

# Centre for Aboriginal Studies

Of Place and People

2018

Open for business: New enabling  
course

Sports stars shine at Indigenous  
University Games

Bright futures: Health  
professionals in training







Anita Lee-Hong, Trevor Satour, Professor Marion Kickett, Vice-Chancellor Deborah Terry, Professor Pat Dudgeon, Darryl Kickett, Professor Simon Forrest.

## CAS CELEBRATES A HISTORY OF ACHIEVEMENT

In 2017, Curtin celebrated [50 Years of Innovation](#). As part of these celebrations, the centre hosted a special event to highlight the achievements of the centre since its establishment in 1983.

We recognised a 'history of achievement' with the congregation of former staff and students at a special celebration event. It was great to see past graduates and six of the seven heads of centre, whose leadership have guided the centre to where it is today, share their memories of their time at the centre.

It was an opportunity to rekindle friendships with alumni and colleagues who have made extraordinary contributions to their chosen professions and communities.

The event included a Welcome to Country by Kim Collard, CEO of Kulbardi, and panel discussion with former and current Heads of the centre.

Attendees stayed well into the evening to mingle and enjoy conversations of past memories.



# FROM THE DIRECTOR



MARION KICKETT

DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL STUDIES

As we move into the season of Birak (Summer), I reflect upon the accomplishments of the centre over the last 12 months.

A terrific achievement to start the year, was the success of the Indigenous Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences (IPMHS) Enabling course, with the first ever 13 graduates starting their studies in health, including three in medicine. The second cohort of students are on-track to start their undergraduate studies in 2019.

The success of the course was acknowledged, in particular, when Dr Rachna Aggarwal, course coordinator for the IPMHS course, was recognised at [Curtin's Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching](#). Rachna received this award for her outstanding contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' learning through culturally appropriate learning and teaching experiences and exceptional pastoral care.

In April, the centre launched its first ever Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) focused on [Noongar language and culture](#). The six-week course allows students to develop an awareness and appreciation of culture by being introduced to some conversational Noongar words and phrases. A special launch event was hosted at the centre, which acknowledged the contributions of a number of language facilitators, and included a special performance by the Madjtil Moorna Choir.

We were delighted to have the Hon. Linda Burney MP deliver this year's [Rob Riley Memorial Lecture](#). Linda spoke of truth-telling, justice and connection. In particular - why experiences from previous policies be recognised at an intergenerational level, and how the 'six-degrees of separation' make us share a common humanity and story.

The theme of NAIDOC Week 2018 was 'Because of Her, We Can!'. It was a great opportunity to celebrate the invaluable contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made - and continue to make - to our communities, our families, our rich history and to our nation. During the week, Noongar Radio 100.9FM hosted a live broadcast from the centre, interviewing a number of Indigenous women who shared their stories about community, leadership and resilience.

Increasing the centre's regional offerings, the centre has started teaching the Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course at Curtin's [Kalgoorlie](#) campus. Students are able to study in intensive study blocks throughout the semester, before enrolling in their first year at Curtin, in an undergraduate course. The centre is also hoping to increase regional course offerings in places such as Geraldton in future.

The centre's courses were showcased at Curtin's Festival of Learning, where a number of staff presented about their teaching experience. A number of videos featuring [student stories](#) were also viewed, which highlighted the positive impact the centre is having in providing pathways to university for Indigenous Australian students.

Looking towards 2019, the centre is excited to be starting two enabling courses to equip students with skills to succeed at university. The [Indigenous Pre-Business](#) and Indigenous Pre-Science and Engineering Enabling Course.

We look forward to working with our students and colleagues over the coming year, and continuing to develop future Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders that will inspire and contribute to their communities.

**Professor Marion Kickett**

Director,

Centre for Aboriginal Studies





# OPEN FOR BUSINESS: New Curtin enabling course

BY YASMINE PHILLIPS

Curtin University is giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students the opportunity to start their business career with a new Indigenous Pre-Business Enabling Course, starting in 2019.

Run through Curtin's Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) in collaboration with the Faculty of Business and Law, the one-year course will welcome the first cohort of students in Semester One, 2019.

CAS Director Professor Marion Kickett said applications for the new enabling program are now open for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

"The [Indigenous Pre-Business Enabling Course](#) is designed to provide an alternative pathway for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander students into undergraduate courses within Curtin Business School," Professor Kickett said.

"This new course will offer students the confidence and abilities needed to negotiate critical business environments that affect everyone's lives, as well as providing key academic skills to help them pursue higher education.

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*"The course is unique as it has been developed and supported by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics, who are committed to and passionate about providing opportunities for Indigenous students to advance their future careers in business."*

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Curtin University Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Professor Jill Downie said the enabling course was an essential part of Curtin's strategy to provide alternative pathways to higher education for Indigenous Australians.

"Curtin is striving toward reconciliation in the wider community and education is a powerful tool in providing support for young Indigenous Australians to become the business leaders of tomorrow," Professor Downie said.

