



The Yarning Circle

Summer 2021 | Edition #7

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

Acknowledgement

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

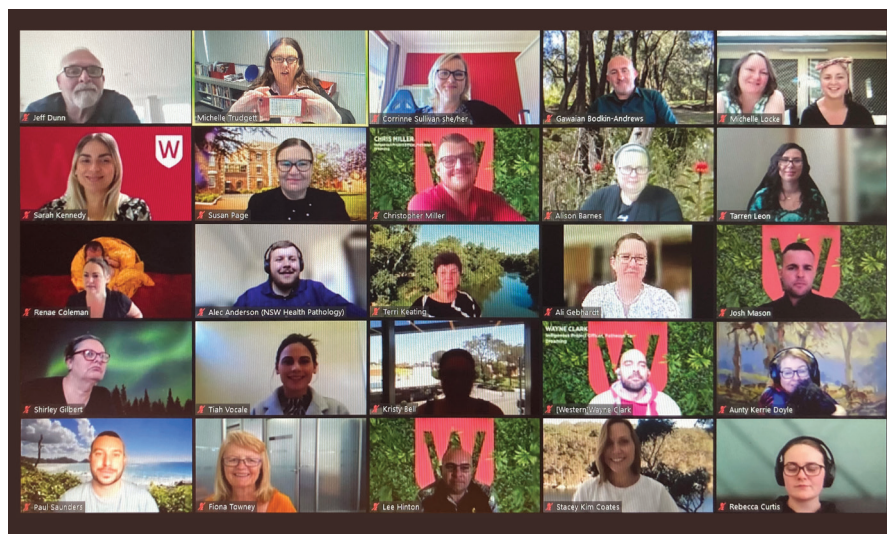
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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that the following magazine may contain images or names of deceased persons.

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Western Sydney University's Indigenous Staff

From Strength to Strength: Building Indigenous Success

On Wednesday 27th October, Western Sydney University's Indigenous staff members came together virtually to reflect, reset and learn at the annual Indigenous Staff Conference. The 2021 conference theme was 'From Strength to Strength: Building Indigenous Success', providing staff an opportunity to network with other Indigenous staff members and learn about the on-going developments in the Indigenous portfolio.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Michelle Trudgett, and Wiradjuri Alumni, Alec Anderson, co-facilitated the event. Presentations were provided by academic and professional staff members to discuss the support and opportunities available across Badanami, Future Student Engagement, Indigenous Employment, Indigenous Learning and Teaching and Indigenous Research.

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Several schools including the School of Medicine, School of Nursing and Midwifery, and School of Social Sciences also showcased their commitment to supporting Indigenous leadership, success, and knowledges at Western. Attendees engaged in discussions focused on approaches to be taken together across Western to support each other's success in the coming year.

Professor Barney Glover AO, Vice-Chancellor and President, addressed the conference and invited all to think about upcoming opportunities across the portfolio and how we might continue to work together to achieve the ambitious goals set in the 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy.

"Western Sydney University is dedicated to Indigenous education, leadership, and the growth of the Indigenous academy, staff profile and professoriate. I would like to congratulate the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership and Western's Indigenous staff on their collegiality, teamwork, and commitment through what has been an incredibly challenging year for all. The Indigenous Staff Conference provided an opportunity to celebrate how much we have achieved at Western, whilst acknowledging all that there is still to do in this space," said Professor Glover.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Michelle Trudgett, discussed Western's achievements in the Indigenous portfolio since the 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy was launched.

"This year's Indigenous Staff Conference was a huge success with 35 staff coming together to connect online. I thank all attendees for their contributions and Western Sydney University alumni, Mr Alec Anderson, who co-facilitated the day with me. A clear message from the conference is that we need to support and nurture one another to serve our communities with excellence and integrity," said Professor Trudgett.

To find out more about Western Sydney University's firm commitment to Indigenous staff, students and community please read the 2020-2025 Indigenous Strategy by following the link, www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1672462/2020-2025_Indigenous_Strategy_FINAL.pdf.



You are invited to attend Western's 25th annual Yarramundi Lecture

On Thursday the 9th of December from 6.30pm-8.00pm the 25th annual Yarramundi Lecture will be held virtually for the second time. The Yarramundi Lecture aims to commemorate the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within Australia. It provides an opportunity for the University community to embrace a spirit of co-operation and sharing, guided by genuine understanding and mutual respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. It will be a forum for the discussion of issues of local and national importance.

Guest speakers include:

- **Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt**, Chair of Indigenous Research, Director of Research and Academic Programs Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney
- **Uncle Harry Allie**, Elder and Member of the Indigenous Elder Advisory Committee, Western Sydney University
- **Dr Paul Saunders**, PhD Student and Research Fellow, Western Sydney University
- **Leanne Markovic**, Student and Casual PASS online facilitator, Western Sydney University.

The team from the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership would like to provide our sincerest invitation to all. To register your attendance please follow

https://uws.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UulX6T5UQzK6kSBkNfO5IA.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR, INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP

Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of *The Yarning Circle*. As I reflect on this year, I acknowledge the challenges we have faced as both individuals and as a connected community. Our staff have demonstrated resilience, compassion and kindness throughout the pandemic. They have come together as a collegial team with a mission to serve each other, our students, and the community with excellence and integrity - I am extremely grateful for this.

The stories in this edition highlight just some of the excellent work happening across the University. The outstanding calibre of Indigenous students at Western Sydney University is an inspiration and I would like to take this moment to congratulate each of them for their successes. I want to particularly congratulate the latest recipients of the prestigious Yarramundi Scholarship and wish them all the best with their research journeys.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff, students, and Elders for their incredible contributions to the Indigenous portfolio at Western Sydney University. I wish you and your families a safe and happy festive season and look forward to welcoming you back in 2022.

