Indigenous students dialling in being higher than ever before. We also recently sent a care parcel to our students which have been very well received.

As we enter into Spring, the end of the academic year and on to 2022, the Badanami team will continue to support each other, and our Indigenous students, in any way we can. We cannot know what challenges will evolve into 2022 for our staff and students, however we will be ready to meet these challenges as they arise.



# YOUR PATH TO SUCCESS

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathway Program

Western Sydney University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Pathway Program provides an early offer pathway into Western's undergraduate degrees.

**Online Assessment Dates for 2022 entry**  
17 and 18 November

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY:**  
[westernsydney.edu.au/pathwayprogram](https://westernsydney.edu.au/pathwayprogram)  
Call 1300 897 669 or  
Email [study@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:study@westernsydney.edu.au)

## The College provides support and alternate pathways which empower Indigenous success

The College is the official pathway provider into Western Sydney University for domestic and international students, offering courses in the form of Integrated Diploma/Bachelors, Extended Diplomas and University Foundation Studies. Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enter and complete The College's Academic Pathway Programs where the highly qualified staff ensure students graduate with the necessary skills to take on bachelor degrees at Western Sydney University.

The College develop, design, and deliver programs that support students to succeed in studying and in reaching their chosen careers. Small class sizes and individualised attention from academics provide a supportive environment for students to succeed in their tertiary studies. The College provides high-quality education and resources, and this is why students from around the globe rank The College and Western Sydney University as their preferred education destinations in Australia.

The College Registered Training Organisation at Western Sydney University offers innovative, flexible, and tailored training that meets the needs of individuals and modern workplaces. They specialise in Training and Assessment, Leadership and Management, Project Management, and Individual Support, and offer nationally recognised Australian Skills Quality Authority accredited courses.

The College are student-centric and committed to delivering the highest quality courses and learning support to our students including, advanced learning resources, academic support, experienced and qualified trainers, and a strong student services team.

Jeff Dunn, the Aboriginal Community Outreach and Student Advisor at The College, provides crucial support to the mob who are journeying through this pathway. Jeff advocates on behalf of Indigenous students, assists with directing students to find more information and additional support opportunities such as the Tutoring for Success. Support is provided to Indigenous students by email, phone and in-person consultations at the drop-in centre at the Nirimba and Bankstown campus and Badanami Centres which are located across all campuses.

Jeff Dunn said that The College sees high levels of satisfaction, retention, and progression among Indigenous students.

"The College has seen students who move into the university achieve great academic results, on par with Western students that begin their studies at the university. The College is a caring and compassionate organisation that offers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People unconditional entry to Education," said Mr Dunn.

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

"Something that I have learnt is being a student at The College doesn't make you any lesser than a University student.

Everyone has their good and bad times and there is plenty of support when you need it," said Mr Murray.

"I cannot thank The College enough for offering me endless amounts of support, guidance and advice as I commence upon my academic journey. I have developed strong professional relationships with staff who genuinely want me to achieve greatness and I was even provided the Ngaramada Indigenous Student Scholarship. The financial, social, academic, and emotional assistance and support has helped me to stay focussed on my studies and enhanced my academic achievement. The College has changed my whole experience at University. I would recommend this pathway to any brothers, sisters, aunties and uncles wanting to transition into tertiary education."

Visit [westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/application-pathways/the-college/rto-programs](https://westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/application-pathways/the-college/rto-programs) to explore Western's programs across community and health, business and project management, training and education, construction leadership, health care, training and assessment, climate risk ready, industry training courses. The College offers online short courses that will give you the skills and knowledge to take the next step in your career – or give you the academic credit to pursue further study in a relevant area. Explore the short courses offered here [westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/courses/short-courses-online](https://westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/courses/short-courses-online) and register for the Online Short Courses Information Session on Wednesday 22nd of September at 5pm using the following link [westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/courses/short-courses-online#form](https://westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/courses/short-courses-online#form). Extended diplomas commence on the 25th of October and you have the opportunity to apply before the 11th of October, using the following link [westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/how-to-apply](https://westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/how-to-apply).

## Western celebrates International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

On the 9th of August Western Sydney University virtually commemorated the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples celebrating and acknowledging the protection of the rights of the world's Indigenous population. The date marks the inaugural session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at the United Nations in 1982.

Western staff and students engaged in a number of events and with resources which respond to the 2021 theme which focuses on *'Leaving no one behind: Indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract'*.

- The [Western Sydney University's International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples Library Guide](#) was developed to provide context of the annual celebration and highlight just some of the great work being undertaken by Indigenous scholars at Western in the last 18 months. Included in this guide are publications authored by Western's Indigenous scholars across 2020-2021, videos and streaming media, and links to other key resources. To access and read the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples Library Guide please follow <https://subjectguides.library.westernsydney.edu.au/idwip>
- Over 60 staff and students joined in a virtual yarning and reflection session from 1-2pm on the 9th of August which was facilitated by Allan McKenzie — a proud Wiradjuri Gamilaroi artist, and advocate. This provided all the opportunity to deepen their understandings of the importance of celebrating on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples and provided a culturally safe space for yarns about Indigenous rights, equity, and justice.

- Indigenous students and staff also uploaded images and text introducing and celebrating their Indigenous role models on [Badanami Facebook](#) and/or [westsydu\\_badanami](#) Instagram on the 9th of August. There was a random draw which saw each person who uploaded an image have the chance to win a \$100 gift voucher. The Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership and the Badanami team would like to congratulate Tara Silimaibau and Holly-lee Dickson for winning the vouchers and thank everyone who got involved.

To learn more about the World Indigenous People's Day and the United Nations commitments to Indigenous communities internationally please follow <https://www.un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day>



## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FUTURE STUDENTS INFORMATION EVENINGS

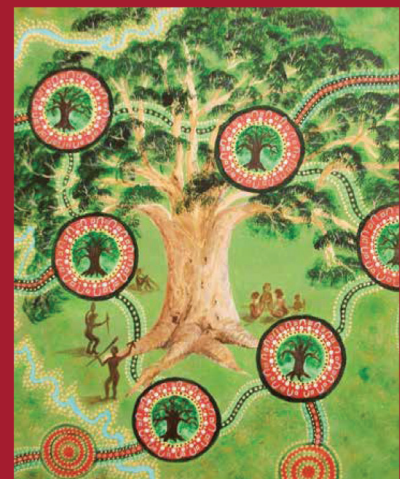
COME ALONG TO FIND OUT ABOUT STUDY AT WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

### FIND OUT ABOUT:

- Courses available
- How to apply
- Entry pathways
- Scholarships
- Support services
- Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education
- Campus life

### EVENT DETAILS

- Tuesday 7 September 2021  
6:00pm-7:00pm  
Webinar (Online)



To register call **1300 897 669** or visit [westernsydney.edu.au/atsiinfoevenings](https://westernsydney.edu.au/atsiinfoevenings)



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