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*"Curtin offers a range of alternative pathways that are tailored to suit the specific needs of different types of students and this new enabling course is an important part of the University's plan to make further education a possibility for more students."*

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Workshops outlining more information about the new course will be available both online and in person at the centre.

The Indigenous Pre-Business Enabling Course is available to people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent and offers alternative pathways into Curtin Business School.

For further information visit [karda.curtin.edu.au](http://karda.curtin.edu.au)

# SPORTING STARS SHINE AT THE INDIGENOUS UNI GAMES

BY MARLEIGH ZADA

The Curtin University Indigenous Nationals Team, the Deadly Kardas, recently returned from the 2018 Indigenous Nationals in Sydney. Team Curtin were able to secure a best ever finish of eighth place out of 27 overall. Team captain Marleigh Zada shares some highlights from the experience.

“Curtin University’s Indigenous team, the Deadly Kardas have made Curtin history this year.

“The Kardas went to Sydney over the end of June to compete against twenty-seven other university teams from around Australia in four sports - basketball, netball, touch rugby and volleyball.

“The Kardas made finals for three out of the four sports, which left us in eighth place overall!

“Quarter finals were made for volleyball and basketball and we played in the Semi Final for netball. This meant that we placed in the top five universities in the country in three out of four sports!

“All finals were won by University of Melbourne, only by a small margin which is an amazing effort.

“The Kardas also had another slice of history made at Nationals - ITEC student Peter Stevens, who is just 18, won the Men’s Overall Netball MVP -having never played netball before!

“To say that I am proud of the Kardas, would be an absolute understatement!!

“Macquarie University hosted the 2018 games and were fortunate enough to be able to hold two of the sporting days at an amazing venue like Sydney Olympic Park.

“It was great to be able to take the students away to a place that most of them had never been.

“We had the chance to site-see on our last day in Sydney, going to the Opera House, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and out to Redfern.

“I feel as though the students thoroughly enjoyed themselves and took full advantage of the opportunity to network and make new friends who share similar interests, from all over the country.

“It truly is a special feeling at the Opening Ceremony, to be able to sit in a room with 450-500 other Indigenous leaders and athletes.

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*“It makes me feel hopeful for our future generations of children, knowing whose hands the future of this country is in.”*

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“The 2019 [Indigenous Nationals](#) has been presented to the University of Western Australia to host.”





# CURTIN'S CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL STUDIES IS BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO INDIGENOUS HIGHER EDUCATION

BY ZOE TAYLOR

Australian universities have achieved a 70 per cent growth in Indigenous enrolments in the past decade<sup>1</sup>, yet attrition rates remain high. Aaron Matthews is a Curtin researcher with the Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) who is examining ways to improve the tertiary experience for Indigenous students to ensure they have the best opportunities to succeed at university.



As a former Curtin student, Matthews has unique insight into the Indigenous uni student experience. An Aboriginal man from the Kija (East Kimberley) and Gurindji (Northern Territory) language groups, he graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Indigenous Community Management and Development (ICMD) with Honours in 2009.

Matthews now lectures in the ICMD program and is undertaking a Master of Education, investigating how tertiary enabling programs can be enhanced for future generations of Indigenous students.

"I've kind of gone full circle. I've had opportunities at CAS as both student and teacher, and that's been really interesting because it's enabled me to experience

education from both sides," says Matthews.

"I've now been able to step back from teaching so I can focus on my research and start creating new ways for Indigenous higher education."

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*"We all share a common goal of wanting to access education and use it to benefit our communities – that's why I'm here doing what I do."*

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Matthews says there have significant improvements in education delivery and access for Indigenous Australians, but there are still barriers that make it difficult for students to prioritise and fully engage with their studies.

"You might have a student who has aspirations to go to university, but they're weighed down by financial, social, cultural or family responsibilities, or are dealing with culture shock from moving away from home to the city," says Matthews.

"And they're probably dealing with a bit of guilt as well, because studying is quite an individual thing – you go off to pursue your own interests and it takes up a lot of your time and it can be difficult for families to understand."

CAS has implemented a number of initiatives to help students feel comfortable at Curtin and get the most from their studies. In addition to its bridging and enabling programs, some of the centre's courses are delivered in block units, enabling students to learn course content for two weeks at a time throughout the year. This helps them to balance study with their other commitments and is especially beneficial for students who live in regional or remote communities.

There is a mentor program for first-year students, as well as a Tutorial Assistance Scheme, which provides private tutoring to eligible students studying an undergraduate degree.

CAS also holds a number of events throughout the year to ensure students and staff have the chance to connect and share experiences.

"There are morning teas and community forums, as well as presentations from important members in the community," says Matthews.

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*"The CAS building itself is quite beautiful and gives people a sense of connection. It's also the people within it as well – the teachers are always willing to work with students."*

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Matthews says CAS is a strong example of a higher tertiary centre that is advancing Indigenous education, but he would like to see more collaboration between institutions, as it can generate a greater exchange of ideas and promote best practice.