Professor Michelle Trudgett (BA, MPS, EdD)

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership



Professor Michelle Trudgett, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership. Photography: Sally Tsoutas

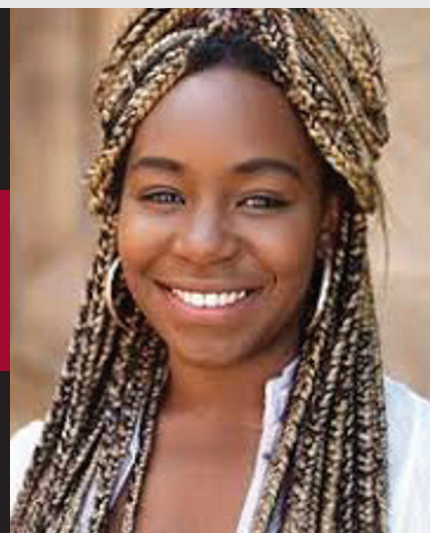
BOLD

conversations

with Kaiya Aboagye

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

Kaiya Aboagye



Kaiya is a Ghanaian, Aboriginal, South Sea and Torres Strait Islander Lecturer and Unit Coordinator in the School of Social Sciences. She is undertaking research which unpacks some of the substantial and significant connections shared between First Nations and African Diasporic peoples in Australia and throughout the Black Pacific. Kaiya hopes her research will disrupt common assumptions about the “Black experience” in Australia and decolonize the ways we have come to teach, learn and engage with African histories in the global south. During this Bold Conversation Kaiya reflects on the discipline of Social Sciences and the need to dismantle its colonial history.

The Island of Vanuatu has been independent of colonial rule for 41 years; however, the legacy of British imperialism and slavery continues in many parts of the world including Australia. On Friday 30 July, diasporic communities and families throughout the continent celebrated a 170-year legacy of activism and community resilience. For the first time in Australian history descendants like myself, of South Sea Islanders who were trafficked and black birded to Australia, received the first ever formal apology by a government official. The official apology came from Bundaberg mayor Jack Dempsey, who acknowledged that the taking of men, women and children from their Pacific Island homelands and forced into indentured labour to work the sugar cane and cotton farm industries of Queensland “was equivalent to slavery and abhorrent”.

I remember getting up early that morning to watch the live stream from Sydney, as communities gathered in Bundaberg for the apology and to celebrate Vanuatu’s Independence Day.

It was a flurry of phone calls and text messages trying to get my tech to work and making sure the younger cussies (cousins) were awake and watching. Later that night, I lit a candle and hit my “Ailan Jams playlist” on Spotify letting the warm reggae sounds transport me away from Sydney back to the tropics of Queensland where most of my family still resides.

I am writing this piece to share my experiences as a South Sea Islander descendant, as I often reflect on this legacy above. Growing up, the cultural kinship shared between South Sea Islanders (Kanaka), Aboriginal and Zenadth Kesian people (colonially known as the Torres Strait) have always been a conscious part of my life. Knowing who I belong to and the ways in which we connect is something that is always on my mind, because the lives of people like my grandmother Sarah Backo, her mother Myrtle Backo (nee Malayta) and her mother before her Amy Watakin, are always on my mind. Whether it be my grandfather Robert Saylor, or the legendary Seven Sisters of Tanna and Coote families, all of my ancestors are products of this long and historical cultural intersection. And to me they are all warriors in the experience of the Pacific’s journey toward decolonisation.

Throughout the entire far North Queensland coastline, it is visibly evident Island people share a distinct relationship to Aboriginal people. One of the factors for this is Australia’s British legacy of imperial slavery. Not long after slavery was abolished in the UK and USA, it was soon transported to the Oceanic waters of this continent, Australia. The lucrative trade of human trafficking soon took its brutal plight upon Melanesian bodies, bodies brought across Black oceans, for the consumption of western capitalism.

Between 1863-1904, some 62,000 South Sea Islander people were transported up and down the Queensland coast to work the sugar plantations and cotton farms in dehumanising and slave like conditions alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people often without consent and with little to no pay.

Queensland’s booming sugar and agricultural industries alone would become largely responsible for the wealth of our nation. Despite this, our people were denied adequate compensation and intergenerational poverty we continue to strive to overcome. To this day, the seasonal workers of South Sea Islanders and other Pacific Islanders still experience conditions that mirror those much like more than 100 years ago. South Sea Islanders and Aboriginal people like many of the people in my own family, came together, built lives and raised families and children all over Far North Queensland. My family were in places like ‘The Gardens’ in Halifax near Townsville and Joskeleigh close to Rockhampton. Places like ‘The Gardens’ became sacred villages as Gabriella Hayes beautifully describes:

‘Gardens began to appear around the huts, and taro was grown in the creeks away from the eyes of the bosses. Though they were not meant to speak language, there were ways to communicate and move that happened away from watchful eyes’.

My mother grew me up in the inner-city suburb of Glebe in Sydney, away from family and her home on Yalanji Country (Far North Queensland). She married an Akan Man Indigenous to Ghana in West Africa, who too was a long-way away from his homelands.

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Growing up Black, in a predominantly Black neighbourhood (before it became gentrified) I existed within and between many diverse Black-Indigenous-Oceanic communities.

As someone who is tri-cultured I often think about the past and all its stories, how all of this has brought us together and come to shape the nature of Black realities and Black lives today. Modelled to me in all of the diversity within this my almost entirely Black universe, was the one, central and consistent core... our connectedness. Whether it was observing this with my Ghanaian paternal side or witnessing it on my maternal South Sea Blakfulla side, every Black person I passed on the street or found in the confines of my parent's home, was Auntie, Uncle or pamlee (family creole term) for me.

My mother and father have always made it known to me, that the keepers of the Land, Earth and Soil cannot be separated from the Keepers of the Seas, Oceans, Water Ways and River Systems. But events that have happened in our histories have tried to erase this connectedness from us and tear apart our structures like our histories displaced, distorted and disconnected. In the constant meeting and melting of these communities within my own daily life, my parents showed me that it is precisely the polarity of our difference is also our connections.

All of the intersection of my tri-cultural heritage reminds me of the word *di-unital* – an undivided whole, it means literally something apart and united at the same time. Like life and death, sea and sand, stars and sun – all that provides the evidence, that we too, are not devoid from this natural pattern and cycle of life. The genius of our cultures has meant that these cycles are mirrored in our societal structures, our systems of thinking, doing, being. You can find it hidden in our language, in our speech, art, dance, kinship, roles, responsibilities, and governance structures of sharing (obligation) and caring (reciprocity). All of this what has ensured our survival and is that which provides us with the deeds and titles of collective custodianship and connectedness to not only the lands – but to one another.