"At the end of the day, we all want to reach the same goal. We need to communicate with and learn from one another to try and increase the number of Indigenous students who are ready to engage with tertiary education."

Matthews hopes that his master's research will help to innovate the delivery of Indigenous courses across all Australian universities. For example, he is looking at how technology can be better integrated into teaching and learning to align with how today's generation of students learn and engage.

He also envisions a future where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives are embedded in all university courses, rather than confined to individual programs.

In the meantime, the CAS alumnus encourages Indigenous Australians to "give uni a go!"

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*"Until you actually put your feet in and see what it's about, you won't know if uni is for you or not. There's so much about it that you won't experience until you're here, so it's just one of those things where you just have to give it a go!"*

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Aaron Matthews presenting with colleague Lynette Mallard at a CAS staff planning day.



# TRAVEL DIARIES: East Kimberley road trip

BY AARON MATTHEWS

A team of academics from the Centre for Aboriginal Studies recently travelled throughout the East Kimberley region to promote opportunities for study and support services available for Indigenous students at the centre. Aaron Matthews shares his experience below.

Lecturers Sam De Oliveira, Mike Sowerby, Lynette Mallard and Aaron Matthews travelled over 1200km over five days as part of a series of regional visits the centre delivers throughout the year.

“The first drive was an hour east from Kununurra to the township of Wyndham.

“In Wyndham, CAS staff met with the Deputy Head from Wyndham High School and Youth Engagement Officer from Wyndham Youth Aboriginal Corporation to talk about different pathways into higher education, and the complex issues facing Indigenous students in high school and also those already disengaged from education.

“This meeting gave me a sense of student participation at school, and the needs that might be addresses in terms of great education through the enabling programs for which the conversation as well as the promotion literature was well received.

“The deputy expressed a strong desire at the school to see students continue their education to complete year 12, and beyond, particularly in light of challenges Wyndham faces with significant changes to employment, with the centralising of services and industry to Kununurra.

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*“The enabling courses were viewed positively in helping keep students connected to their home Wyndham.”*

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“The second visit in Wyndham was to Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation to meet with Stanley Nangala, the current CEO.

“Of importance to Nangala was the Centre for Aboriginal Studies Indigenous Mental Health Principles and Practices (IMHPP) degree, which he saw as vital to supporting Aboriginal people.

“Ngnowar Aerwah Aboriginal Corporation is involved in a broad range of community services, including health.

“Stanley indicated early in our conversation that there were five staff members who he saw benefiting from the upcoming Indigenous Mental Health Principles and Practices course.

“Stanley spoke of this as an important part of capacity building and strategic development for the Ngnowar Aerwah Corporation.

“East Kimberley Job Pathways (EKJP), Joongari House and Balangarra Aboriginal Corporation were the two final organisations we visited that day, and what made an impression for us all is the importance of ‘field visits’.

“To hear the ‘on the ground’ stories of the challenges for potential students, when things we take for granted - like easy access to internet, tutor availability and printer access - highlight the cooperative needs between regional and remote organisations and communities, and the courses’ support services.



"Cooperation and regular communication is the key.

*"All three services are very unique in their service delivery, and highlighted the need for services to be made available to people from the grassroots level so they can be involved in creating positive social change."*

"The second day involved some serious kilometres in the Toyota Prado.

"This team travelled from Kununurra to a number of communities including Wuggubun Aboriginal Community, Doon Doon Station, Warmun Aboriginal Community and Halls Creek.

"It followed that these small more personal and 'informal' visits were the most effective way to 'recruit'.

"Doon Doon station along the Durack Rangers had a small number of potential students interested in studies, particularly the Indigenous Community Management and Development, Indigenous Community Health and Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course.

"Halls Creek gave Sam and Mike an opportunity to have a good yarn with Vince at the local radio station whom showed a great deal of personal interest in the IMHPP course and indicated a real want to promote the courses run through the media.

*"Again having a voice and a face to connect with in community is so important for ongoing engagement."*

"The final three days centred in Kununurra, delivering two community forums in the mornings at North Regional TAFE, followed by visits to community and health service organisations in the afternoons.

"At the community forums we had representatives from Ord Valley Aboriginal Health (OVAHS), Wunan, Warringarri Aboriginal Arts and Warringarri Aboriginal Corporation and visits were made to MG Corp, Kimberley Community Legal Service and Kununurra District High School.

"Most often people asked specific questions relevant to their life work, community situation, and the personal responses by members of the team seemed to encourage greater interest and potential to explore their options further.

"The overall impression for us has been the importance of face-to-face contact, and an ability in the moment to talk to the questions."

*Sam De Oliveira, Mike Sowerby and Aaron Matthews.*





# BRIGHT FUTURES: Health professionals in training

Dr Rachna Aggarwal says she feels lucky to watch the centre's aspiring health professionals grow, and that industry visits have given students insight into professional practice.

"We have been on a number of tours allowing students to expand their views on Indigenous culture and the role it plays in the health industry, but also look further into the pathways they can take post-enabling," Dr Aggarwal says.

"Visits we have been on include: Fremantle Port Authority, with whom we are developing a mentoring program to pair students with working professionals in the industry; York, on a cultural awareness tour, where we had locals and CAS staff guide us through the Indigenous history of the town; and a tour of Royal Perth Hospital, where students explored some of the areas they are considering going into once they graduate."

Marleigh Zada, the centre's Academic Engagement Officer for the Indigenous Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences Enabling Course, says not only are students excelling academically, but also in extra-curricular involvements.

Earlier this year, Curtin University's Deadly Kardas flew to Sydney to compete in the 2018 [Indigenous Nationals](#) (previously known as Indigenous University Games).

"Three of the Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences students were selected on the team and all performed exceptionally

well, with all receiving awards for their contribution on and off of the court," Miss Zada says.

In October students visited Adelaide to participate in a health camp, which Dr Aggarwal says was a great learning experience for students.

"Students visited two universities, the Royal Adelaide Hospital (RAH) and the Anangu Ngangkari Tjutaku Aboriginal Corporation (ANTAC) which is a corporation of traditional Aboriginal Healers from the APY Lands of Northern, South Australia," Dr Aggarwal says.

"Visiting these locations allowed students to see how traditional Aboriginal medicine is now being used on par with modern western medicines in major hospitals such as the RAH, and see why it is important to consider using such treatments more regularly."

With students now enrolled in their undergraduate courses for 2019, Dr Aggarwal says it is promising to see a range of interests including: nutrition, sport science, occupational therapy, nursing and medicine.

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*"We are very excited to watch this cohort of talented students grow into outstanding health professionals and look forward to seeing them enter their undergraduate courses in 2019."*

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*First day in the chemistry labs.*



*Mentoring boat trip at Fremantle Port.*



*Outside Royal Perth Hospital Emergency Department.*



*Inside Royal Perth Hospital Emergency Department.*



*Foundations of Professional Practice presentations.*

# GIVE TO CHANGE SPOTLIGHT: JADE'S STORY

## STAFF NEWS

The CAS Bridging the Gap Program supports Indigenous students undertaking the centre's Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course and the various activities associated with the program, including field trips, camps, life coaching, tutoring and scholarships.

The program is funded by Curtin's Give to Change program, through which Curtin staff can donate to help change the lives of Curtin students.

### Jade's story – Bridging the Gap

"I didn't find out that I was Indigenous until after my Grandmother passed away. We were told she had been adopted, but my family did some research into our history and found that my Grandmother had been part of the stolen generation.

"Everyone I met on the ITEC program had a story like my Grandmother's in their family. Being at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) reconnected me with my culture; I learnt so much, and shared stories with people who understood. It felt like coming home.

"I rebelled in school, and after high school ended up working lots of different jobs, including working as a roustabout in shearing sheds. I always regretted not pursuing my education. When I found out about the ITEC program it felt like the right time to give it another go.

"At CAS I was engaged, focused and passionate. There was a lot of support available, from the inspiring lecturers and teaching support staff and my peers. The course introduced me to a group of warm and friendly people – we were all on the journey together and believed in each other. It completely rebuilt my confidence, and I felt prepared for university emotionally as well as practically.

"I'm proud of how far I've come. I graduated the course with the highest CWA and have been accepted into an undergraduate degree at Curtin. Attending the ITEC graduation ceremony is one of my most memorable moments. I felt inspired by the graduates who were further on in their studies; seeing mature-aged students, like me, who had also been through ITEC and were now graduating with postgraduate qualifications showed me what I can achieve.

"I'm now studying Journalism. My Nanna always listened



to the news, and insisted that I listened too when I was younger, so I think I get this interest from her. My degree has introduced me to so many new interests and skills – I'm learning how to operate camera equipment and have been recording news bulletins.

"I love to write, and volunteer as a writer for Grok. I also volunteer in the ITEC mentoring program, so that I can help others by offering some of the support that helped me. In the future I'd like to produce my own documentaries, casting light on important issues and telling people's stories."

Students at CAS have the opportunity to participate in unique camps and excursions. Recent trips have involved outdoor activities such as canoeing, archery, orienteering and rock climbing. Students get to know each other while developing skills in team building, confidence and self awareness. Pictured right: photos from the enabling orientation camp 2018.







# GROUND BREAKING PROGRAM SUPPORTS ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

BY ARIANNE CHAVEZ

Imagine you are the first person in your family to attend university; the culture and structure of higher education a foreign landscape to navigate. This is often the case for the 75 to 100 Aboriginal students who are enrolled in health sciences courses in any given semester. While achieving entrance to university is no mean feat, the myriad demands of tertiary education can often prove challenging for Aboriginal students to manage and, compared to other domestic students, they are more than twice as likely to drop out of university in their first year.