Kaiya Aboagye and her father

Our people are no different, we Aboriginal, Zenadth Kes and South Sea Islander people are both equal parts to the same whole. Di-unital. This principle of harmony and reciprocal kin will always remain the first pillar of Black/Indigenous Oceanic life and sovereignty. Despite this, little is known about the deep nature of our relations or relating. How it is encoded into all of our systems for being. Our systems for knowing each other, identifying ourselves and our networks of belonging are shared, ancient and interconnected. They have provided our people peace, balance and cultural equanimity.

Sadly, however, our connectedness is often misunderstood and misrepresented in mainstream media, research and scholarship. In my own scholarly works I write back to empire to counter colonial ideas that have distorted this concept within Black Indigenous realities.

Fijian scholar Tracy Banivanua Mar wrote extensively on our interconnected struggles in our shared plight toward decolonisation in the Pacific. Similarly, my work is inspired by Mar, celebrating lineages of connection, where Aboriginal, Zenadth Kesian, Kanaka South Sea Islanders, and other Pasifika kin are all Wantok, One Salwara People. Together Bla(c)k First Nations, Oceanic sovereign people to the continental plate of Sahul. Aboriginal, Zenadth Kesian and South Sea/Kanak people are also a people brought together and enslaved by race-based policies of segregation and assimilation. And because of this our story has not been without complexity nor fragmentation. This complex history has played out in many forms of racialised violence, including violence perpetuated amongst ourselves.

From the moment of imperial inception, the settler colonial project has sought to conquer, categorise and divide Aboriginal, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander people. Separating, categorising and dividing us up, just as they have done our lands and waterways for themselves. But the sacred winds weave and connect all Oceanic Islands and their peoples back together. Breathing air into our lives, in much the same way that the constellations, stars and galaxies remind us we are cosmically connected. Without one the other cannot survive. Our liberation and pursuit for justice, truth and peace in the Country will always be intrinsically connected. Not because of colonialism, but because of the ancient Indigenous knowledge systems that anchors us in our relations, relations to the land, relations to the seas and relations to each other.



Professor Bronwyn Carlson



Western celebrates Bold Indigenous Futures during Research Week

The research being conducted at Western Sydney University addresses complex problems and identifies opportunities to shape a better world. From the 25th to the 29th of October Western celebrated Research Week—an annual showcase of research excellence, progress, and impact. All students, staff and community were invited to join as we heard from leading researchers and academics as they shape solutions for national and international issues. This year's theme 'Bold Research Futures' reflects Western's approach to finding solutions and aims to produce a future of impactful research that works collaboratively with government, industry, and other organisations on the most important issues affecting our region: health, education, environment, society, and much more.

As part of the Research Week activities, the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership hosted the virtual Indigenous Research Forum on Friday 29th October.

The keynote speaker for the symposium was respected Aboriginal scholar, Professor Bronwyn Carlson, who is the author of the influential book *The Politics of Identity: Who counts as Aboriginal today?* Professor Carlson's presentation drew from her recent work involving social media and activism, and is titled *The movement of emotions: Indigenous people and social media activism*.

Indigenous-led scholarship was also highlighted in a series of snapshot presentations by Indigenous Higher Degree Researchers and Indigenous academics within Western Sydney University. These presentations encompassed a range of topics, including Indigenous medical education, cultural responsiveness in mental health, Indigenous leadership within higher education, Indigenous midwifery learning experiences, and school-based physical activity programs.

During the event several prizes were awarded. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership prize was awarded to Renae Coleman for her research, the keynote speaker prize decided by Professor Bronwyn Carlson was awarded to Robert Doyle for his research and the People's Choice Prize was won by Dr Michelle Locke.

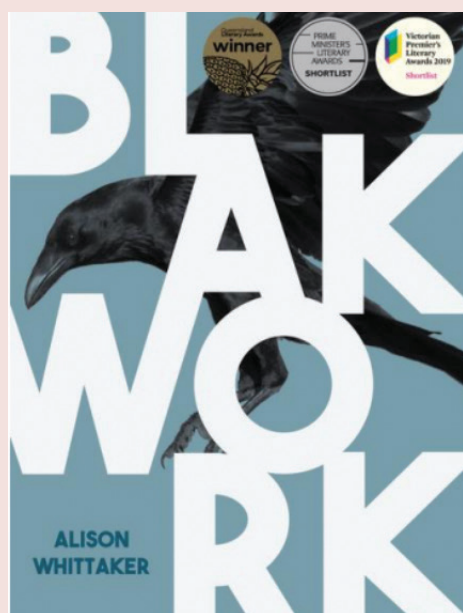
Western's new Director of Indigenous Research, Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, hosted the event.

"This event presented an exciting opportunity to showcase the outstanding work of Western's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academic staff and higher degree research students, and empowered Western's Indigenous Research network to gain a deeper understanding of each other's work. *Naminima nuggun mora nandiri walunadarang'o'nya* [We are looking to strengthen teachings of our ways]," said Professor Bodkin-Andrews.

Professor Deborah Sweeney, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise and International) was also in attendance at the event.

"This event showcased Western's Indigenous academics' and students' strength and excellence to the wider university community and future generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. Western Sydney University recognises and respects the teaching, learning, and research that is currently being undertaken on these campuses and that has been conducted on these lands for thousands of years," said Professor Sweeney.

To learn more about the research opportunities available at Western Sydney University please follow www.westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/courses/research.



Alison Whittaker's, Jazz Money's, & Ellen van Neerven's recently published books

Writing and Society Research Centre's seminar celebrates the staunch voices of Indigenous Poets

On Friday the 1st of October, the Writing and Society Research Centre held a virtual seminar to invite conversation around the form and function of hope in writing, with a specific interest in the way joy interacts with forms of protest. The conversation addressed the location of 'hope' within fierce critiques; transcending the confines of the colony by writing about joy; balancing hope and despair in creative practice; and writing as a way of connecting with and building community.

Jazz Money, an award-winning poet of Wiradjuri heritage and Western Sydney University student chaired the event. She is a fresh-water river woman currently based on beautiful Gadigal land now known as Sydney. Her practice is centred around the written word while producing works that encompass installation, digital, film and print. Jazz's David Unaipon Award-winning debut collection is 'How to make a basket' available from September 2021 with University of Queensland Press.