It's a statistic Ms Cheryl Davis, the faculty's Director Indigenous Engagement, is determined to change. Ms Davis is the project lead on the faculty's innovative *Balang Djuripin* pilot project, a joint initiative of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the [Centre for Aboriginal Studies](#) (CAS) funded by a [Curtin Learning and Teaching Innovation grant](#). The *Balang Djuripin* project has adapted the successful [LGBTIQ+ Ally model](#) to develop a culturally safe learning environment for Aboriginal students and, by extension, aims to increase retention and graduation rates.

"Aboriginal students often work incredibly hard to gain entry to university, however they can struggle significantly when they begin their studies and they need well-considered support to ensure they continue on and complete their courses," Ms Davis said.

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*"Many of our students are not familiar with the culture of university. They often have diverse needs ranging from wanting to gain proof of Aboriginality, to financial support for textbooks, to applying for scholarships and accessing academic support and tutoring. Of course, some of our students need far less support and are successfully navigating around campus and succeeding academically, however many aspects of higher education can make our students feel extremely anxious and disempowered."*

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Some of the project administrators and participants.





# BALANG DJURAPIN

Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student looking for support or just a yarn?

*Balang Djuripin* translates to 'they/them are happy'. The project aims to develop a visible network of *Koordas* (allies) in the Faculty of Health Sciences to support staff and actively provide secure learning environments for Aboriginal students, as well as develop capacity to embed Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum.

## Ways of Working

Curtin has long been recognised as a leader in Reconciliation. It was the first University to implement an Aboriginal Employment Strategy, issue a Statement of Reconciliation and [adopt a Reconciliation Action Plan](#). The *Balang Djuripin* pilot program builds on the strong foundations laid by Curtin's [Indigenous Cross-Cultural Capability Framework](#), launched in May 2016, in expanding Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives amongst 100s of staff and students.

Approximately 27 staff, representing most schools in the faculty, participated in the *Balang Djuripin* pilot, which consisted of three workshops: *Wogga Warniny* (Blanket Exercise), *On Country* (Mogumber Mission and Rabbit Proof Fence) and *Support Students through to Graduation*. The second part of the pilot is a research project, including data collection, reflection activities and interviews, which will be completed later this year.

The *Wogga Warniny* workshop provided staff with information about Aboriginal history and people, and the importance of land and culture. Staff learnt how, upon invasion, Aboriginal people were rounded up and forced off their traditional lands.

In the *On Country* workshop, an Elder took staff to visit the site of [Mogumber Mission](#), where children were taken from their parents, now known as the [Stolen Generations](#). Staff visited the site of a memorial plaque for the children who passed away whilst institutionalised, never returning

to their family and country.

Staff gained further knowledge about Aboriginal history, including the [Aborigines Act 1905](#), which [governed the lives of all Aboriginal people in Western Australia for nearly 60 years](#), and provided a legal framework whereby Aboriginal children – the Stolen Generations – could be forcibly removed from their families and institutionalised, creating a legacy of generational trauma and loss that is still felt today. Under the Act, Aboriginal people were also required to gain permission to marry and permission to gain employment.

The third workshop, *Providing Cultural and Academic Support to Improve Indigenous Graduate Outcomes*, explored the role and responsibilities of staff, and how to work with the Indigenous Engagement team to better support students, including protocols for approaching Indigenous students and strategies for best practice.

Ms Davis said staff indicated the workshops prompted them to reflect on their relationships with Aboriginal students.

"Staff expressed the desire for a more comprehensive understanding of Aboriginal ways of working, so they can better support their students," Ms Davis said.

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*"Staff were very engaged with the content delivered in all three workshops, and many reflected on how they could use their learnings to engage more effectively with Aboriginal students."*

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## A network of Koordas

Earlier this year, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Terry, and the faculty's Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Archie Clements, and Director Indigenous Engagement, Ms Cheryl Davis, gathered with colleagues and project participants to celebrate the successful completion of part one of the pilot.

In her opening address, the Vice-Chancellor congratulated the project team and noted the importance of the *Balang Djuripin* pilot.

"The project highlights the essential role non-Indigenous staff have in creating welcoming and culturally secure learning environments for Aboriginal students," the Vice-Chancellor said.

"Without the provision of culturally secure learning spaces it is unlikely Curtin will see significant improvements in the numbers of Indigenous students enrolling in, and graduating from, their course of choice.

"I look forward to hearing more about both the outcomes of the associated research project and the Koorda network and congratulate the project team, the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Centre for Aboriginal Studies.

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*"If the Koordas prove to be as successful as the LGBTIQ+ Allies we will hopefully see a University-wide Koorda network with potential for a national network."*

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A University-wide network of Koordas is something Ms Davis is passionate about developing.

Aboriginal students want to have relationships with staff, and they want to feel guided and supported," Ms Davis said.

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*"Our aim is to continue to build our network of Koordas in the faculty, and ultimately the University, and offer ongoing training and professional development opportunities. Koordas play an incredibly important role in the success of our Aboriginal students, and they have the opportunity to change lives."*

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The *Balang Djuripin* project team includes: Ms Cheryl Davis, Director, Indigenous Engagement, Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor Marion Kickett, Director, CAS, Professor Simon Forrest, Elder in Residence, Dr Robin Barrington, Learning Designer, Indigenous Curriculum & Pedagogy, CLT, Ms Kristy Indich, Indigenous Engagement Officer, Faculty of Health Sciences, Bev Councillor, Project Research Assistant, CAS and Dr Helen Flavell, Coordinator, Scholarship of Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Health Sciences.



The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Deborah Terry, Director Indigenous Engagement, Ms Cheryl Davis, Director Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Professor Marion Kickett, and the faculty's Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Archie Clements.



Ms Bev Councillor, Project Research Assistant, CAS.



Aboriginal students will be supported by a network of Koordas.



Curtin has long been recognised as a leader in Reconciliation.



# RESEARCH OUTPUTS:

## PhD Student Projects



*Michelle Webb*

**Project:** If you're Kaarty and you know it, clap your hands

The aim of this research is to explore the ways in which young Indigenous Australians aged between 18 – 25 years define and understand mental health.

The research process aims to provide an opportunity for young Indigenous adults with a culturally secure and safe space to explore some of their ideas, definitions and approaches to mental health and overall wellbeing.

The project will articulate and highlight the areas of strength and resilience that young Indigenous people self-identify with. The study may potentially facilitate the development of more culturally appropriate and alternative ways of looking at mental health in an Indigenous youth focused context.

By identifying existing strengths within families and individuals, the project will explore the mechanisms and skills and empowerment strategies used to 'stay mentally well' despite internal and external pressures and attitudes.

**Project:** Indigenous Leadership 'Having Influence in Two Worlds'

The proposed research aims to discover the construct of Australian Aboriginal Leadership, and the process of achieving leadership in the business/community arena that usually is conducted in a non-Aboriginal cultural construct.

Knowledge of leadership in a Western construct is fundamentally objective and explicit, that can be learned through participation a variety of study programs such as a Masters of Leadership. Aboriginal culture has a long oral tradition where knowledge and leadership is predominantly earned and owned by community leaders.

For many Aboriginal Australians their knowledge is closely guarded. In addition, I contend that the language of leadership has not been linguistically analysed by many Aboriginal people and is therefore a potential barrier to leadership.

A key objective of my research is to explicate and make clear these two key areas of knowledge and enable this knowledge to become more accessible to the next wave of Aboriginal leaders.



*Graeme Dimer*

# INDIGENOUS CULTURES AND HEALTH BEHAVIOURS

Indigenous Cultures and Health Behaviours (ICHB) is a core first year unit for all health sciences students at Curtin. This unit is managed by the Centre for Aboriginal Studies (CAS) and the School of Public Health in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Lecturer, Michelle Webb shares what it's like trying to capture the richness of Indigenous Australian culture and history in class.

## Tell us a bit about the unit.

The unit explores Indigenous people's experiences in Australia and internationally as part of a broader context of understanding similarities and differences within and between global Indigenous populations.

Then, with a more national and local focus, the impact of specific policies, events and practices on Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and health outcomes are examined in detail.

Understanding the significance, diversity and experiences of some Indigenous populations - both globally and with a particular focus nationally upon Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures - provides opportunities for an enriched learning experience and enhanced cultural knowledge.

In addition, students learn about concepts such as cultural communication, cultural awareness, cultural safety and cultural security and why they are significant to working within diverse cultural contexts, in particular with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## What developments have there been over the past year?

There have been several bits of tweaking to the unit content and this will continue. Keeping the content relevant and up to date is extremely important, and we are always looking

at ways to improve both the content and teaching.

The large number of students means that this unit is staffed by tutors from CAS and from across the Faculty of Health Sciences.

We are really working hard on developing a core group of tutors who can then work with new tutors and build their capacity, knowledge and confidence in the intercultural and interprofessional space.

## What support has contributed to the success of the unit?

The INDH1006 team is awesome, and every week I fully appreciate how important a good team is.

My colleagues at CAS have been amazing with their ongoing support, advice and willingness to help out when needed. Pam McCrorie - who has moved on from CAS was amazing in teaching, and her advice and input is still proving valuable these past few semesters.

Tutors from areas across the Faculty of Health Sciences are also a very important part of keeping both the enthusiasm and momentum of the unit going.

Continued input and involvement for tutors really helps to maintain the cultural and academic integrity of the unit. Building relationships with other areas is also core part of developing the intercultural skills of staff.

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*"Students learn about some of the aspects of the oldest living culture in the world and the concepts of continuity and change, as well as the impacts of policies on health, and programs that improve health outcomes. Every workshop is an adventure!"*

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## What have been a few highlights in teaching this unit?

Getting through the last few semesters of teaching was a huge accomplishment. We had over 2000 students and were teaching with a new curriculum and a new pedagogical approach. The whole team of about 30 academics and support staff were amazing. The introduction of the unit and the new teaching approach were both the biggest challenges and highlights.