Ellen van Neerven, an award-winning writer of Mununjali and Dutch heritage participated in the yarn. Their books include *Throat* (2020), *Comfort Food* (2016) and *Heat and Light* (2014). *Throat* received three awards including Book of the Year in the 2021 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. Ellen is also the editor of four anthologies including the recent *Flock: First Nations Stories Then and Now* (2021).

Alison Whittaker, a Gomeroi poet, essayist and legal scholar also engaged in the discussion. She is a Research Fellow at the Jumbunna Institute.

In 2017-18, Alison was a Fulbright scholar at Harvard Law School where she was named Dean's Scholar in Race, Gender and Criminal Law. Her second book *Blakwork* was shortlisted for the 2019 Prime Minister's Literary Award. Her most recent book, *Fire Front*, is an anthology of, and about, First Nations published poetry.

Throughout the seminar the poets considered what makes poetry a unique tool for complex dialogues, and how writing helps to connect Indigenous poets. The poets also discussed how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are confronted daily by the brutalities and injustices of the colony of Australia, yet our communities are full of laughter, love, joy, solidarity, and support. However, Indigenous poets write into this duality as an ongoing way of resisting and critiquing the colony.

"Every day Indigenous people across this continent are confronted with the violence of living in the Australian colony. And yet, there is still so much Blak art, Blak joy, Blak power. Poetry has always rung out in protest against the invasion of our lands. At rallies, at gatherings, the poetry of our people can be heard in those who are compelled to speak, those who move others with the power of words. Poetry is a space full of community and uplift. Having sovereign spaces of discourse is such a beautiful opportunity, and this panel was a complete joy and honour to take part in and facilitate," said Jazz Money.

To find out more about Western's Writing and Society Research Centre follow, www.westernsydney.edu.au/writing_and_society

Students

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS STUDENTS ACHIEVE GREAT THINGS

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Nicholas Howie

Who are you?

My name is Nicholas Howie and I am studying with the goal of becoming a high school physics teacher.

Who is your mob?

I'm a proud Dharug Man from the Boorooberongal clan (Richmond basin area).

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

A few years ago, I was involved in the Firesticks Program, which focuses on bringing traditional backburning practices back to Country. We did it at Yarramundi, with great success. The fire brigade that helped us said they had never been involved in such a calm backburn before. A couple years ago, I got some of my Aboriginal students that I work with at a local high school to get up in front of 9 or so different classes and talk about Aboriginal culture from past to present and talk about why it is important to every Australian. They did it as part of NAIDOC week, and some of those boys have since gone on to become School Captains. I was also involved in this year's NAIDOC, where I did the smoking ceremony with one of our local Elders. It was an incredible opportunity to be involved in, and I learned a lot very fast. I was also involved in an art project at the Blacktown Native Institute site (one of the first locations where children were taken to as part of Stolen Generation). We held Corroboree focused on healing Country and reclaiming our lost spirit, and involved everything from dance, self-reflection, singing and playing. For a moment, we felt that place remember what it was to be alive. There will be more events such as that in the future and I look forward to being part of them. I will also be involved in a charity walk, to raise



Nicholas Howie

money for Western Sydney Scholarships with my Mum and her colleagues. Our goal is to raise \$500 each for Aboriginal Scholarships because we both know the positive effect they can have on someone's motivation to study.

Why did you choose to study at Western Sydney University?

I'm studying at Western for two reasons; the first being that Western is one of the more culturally engaged Universities in Australia, giving me the chance to explore my heritage in a way I have never had access to before. The second is that, when it comes to teaching, no University beats Western. Western is one of the best in Australia and the staff and students are super friendly as well. Western understands that success does not always look like high grades, and that is a philosophy I wish to propagate through my own teaching as well.

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

This is a difficult question to answer for a couple of reasons. The answer is yes, but without knowing what life as a non-Indigenous person looks like, it's hard to know exactly how. Obviously, there are the cultural things, which do not take up a massive amount of time but are there and do contribute. One of the biggest challenges that I have faced though is the disparity between Western Society's culture and Aboriginal culture. In my latest class for example, we were discussing the ethics involved in teaching,

and some of the articles we were basing our conversations off claimed to be universal, while also saying they were only looking at the Western perspective. The fact is that society is not built around the concepts and values that my life is. Sometimes I feel like an outsider, and sometimes an outright antagonist to the plot of the wider society, as my values conflict with what is being taught. The way I manage, is by remembering that my way of thinking and being is revolutionary to a lot of people, and although I may lose marks for the way I think sometimes, or be disregarded as a crazy idealist by some, I must remember that by simply existing, I'm challenging old value systems, and providing new perspectives of the world for the people I encounter. I strive every day to find a middle ground between Western and Aboriginal culture, where both can live in harmony. What a beautiful country that will be.

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

Everything from a mildly successful amateur rock-climbing career to becoming a well-respected and insightful science teacher who challenges dogma and helps students discover how to learn. I want to be the man with 1000 stories, and be a force for good, directed at anyone that crosses my path. I want to learn as much as I can, so I can share the wonder of it all with others, and hopefully inspire them to fall in love with this world. I guess I just want people to see the world a little bit like me, because it's so full of beauty and wonder that often goes unseen.

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. The first must be proper scheduling. You must plan things out, including when to take breaks, and look after yourself.
2. It is also super important to know why you are doing what you are doing. Motivation comes from purpose. If you have an end goal, a reason why you are studying, it will be much easier to stick with it when it gets hard. It'll be more fun too.

(continued overleaf)

Students

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3. Enjoy the little things. I know it is an overused quote, but it's true. From the birds singing, to toilets that flush, we live in a world full of magic. If you get yourself into the habit of appreciating these things a couple times a day, your mind and soul will feel so much freer, giving your head the space to focus when you need it to.
4. Fourth is friends. I can't stress enough how important having friends to help you out can be. People to study with, play with, cry with etc. It is invaluable to have someone that's got your back. Helps make you feel like you're worth the effort, and they will give you a kick when you need it too.
5. Last, but not least is failure. Fail spectacularly. Making mistakes is a chance to learn, so if you're going to mess up, give yourself the biggest opportunity you can to learn from it. Be spectacular in your failure. Make it big, make it hurt. Then, always get up again, but get up knowing that by doing it this way, that mistake will never knock you down again. Eventually you will run out of ways to mess it up... Or so I keep telling myself.