## What are you looking forward to in this unit for next semester?

A new mob of students, tutors and experiences - not the marking!





# HISTORY PROJECT UPDATE

The CAS History Project made a great deal of progress in the last year, achieving a number of milestones.

It is revealing the ways in which Curtin University (formerly WAIT) provided a highly supportive environment in which the Centre for Aboriginal Studies became one of the foremost Indigenous tertiary education units in Australia.

Lead author and research, Dr Ernie Stringer, shares an update on the achievements of the projects so far.

Working closely with the Aboriginal Editorial Board and CAS staff, the 'History of Achievement' book is nearing completion. A book launch event is expected in 2019.

## Project milestones:

- Collection of a large body of data, including: approximately 90 interviews of current and previous staff and students; and past CAS and Curtin articles, media reports, published materials, photographs, videos and promotional materials.
- A significant body of written material that will be incorporated into the books that comprise the intended outputs of the project.
- Completion of a five minute video segment of the initial years of the CAS that broadcasted in the *Noongar Dandjoo* series.
- Two radio broadcast about the history of the centre on Curtin Radio.
- A celebration of "A History of Achievement" event as part of the Curtin 50 Years of Innovation celebrations.



## CAS RECIPES - PUMPKIN SOUP

Besides being a keen photographer, CAS lecturer Mike Sowerby is also well-known at the centre for his cooking skills. Every morning tea, staff are always eager to see what Mike will plate up, in particular, his famous smoked salmon. Enjoy a page from his recipe book below.

One medium butternut pumpkin.  
One medium potato.  
½ a medium sweet potato.  
½-1 medium onion.  
1 clove of garlic.  
3 sprigs of fresh rosemary.

1. Chop onion finely, sauté in moderate amount of good olive oil. Heat, salt and pepper to taste.
2. Add crushed garlic ½ way through sauté and chopped rosemary.
3. Add ¼ teaspoon of curry powder.
4. Add chopped potato, sweet potato, and butternut.
5. Stir in to onion mix. Lightly fry for few minutes.
6. I use 'vegeta' vegetable stock (or chicken stock), as per instructions the on container or any other good vegetable stock like a home made one. Cover the vegetables with stock and simmer til soft.
7. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon, and nutmeg and ½ -1 small carton of cream.
8. Give it a good blend in blender or with bar mix.. Season to taste.
9. Sprinkle a light amount cinnamon on top when serving, or garnish with parsley, nice with crusty bread.
10. A nice variation is to use a Thai stock made with vegetable/chicken stock lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, and lemon juice, or good commercial Thai stock. Garnish with coriander.

# MEET OUR STAFF



*Bidy (Bernadine) Brennan*

Bidy initially joined the centre to work with a small team to develop the Indigenous Pre-Law and Business course. This has expanded into lecturing in the Indigenous Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences Course and the Indigenous Community Management and Development course.

Her background is law and education, having worked as a lawyer and a school teacher previously. Over the last decade she has practiced criminal law at the Aboriginal Legal Service at Perth and Kalgoorlie. She then worked uniquely with Aboriginal women at the Djinda Services (Perth Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Service) where she practiced family law, including care and protection matters in the Children's Court and Family Violence in the Magistrate's Court.



*Max Jackson*

Max is a Whadjuk/Ballardong Nyungar man who grew up on the Aboriginal Reserve in Beverley. This provided some hard times but also provided him with a strong cultural environment.

He currently lectures at CAS across the Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course, Indigenous Pre-Business Course, On-Country units, as well as coordinating sections of the Ways of Working (WOW) cultural awareness program at Curtin.

He enjoys his role with helping the capacity-building of the Indigenous community by helping staff and students develop self and cross-cultural knowledge.



*Shannon Johnston*

Shannon is a Learning Engagement Developer at CAS. She works with staff to engage with effective teaching, learning and assessment design and practices, particularly around the use of learning technologies.

She enjoys working within a community with such a strong vision for enabling Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to learn and be successful in themselves and as leaders.

She is a third generation Western Australian, born in Derby, raised mostly in Perth but also in Esperance and Bunbury. Her great grandparents were English, Scottish and Irish. Shannon is also influenced by a lived heritage of her other language, culture, and adopted family in Indonesia.



## CAS GRADUATION CEREMONY

**When:** Wednesday 27 February 2019  
4.30pm - 6.00pm  
Refreshments and photos from 4.00pm.

**Where:** Centre for Aboriginal Studies Foyer  
Building 211, Level 1  
Curtin University

**Who:** CAS graduates

The Centre for Aboriginal Studies graduation event is an opportunity for graduates to celebrate their achievements with fellow peers, staff and family members.

The ceremony will include award presentations and an address from a guest speaker. Graduates and guests will have an opportunity to have professional photos taken.

Awards presented include: Director's Resilience, Excellence and Academic Excellence.

RSVP to [CAS.Events@curtin.edu.au](mailto:CAS.Events@curtin.edu.au)



## KAADITJIN DAY - SEMESTER 1

**When:** Wednesday 27 March 2019  
9.30am - 3.30pm  
Morning tea and lunch provided.

**Where:** Centre for Aboriginal Studies Foyer  
Building 211, Level 1  
Curtin University

**Who:** Year 10, 11 and 12 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students

Students and school groups are invited to CAS Kaaditjin (Knowledge) Day. A day to experience higher education and explore employment opportunities upon graduation.

Your day will include faculty tours, hands-on activities and meet-and-greets with Curtin staff and students.

Limited places. Register by 28 February 2019.

Register to [Indigenous.Support@curtin.edu.au](mailto:Indigenous.Support@curtin.edu.au)







*Indigenous Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences Enabling Course graduates at the CAS Pre-Graduation Ceremony.*



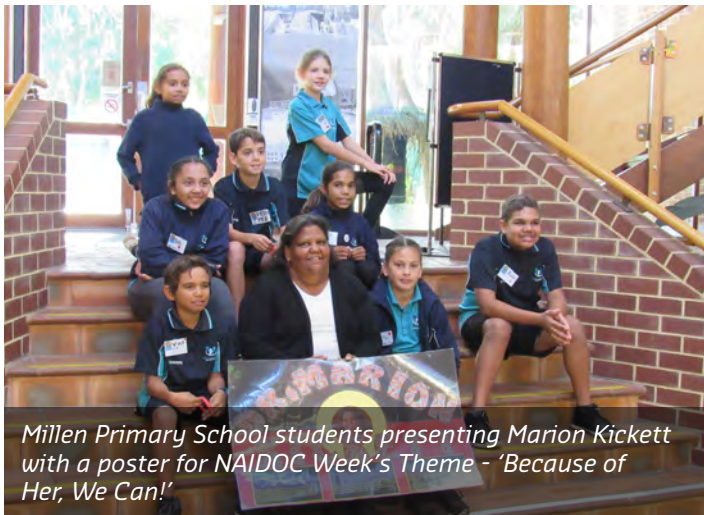
*Children learn the meaning of symbols, and how to paint an art mural during NAIDOC Week.*



*Indigenous Tertiary Enabling Course graduates at the CAS Pre-Graduation Ceremony.*



*Whadjuk Yorgas dance group at Djeran during National Reconciliation Week.*



*Millen Primary School students presenting Marion Kickett with a poster for NAIDOC Week's Theme - 'Because of Her, We Can!'*



*Madjitil Moorna Choir at Noongar Language and Culture MOOC Launch Event.*



*Indigenous Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences students on an excursion to Fremantle Port.*





*Curtin staff stand around a sand mural created by artist Roni Forrest during NAIDOC Week.*



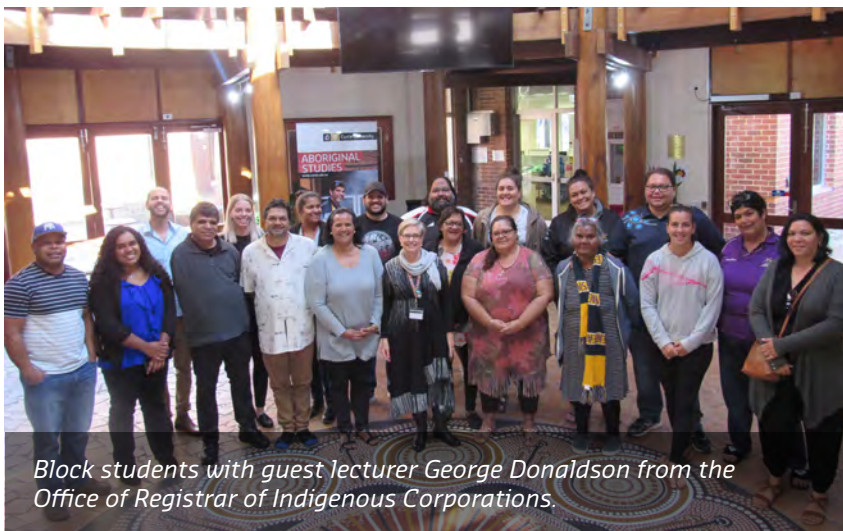
*Tony Hanson, Indigenous Co-Chair, Bringing Them Home WA with Marion Kickett, Director CAS and Simon Forrest, Elder-in-Residence.*



*Indigenous Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences students in Adelaide.*



*Hon. Linda Burney MP presents the 2018 Rob Riley Memorial Lecture.*



*Block students with guest lecturer George Donaldson from the Office of Registrar of Indigenous Corporations.*



*Doreen Pensio and Richard Mellick performing at the 2018 Rob Riley Memorial Lecture.*



*Robyn Collard delivers a Welcome to Country at the 2018 Rob Riley Memorial Lecture.*



*Indigenous Pre-Medicine and Health Sciences students on a cultural immersion trip to York.*





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