Robert Doyle



Matilda Harry



Dr Dana Slape

Scholarships support higher degree research students to achieve academically

Western Sydney University offers over \$25 million in scholarships every year which recognise and reward students who demonstrate outstanding academic ability, and superior leadership and community skills. Recently three Indigenous students were awarded the Yarramundi Scholarship. This scholarship is highly prestigious and valued at \$50,000 per annum for PhD students. It is designed to provide support to Indigenous students undertaking higher degree research.

Western would like to congratulate Robert Doyle, Matilda Harry and Dr Dana Slape who were recently were awarded the scholarship and wish them the best of luck with their studies.

Robert Doyle is a Winninninni Budjeri, Cadigal man, born and raised on Darkinjung country. He served on a mission in Western Australia in Broome and Kalgoorlie and recognised the

need for Aboriginal mental health and well-being professional, and so pursued a career as a Registered Nurse. He has gained experience working with Aboriginal people in acute mental health settings, and is looking forward to completing his research at Western.

"My thesis will consider a model of cultural proficiency for Aboriginal people using mental health services. Being awarded the Yarramundi scholarship is one of my greatest honours in my career. I am looking forward to my Masters of Research journey at Western and am incredibly grateful to have support from Western staff with a special thanks to Dr Brahm Marjadi," said Mr Doyle.

Matilda Harry is a proud Wiradjuri woman born and raised on Darug Country. She is passionate about making positive social change for young Indigenous people and is a Primary School teacher. She will be completing her thesis in the Graduate Research School examining Indigenous mentorship. Matilda is incredibly grateful and honoured to have received the Yarramundi Scholarship at Western Sydney University.

"I am indebted to Western for the support provided to me from my undergraduate degree all the way through to my PhD and hopefully beyond this milestone into the future. This scholarship will allow me to pursue my interest and passions in Indigenous research and support me to give back to community. As a first in family student to access higher education, I am honoured to have such an opportunity," said Ms Harry.

Dr Dana Slape is a Larrakaia woman living in Southwest Sydney on Dharawal Country. Dr Slape is a graduate of Western's School of Medicine and is Australia's first Aboriginal dermatologist, working as a staff specialist in the hospitals where she trained, as well as in the NSW Justice Health system. Dr Slape is very proud to be a recipient of the Yarramundi scholarship as she says this helps support and highlight the PhD which investigates the burden and treatment experiences of people with skin disease living in correctional centres.

"I am ecstatic to have been successful in receiving the Yarramundi Scholarship. The support Western has provided will assist my studies and help me to better support communities across the nation," said Dr Slape.

Western Sydney University offers a wide range of scholarships for both future and current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students on all Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Higher Degree Research levels. To browse the range of scholarships offered please follow this link: www.westernsydney.edu.au/future/why-western/scholarships.html



**WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY**



IGNITE INDIGENOUS TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM

Are you ready for your career in the university sector to take off in 2022? Let the Ignite Indigenous Traineeship Program spark your future to new heights!

Western Sydney University is proud to introduce the Ignite Indigenous Traineeship Program. The program is administered by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership and provides a vocational pathway to gain experience in general university operations, a sector that has consistent demand and longevity.

The Ignite Indigenous Traineeship Program has been developed as an employment opportunity to interested Indigenous people living within Greater Western Sydney, as it provides an entry level platform to enter a university workplace and acquire a unique business skillset from a host School, Division or Institute. In addition, the trainee will be enrolled in a vocational education and training course.

Specifically, participants of the program will be employed on a one-year fixed term contract whilst registered into a Certificate III in Business (Administration) traineeship contract. Trainees will be strongly supported and guided throughout their traineeship journey by the Indigenous Employment Coordinator, within the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership as the key facilitator of the program.

Upon successful completion of the program, the trainee will be supported by the Indigenous Employment Coordinator in liaison with the host business unit to work towards securing further employment and/or providing opportunities to network and transition into other employment prospects at Western. Moreover, in providing ample opportunity for the trainee to progress, the Indigenous Employment Coordinator will also seek avenues for further study at Western Sydney University if applicable.

Fundamental requirements to be considered for intake into this life changing employment program are:

- To identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- To have completed a year 9 level of schooling or equivalent
- To have an interest in general business administration duties
- To display a willingness to enrol and complete a Certificate III in Business (Administration) traineeship for 12 months

Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Professor Michelle Trudgett, states that this program is important for positioning Western Sydney University as a place of choice for Indigenous Australians to work in an environment that supports and nurtures their careers.

“Western Sydney University is excited to launch the Ignite – Indigenous traineeship program which offers a clear signal of our commitment to providing entry-level positions to Indigenous people in our region. I look forward to meeting the trainees and working with them to achieve their aspirations,” said Professor Trudgett.

Lazarus Brown, Indigenous Employment Coordinator in the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, has played a critical role in developing this program ensuring that this pathway will empower mob to gain specific skills to help cultivate their career in higher education.

“We welcome all of our interested Bunjis and Tiddas’ to submit an EOI for this deadly opportunity. Let Western show you why we are the university that cares more. Because dulili, we are unlimited,” said Mr Brown.

To learn more about the program or for further enquiries or feedback please reach out to Lazarus Brown via email at laz.brown@westernsydney.edu.au

Staff

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S PASSIONATE INDIGENOUS STAFF

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Terri Keating

Who are you?

My name is Terri Keating; I have lived on the land of the Darug people for 36 years. I am a proud Wiradjuri woman from Narromine in the Central Western Slopes and Plains of NSW. As a child growing up in Narromine, I gained a deep respect for the community, in particular the Elders, who I give credit to for teaching me the standards and culture of our ancestors.

Who is your mob?

I was born and bred in Narromine. My Dad's family came from Narrandera, where they lived on the sand hills near the Murrumbidgee River, it was an Aboriginal settlement. His two sisters and his brother were taken from the family in the early 1940's, however my Dad managed to escape and ended up living and working with the Corney family from Hartley near Lithgow. The Corney's treated him like family, he was very lucky to have them.

My Dad married my Mum in 1952 and began to set up our home in Narromine, where they had two children, me, and my brother Michael. Most of my mob is located in a part of Narromine named Frog Hollow where I visit on a regular basis.



Terri Keating

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

As part of my position here at the University, I am honoured to be able to support our Elders at events including the Western Sydney University Indigenous Elders Advisory committee meetings, the Welcome and Acknowledgement to Country at many events, the NAIDOC Week event at the University and the annual NAIDOC Week celebration at Jamison Park in the Penrith LGA which has unfortunately been cancelled for the last 2 years owing to COVID restrictions.

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

I am a Community Engagement Officer. I started my career at the University as a Trainee Administration Assistant in the HR department. As time has gone by, I have assisted with the traineeship program and the Elders on campus program by coordinating elders to present Welcome and Acknowledgement to Country at many University events.

Have you always aspired to work in tertiary education?

I have always been a hard worker. I get that from my Mum and Dad. I think I have always aspired to be successful at any role I fulfilled, in whatever climate, however I didn't think that I would ever be working at a University. As a successful trainee applicant, many opportunities have been opened up to me at the University that I am very grateful for.

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

I have made many friends and I love spending my time with the Elders, seeing them share our culture with the students and staff. Being part of the Indigenous Staff Network, and making our University a place for community is a very rewarding experience.

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

I have now been employed at the University over 13 years. No day is ever the same and I am very grateful for all the experiences I have been given. There are opportunities at the University for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and I encourage you to come and join us.

Staff Updates

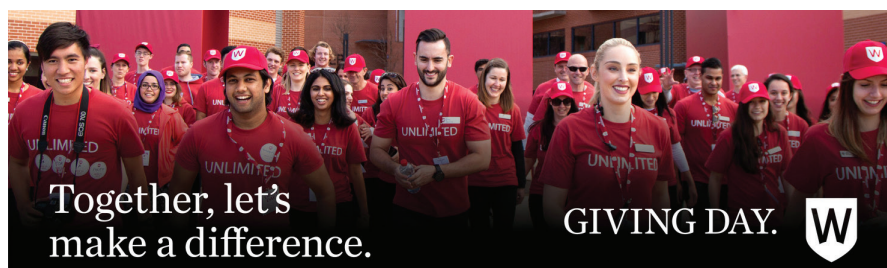
Western Sydney University would like to congratulate the following Indigenous staff members for their appointments and recent achievements:

- Josh Mason appointed to the newly reclassified position of Senior Student Advancement Officer, Badanami.
- Crystal McDermid moved to the new position Senior Administration Officer in the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership.
- Christopher Miller, Indigenous Engagement Project Officer in the Office of Pro-Vice Chancellor (Engagement and Advancement) discussed how Western Sydney University staff weave cultural aspects into outreach programs for Indigenous students in an episode of 'Indigenous Success: Doing it, Thinking it, Being it' with Professor Tracey Bunda as part of Dr Katelyn Barney's National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education fellowship. To listen, please follow <https://indigenoussuccess.podbean.com/e/cultural-aspects-in-outreach-programs-for-indigenous-students-chris-miller/>

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



Christopher Miller with Dr Katelyn Barney and Professor Tracey Bunda. Photography: Anthony Frangi



Together, Western Sydney University will make a difference for 2021 Giving Day

On Wednesday the 1st of December Western Sydney University will celebrate Giving Day. Giving Day offers students, staff, alumni, and our Western community an opportunity to raise funds and highlight the great work of our University. This year Western is holding the first ever Giving Day Walk and Chancellor's Challenge at CommBank stadium. Donations will be awarded to Western's scholarships, student life, and research and innovation.

The start line for the 15km walk will be at the beautiful Lake Parramatta site, where a few hundred participants will gather at around 7.30am – 8am. Dr Michelle Locke, Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, and her son Nicholas Howie, Western Sydney University Education student, will Welcome all to County at the opening ceremony. Dr Locke and Nicholas will also provide participants with brief information to consider as they walk through the area and along the Parramatta River as they are culturally, spiritually and ancestrally connected to this Country.

En route, walkers will enter Bankwest stadium and be entertained by the Chancellor's Challenge. 'Team Chancellor' captained by Professor Peter Shergold AC will be pitted against 'Team Vice-Chancellor' captained by Professor Barney Glover AO in a soccer-style penalty shoot-out. Each team will consist of ten players who will compete to score as many goals as possible. Donations will be encouraged, to see extra penalty shots attempted. Star studded teams will include sporting and media celebrities, alumni, donors, students, and University staff.

Team Chancellor will raise funds for Indigenous Scholarships at Western.

Team Vice-Chancellor will raise funds for Integrative Health at Western.

Which team will be triumphant?

Walkers will then continue the Giving Day Walk through Parramatta CBD, along the banks of Parramatta River for a couple of kilometres to a celebratory finish at Parramatta South Campus.

Fiona Towney, Director of the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, is looking forward to walking in the team which was formed under the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Indigenous Leadership to raise money for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarships at Western.

"A number of Western's Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff and students will participate in Western's Staff Giving Day. The walk will be enjoyable and is a great opportunity to raise money for our mob. This annual event is a 24-hour campaign which celebrates the impact of philanthropic support at the university," said Ms Towney.

To find out more about Giving Day and to donate please follow www.westernsydney.edu.au/give/giving-day.



Staff

Congratulations to Alison Barnes on her recent achievement in the Naomi Williams Poetry prize

Western Sydney University would like to congratulate Alison Barnes, Associate Lecturer and First Nations Student Liaison and Support within the School of Nursing and Midwifery for recently being awarded highly commended in the Adult category of the Naomi Williams Poetry prize. Alison is a proud Wiradjuri woman born and raised on Darug lands. She has been a registered nurse since 1991 and has worked across a number of clinical specialties including emergency, primary care, mental health, and intensive care units. She has always maintained three aspirations for herself; learn a lot, make things better for my mob and have fun doing it and she is finding that her current role as an Associate Lecturer allows her to continuously achieve all three. Alison also loves reading, art, music, and both growing and cooking with bush tucker.



Alison Barnes

Ms Barnes said that she entered the competition to show her support for mob.

"I did not expect to win anything! My poem is titled Ngadhuguyunganbul Murungidyal, Healing myself. I just wanted to encourage people to be proud of their healing journey. It was inspired by an old Uncle who once described nursing to me as healing Country by healing people," said Ms Barnes.

"Sometimes you just need a safe place to portray your feelings. There is a special kind of beauty about poetry it is not just the words but how they are structured on the page and how you say them," said Ms Barnes.

Mitch Hibbens, Associate Lecturer (Programs) at Dilun Duwa Centre for Indigenous Business Leadership, states "Through the Naomi Williams Wiradjuri Poetry Prize, Nay's legacy and gift to her communities lives on. Nay was a strong, proud Wiradjuri woman who loved to write poetry about the river, her family and all the elements of love that she treasured."

"I encourage Wiradjuri poets far and wide to submit an entry and be part of a collective storytelling, showcasing the diversity and depth of Wiradjuri poetic talent," said Mr Hibbens.

This poetry prize aims to support other Wiradjuri writers and to create more poetry about life in Wiradjuri country. There are categories for kids, youth, and adults. To find out more about the Naomi Williams Poetry Prize please follow <https://justice.org.au/naomi-williams-poetry-prize-2021/>

UNLOCKING CAREERS IN SPORTS

**THURSDAY 2ND DECEMBER, 2021
9:30AM – 1:30PM**

A virtual event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students to explore the wide variety of careers available in the sports industry

Do you love sport and would you like to work in the sport industry? Not sure what jobs you can do or how to start?

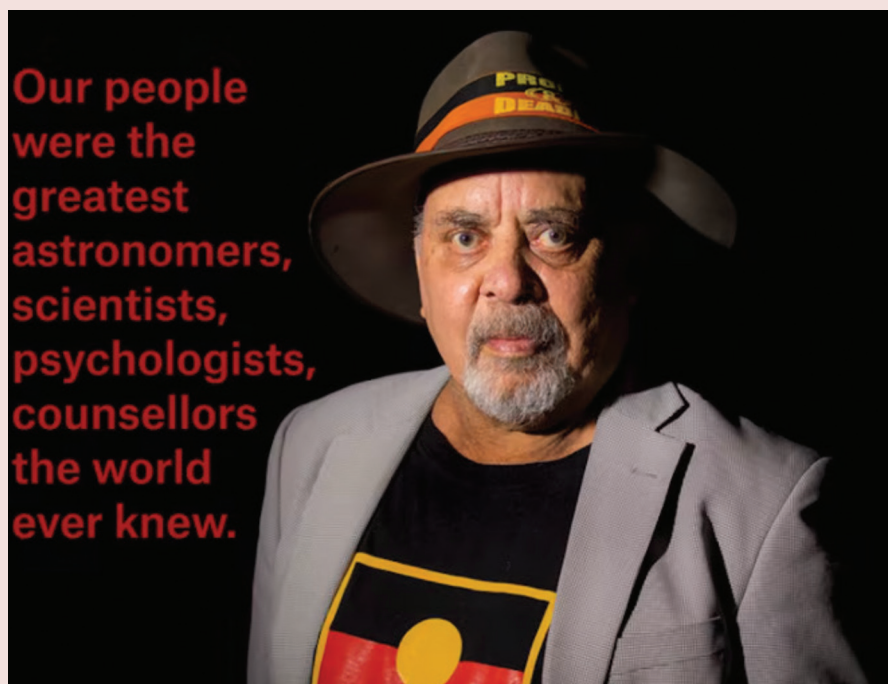
Join us for this online event where Western Sydney University staff, students and industry professionals will take you through all the different paths to a career in sports!

Receive a Free Western Sports Pack for Participating

REGISTER NOW
westernsydney.edu.au/ucis2021

Working in collaboration with





Uncle Greg Simms. Photography: Storybox Co.

Seven deadly questions: Uncle Greg of Western's Elders Advisory Committee

Please tell us about yourself.

My name is Greg Simms (most people know me as Uncle Greg). I have lived in Western Sydney since 1984. I suppose you could call me an activist for reconciliation, I am an artist and traditional woodcarver, a storyteller and an educator of Aboriginal culture to the community of Greater Western Sydney.

Who is your mob, and where are you from?

My Mob is Gadigal in Sydney; we are the Whale people of the Darug nation, on my Mum's side we are the Yuin, Beach Pluver People on the South Coast. We also have links to the Gundungurra, Water Dragon and Lizard people of the Blue Mountains.

I grew up in La Perouse, on the Aboriginal reserve on the eastern shores of Botany Bay, I was the youngest of a big family, my parents, brother and sisters, Uncle and Aunts, Grandfather and lots of cousins.

What does it mean to be an Elder?

To be an Elder you have to do lots of work in the community, I visit schools and organisations to teach people about our culture and mentor them to become better people. No matter how educated you are, if you learn a little bit about us, then you will benefit from that. Teaching is never going to become a one-way street; it always been two ways.

Who inspires you?

The old people, my Dad and Uncles, they have taught us, they talk about a lot of things, people, animals and conservation and how they connect with us, they teach us how to respect. If you've got no respect, then nothing is good for you. If you learn to respect, then you are a good ambassador.

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

I am one of the Elders on The Western Sydney University Advisory Committee along with seven other Elders. The beauty of it is we all come from different tribal backgrounds, different tribal language areas. We are consulted when it comes to strategies and projects that are put in place for our students and staff.

We make sure our students are looked after, that there is no racism, we don't want any racism at the university. Because black or white, we all belong to the one culture. We don't just see people from our circle, you are part of us too you know, part of our heritage and culture, we're all one mob.

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

I hope we will be a lot stronger; I hope to continue my work in the community to share our culture and history to bring people together as one.

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 proud of who you are and where you come from, tell your stories, love your mob and most of all respect everybody for who they are.

Alumni

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY'S INDIGENOUS ALUMNI

Seven deadly questions: Introducing Phillip Nixon

Who are you?

My name is Phillip Nixon, I am a proud Gadigal man from the Eora nation. I have lived on Darug land my whole life.

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

Recently I have been involved in the NSW Uluru Statement Youth Dialogue. This network aims to inform Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about the reasons underpinning the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the crucial role that a constitutionally enshrined Voice to parliament will have in addressing issues facing our Indigenous communities across Australia. Pre-COVID-19 I was also involved in AIME as a mentor. At the end of 2019 I was involved in CareerTrackers and completed an internship at Dentons. Following from this, at the start of 2020 I completed a 3-week Indigenous Clerkship with the NSW Bar Association which led to my current employment.

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

I currently work as a Deputy Associate to a Judge of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. In this role I am able to witness the entirety of the legal process and engage critically with pressing legal issues in a variety of areas, particularly Intellectual Property. I love that I have the opportunity to learn and develop skills which I will be able to use to help my community.



Phillip Nixon

What degree did you study at Western Sydney University?

I studied a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws.

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

My experience at Western has given me the ability to work with people from diverse cultures and who hold different beliefs and opinions. This is important as my current role, as well as any future roles I have will require me to be able to communicate effectively with people of all backgrounds. Badanami provided tremendous support throughout my studies, and encouraged me to take any opportunity that was available. I was incredibly fortunate to receive the Gilbert & Tobin Indigenous Law Scholarship. This provided me with the opportunity to focus on my studies and removed some of the financial burden that comes with studying.

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

My parents are my role models. Cliché I know, but my parents have always worked so hard to give me and my brothers everything we could need or want. They have both been so supportive of me at uni and are incredibly hard working, generous and kind. I hope that I can live up to the example that they have given me.

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

1. Apply for every opportunity and go for it. It doesn't matter if you think you will or won't get whatever it is you apply for! The worst that can happen is that you don't get to do something. The best that can happen is that you get an amazing experience and meet amazing people. Just go for it.
2. Network. Getting to know people can lead to amazing opportunities, and you never know when it may come in handy, or when you may run into someone you know.
3. Get involved in the community. You'll get so much fulfilment from it, and you will get to meet amazing people you otherwise would not have had the opportunity to meet.
4. Do what's best for you. If and when an opportunity comes your way, don't feel as if you can't take it because the timing isn't right, or you have a sense of loyalty to someone/something else. Loyalty is great, but not when it stands in the way of your growth. So do what is best for you!
5. Be proud of your heritage.



Congratulations to our Indigenous graduates

Western Sydney University is committed to empowering and supporting Indigenous students' study and graduate from degrees of their choice. Currently, Western Sydney University has over 1,401 Indigenous alumni who have graduated from a variety of degrees across the University's range of Schools.

Graduation is an incredibly important milestone as it celebrates all the hard work and time put into achieving a degree, marking the formal end of tertiary study and the beginning of a new career.

Our staff are looking forward to celebrating your graduation with you and your closest.

In December 2021, 35 Indigenous students graduated including 1 Graduate Certificate, 4 Diplomas, 1 Graduate Diploma, 1 Undergraduate Certificate, 24 Bachelor Degrees, and 4 Master Degrees. Congratulations to the following students, we are so proud of each of you and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavours.

Anika Catherine Edwards - Master of Teaching (Primary)

Anthony Clark - Bachelor of Science

Ashley Barter - Diploma in Health Science

Benjamin Lewis - Bachelor of Social Science

Cameron Robert James Bartlett - Bachelor of Psychological Studies (Honours)

Cheyane Hancock - Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedicine)

Clarinda Leanne Martin - Master of Nursing

Dana Williams - Bachelor of Nursing

Daphne Kay Elizabeth Butler - Bachelor of Social Work

Edward Turner - Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology

Jaime Howard - Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology)

Jasmine Cheri Kubecka - Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedicine)

Jazmine Paige Glover - Bachelor of Design (Visual Communication)

Jemma Maree Farley - Bachelor of Arts (Pathway to Teaching Primary)

Jessie James John Gentle Aslett - Diploma in Engineering

Kacey Ellen Witt - Bachelor of Social Science

Kacie Jay Wilson - Bachelor of Natural Science (Animal Science)

Kathleen Dawn Brown - Bachelor of Social Work

Katrina Maree Bunyan - Bachelor of Nursing

Kayla Victoria Sale - Bachelor of Podiatric Medicine

Kayla Emily Towle - Bachelor of Educational Studies (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education)

Lauren Dahl - Master of Teaching (Secondary)

Matilda Rose Harry - Master of Teaching (Primary)

Naomi-Jane Christina Monfrooy - Undergraduate Certificate in Counselling and Mental Health

Natasha Heal - Diploma in Science (exit only)

Nathan Spencer - Bachelor of Arts (Pathway to Teaching Secondary)

Paul Thomas Joseph Pearson - Graduate Diploma in Mental Health Nursing

Ryan John Lowes - Bachelor of Engineering

Sarah Megan Hatton - Bachelor of Nursing

Scott Bradbery - Diploma in Communication (exit only)

Stevie-Lee Sutherland - Bachelor of Education (Primary) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Tarni Jane Bene - Bachelor of Education (Primary) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education

Tayla Maree Castles - Bachelor of Social Science

Tiana Rodwell - Bachelor of Business

Wayne Peter Forbes - Graduate Certificate in Education (STEM)

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 this year.

Corrinne T. Sullivan. (2021). 'People Pay Me for Sex': Contemporary Lived Experiences of Indigenous Australian Sex Workers. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*. DOI: 10.1080/07256868.2022.1997956

Rhonda Povey, **Michelle Trudgett, Susan Page, & Stacey Kim Coates.** (2021). On the Front Foot: Indigenous Leadership in New Zealand Higher Education. *Higher Education Research & Development*. DOI:10.1080/07294360.2021.1969542.

Michelle Lee Locke, Michelle Trudgett, & Susan Page. (2021). Indigenous early career researchers: Creating pearls in the academy. *The Australian Educational Researcher*. DOI:10.1007/s13384-021-00485-1

Paul Saunders, & Auntie Kerrie Doyle. (2021). Gambling Interventions in Indigenous Communities, from Theory to Practice: A Rapid Qualitative Review of the Literature. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, 1-36.



Yindamarra Van – Western Sydney University would like to congratulate Dr Scott Avery, Senior Lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, and his community partner First People Disability Network on decking out their community van with the cover from Dr Avery's book 'Culture is Inclusion'.



Badanami team supports Western's Indigenous students' success

After a second round of lockdown and just under four months of working remotely, it's extremely exciting to confirm that the Badanami Centres for Indigenous Education opened their doors on Monday 25 October 2021. It is rewarding for Badanami staff to be back on campus just in time to support our students for the business end of semester. Over the lockdown period Badanami reverted to their online support model, with staff logging just over 1500 personalised and individual interactions with students, 46% of these interactions were phone conversations. Badanami staff kept in touch with students via phone calls, personalised emails and weekly zoom sessions which gave students the best chance to get the support they needed through a tough period. Students were also sent a care package. These packages were very popular, and served as another reminder of that we were thinking of our Indigenous students' throughout the second wave of the pandemic.



WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU