



Vice-Chancellor Professor Kerry Cox overseeing the lighting of a balga tree by Sasha Morgunovskaya and Jason Barrow at farewell event on the Joondalup Campus

Vice-Chancellor retires

The longest serving Vice-Chancellor in Australia, ECU's Professor Kerry Cox, was farewelled by students, staff and members of the ECU community at celebrations across each campus in early September 2014. Professor Cox retires after more than eight years in the top job at ECU.

Prior to commencing in March 2006, he had been Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Ballarat for five years. Before that, he held senior roles at both the University of Ballarat and Flinders University.

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Welcome from the Head of Centre

Welcome to the Djilba edition of *Our Place*, the official newsletter of Kurongkurl Katitjin, Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research at Edith Cowan University.

This edition of *Our Place* is dedicated to our Vice-Chancellor Professor Kerry O. Cox, who will be stepping down from the top job after more than eight years here at ECU.

Kerry's support and personal commitment gave us permission to explore the possibilities for embedding Aboriginal knowledge and culture in so much of the work of ECU, to dream and generally to put our lofty ideas into practice.

This cultural embedding has proved to be a point of difference for ECU as well as for Kurongkurl Katitjin and we've learned and grown in that experience. In this space, I am proud – proud that we had the only Vice-Chancellor of any Australian university who has bothered to learn the local Aboriginal language and who uses it (the fifteenth dialect!) to such great effect.

On behalf of Kurongkurl Katitjin, we thank Kerry for his generosity – his teaching, his standards, his sense of humour, his hospitality and especially his generosity of spirit. It has been a privilege working with him and we wish Kerry all the best for the years ahead.

Happy reading!

Colleen W.

Professor Colleen Hayward AM
Head of Centre, Kurongkurl Katitjin;
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Equity & Indigenous)



About the Centre

ECU's Kurongkurl Katitjin has a vital role in assisting the University to meet its commitment to Indigenous peoples.



Our mission is to “provide excellence in teaching and learning and research in a culturally inclusive environment that values the diversity of Indigenous Australian history and cultural heritage”.

Consistent with this mission, the Centre provides support and academic pathways for Indigenous students and opportunities for non-Indigenous students to enhance their professional knowledge and cultural competence.

Vice-Chancellor retires

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ECU Chancellor Dr Hendy Cowan AO reflected on Professor Cox's appointment in 2006.

"Kerry accepted the position here as Vice-Chancellor because he thought he could make a contribution, and what a contribution it has been," Dr Cowan said.

"He has taken us to a point where we believe in ourselves. He has given us all ownership over the challenges we face."

Professor Cox paid tribute to those who supported him in the role.

"The success of our modern university has not been because of one person or one VC," he said.

"You do well as a university when you connect with your community."

During Professor Cox's tenure as Vice-Chancellor, ECU has recorded many significant achievements, including:

- Establishing and implementing a Reconciliation Action Plan,
- Learning and speaking Nyoongar language;
- Receiving five star ratings for six years in a row for teaching quality, generic skills and overall satisfaction in the Good Universities Guide;
- All three campuses becoming smoke-free on 1 January 2012;
- Being awarded the Business Higher Education Round Table (B-HERT) Ashley Goldsworthy Award for Sustained Collaboration between Business and Higher Education; and
- Being named in the Times Higher Education Top 100 Under 50 for 2012, a global list of the best universities under the age of 50.

Professor Steve Chapman has been announced as the next ECU Vice-Chancellor. He is due to commence in April 2015. Professor Arshad Omari has been appointed Acting Vice-Chancellor for the interim period.



ECU Chancellor Dr Hendy Cowan AO, Professor Colleen Hayward AM and Vice-Chancellor Professor Kerry Cox at farewell event on the Mount Lawley Campus.



ECU Staff Donna Ferreri and Tracey Lee Edwards with Vice-Chancellor Professor Kerry Cox



Vice-Chancellor Professor Kerry Cox with Guild President and Aboriginal student Azlan Martin at the farewell event on the Joondalup Campus

Nyoongar Season: About Djilba

Djilba season is the time to look for the yellow and cream flowers starting on mass.

After a warmer than usual Makuru (Jun/Jul), we have finally had some cooler weather late in the season. This along with the good rainfalls that have happened should mean that we're in for some amazing wildflower displays as we get two seasons shoved together.

From Makuru, we are finally seeing great displays of the Native Wisteria and the Cockies Tongues that usually would have started to go to seed by now with their blackened seed pods. As the weather continues to stay wet and warms a little more, we will also start to see the many wattles across the coastal plain burst into flower.

For those of you with a keen eye for detail, you can also expect to see the Western Australian floral emblem - the Red and Green Kangaroo Paw - in your travels, including on our Mount Lawley campus gardens adjacent to the Kurongkurl Katitjin building.



Jason with Native Wisteria in flower on campus

Also around the Kurongkurl Katitjin building, you will also be able to find the Native Hibiscus with its purple flowers on mass at the eastern end of the building. There are masses of everlastings throughout the northern garden beds at Mount Lawley and also the Joondalup Drive entry at the Joondalup campus that the Grounds crew planted back in Djeran (Apr/May) season.

The good rainfalls will be well received by the local fish species and this will trigger many of them to start their spawning cycles as mentioned last season. With the late run of the cold weather, the first hatchlings should be seen in August, where as last year we saw them in early in July with the very warm and dry winter we had.

Many other animals will also start to look after their new babies shortly, so wherever you find yourself, please take the time to watch and become aware of your surroundings. This will pay benefits not only for family groups trying to cross busy roads to get to the lake or from you or your kids being 'swooped' by protective Koolbardies (magpies).

For the avid bush walkers amongst us and even those just happy to get out around the various walking trails, it is also the time to seek out the many orchid species of the South West that have been waiting patiently for the rains to hydrate them before they burst quickly into their short lived lives.

Additionally while you're out and about, take the time to look a little more closely for the many different types of fungi that are also on display in their uniqueness, be it their colour, size, shape, smell or location.

These next two seasons are some of the best times to get out and amongst it, so enjoy all that is on offer.



Jason Barrow

Kurongkurl Katitjin Cultural Awareness Officer

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Wongi Nyoongar – Talking Nyoongar

In this edition of Wongi Nyoongar, we continue the theme of looking at various places and points of interest along the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) and take a closer look at Maaradangup, also known as Alfred Cove.

This small suburb takes its name from the sheltered cove that forms its northern boundary. The cove was named after Alfred Waylen, the original grantee of Swan Location 74 which took in most of the present day localities of Myaree and Alfred Cove.

Nyoongar phrase	Pronunciation	English translation
Kapi	Cup-ee	Water
Nona Boodja	Nonna Bood-jar	Mud
Boya	Boy-a	Rocks, stones
Ngoobar	Ny-oo-bar	Sand dune
Minung	Min-ung	South
Nootj	Nootch	Dead
Ngamar	Ny-am-ar	Waterhole

Nyoongar Story Time

Maaradangup – Alfred Cove

Maaradangup means dead/stagnant water. It is a part of the Derbal Yerrigan (Swan River) that is not flushed by tidal movement, like most of the water in that part of the river.

To Nyoongar people, this is where the female Waugal created the cove as she moved south, also creating a series of lakes.

North Lake Road basically follows her trail to the south past Bibra Lake and South Lake.



Dr Noel Nannup

ECU Cultural Ambassador and Kurongkurl Katitjin Elder-in-Residence

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Bound for Oxford

Indigenous graduate Tamara Murdock, who completed a Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) with First Class Honours has been awarded a scholarship to the University of Oxford.

Tamara is one of just three recipients of the national Charlie Perkins scholarship and will travel to the UK in October to undertake a Master of Science in Biodiversity, Conservation and Management.

Tamara was born and grew up in Geraldton, WA, and is a descendant of the Noongar and Yindjibarndi people. She is also of Scottish and Japanese descent.

She graduated from ECU in 2011 and her other key achievements include her placement on ECU's Dean's List for 2011, being inducted as a member of the Golden Key International Honour Society, and receiving the Yamatji Marlpa Corporation Values Award in 2013. She also participated in the Aurora Indigenous Scholars International Study Tour in 2013.

Tamara is currently employed as a Project Coordinator for the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation in Geraldton, a role that involves managing Indigenous Protected Area and Carbon Farming Initiative projects.



Her studies at ECU align with the work she is now doing and the support of the staff helped to prepare her for the path ahead.

"I will be eternally indebted to the people who took a chance on me and allowed me to pursue a line of research that sat outside the general scope of study in the School of Natural Sciences," she said.

Although Tamara modestly says she never expected to be in the position of attending Oxford later this year, she generously shared her five top study tips for other Indigenous students.

1. Make certain that you are truly passionate about your field of study. In some respect passion breeds commitment. I've been lucky, I knew from a very young age that I was going to work in the field of environmental science.
2. Develop a thick skin, remember who you are and those who have come before you.
3. Have the willingness to try and understand other perspectives before forming an opinion, this takes time.
4. Don't focus too much on getting the highest mark in the class. You're there to learn, so learn and don't be ashamed to ask for help.
5. When everything else falls away, you got a bad mark on an essay or you're missing your family (which happens a lot), remember why you chose to go to university in the first place, it's well worth it in the end.

Through post-graduate study, Tamara would like to develop a broader perspective and understanding of land management and the cultural, social, economic and political environments within which policy and management decisions are made.

The scholarship program was established in 2009 in the memory of Dr Charlie Perkins AO, one of the first Indigenous Australians to graduate from university.

2014 Rock Solid Foundations Travel Award

The Rock Solid Foundations Travel Award is designed to provide ECU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates with assistance towards the costs of travelling to Perth, to attend Alumni events held by the University.

The aim of the travel award is to re-connect with and increase engagement of ECU's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates, who are based in regional WA and/or interstate.

The travel award is open to any Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander graduates of Edith Cowan University or its predecessors* between the years of 1951 and 2014, who resides outside of the metropolitan area of Perth. Graduates are defined as completing a teacher qualification, diploma or higher.

In 2014, Kurongkurl Katitjin is offering five travel awards, up to the value of \$1000 each to attend the Rock Solid Foundations event on Friday, 28 November 2014.

Applications are to be received by Friday 21 November 2014. No late applications will be accepted. Completed applications forms can be faxed to (61 8) 9370 6055 or scanned and emailed back to rocksolid@ecu.edu.au

If you, or someone you know, graduated from Edith Cowan University or its predecessors and meet the criteria, we would love to hear from you.

Kurongkurl Katitjin set to host its fourth Alumni Sundowner

2014 marks the third anniversary of the establishment and recognition of Edith Cowan University's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Alumni and the unveiling of the Rock Solid Foundations tribute.

To celebrate, Kurongkurl Katitjin, ECU's Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research is hosting a sundowner to re-connect, network and socialise.

If you, or someone you know graduated from Edith Cowan University or its predecessors*, between the years of 1951 and 2014, we would love to hear from you.

Date: Friday, 28 November 2014

Time: Between 6.00pm and 8.00pm

Venue: Kurongkurl Katitjin Gallery, Building 15

ECU Mount Lawley Campus

2 Bradford Street, Mount Lawley (enter via Central Avenue)

Details: This event is open to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander graduates of ECU.

One guest per graduate is welcome to attend. Unfortunately, no children. Guests must be 18 or over. Canapés and beverages will be served.

RSVP: Via email to rocksolid@ecu.edu.au by Friday, 21 November

*This includes Claremont Teachers College, Graylands Teachers College, the Western Australian Secondary Teachers College, Nedlands College of Advanced Education, Mount Lawley Teachers College, Churchlands Teachers College or the merged Western Australian College of Advanced Education.

2014 National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games

The University of Western Australia recently hosted the 19th National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games (NITESG). From the 21–25 September, four ECU students: Ahmi Narkle, Jackson Hunt, Ashton Ramirez Watkins and Michael Catley competed (in a combined team with the Australian Catholic University) across four sports – touch rugby, netball, basketball and volleyball. Two of the students, Ahmi and Ashon provided feedback on their experience.



“It was such a good experience to be able to be surrounded by fellow Indigenous uni students who are amazing young people and I am proud to say my new friends. As well as playing games, there was a great social calendar planned with nights to let our hair down and mingle with the other unis. This is where I felt I most got to bond with the other ECU students – my new brothers and our other team mates all from different parts of Australia! I had such a good time and I can not wait until next year to hopefully take a full ECU team to compete at the 20th Indigenous uni games in New Castle. Thank you so much to Kurongkurl Katitjin for sponsoring us to play”. – **Ahmi Narkle**

“The Indigenous games 2014 was a great experience. It was my first year competing so it was really fun. It was a real eye opener to see so many young Indigenous people who are all striving for a better future for our people. When looking at all the students who are participating, it made me think that this is the next generation of Indigenous leaders who will lead our people to a better and more hopeful future. It made me happy to meet new people from different countries and languages, as they celebrated and shared their culture with us. It made me proud that the game was hosted in Nyungar country and celebrate our culture. I am looking forward to the next Indigenous games in Newcastle to celebrate 20 years of the games” – **Ashton Ramirez Watkins**

Off to a flying start



Scholarship recipients Daniel Edwards and Kelli Schmitt with ECU’s Dr Anthony Medhurst and Perth Airport CEO Brad Geatches,

ECU students Kelli Schmitt, Daniel Edwards and Kirsty Eades have been awarded a 2014 Perth Airport Indigenous Scholarship thanks to the generosity of Perth Airport. Established in 2010, it provides financial support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in full-time study. To date, ten ECU students have benefited from the commitment of Perth Airport. The scholarships, awarded annually, are to the value of \$15,000 per student.

For recipient Kelli Schmitt, part of the South West Boojarah people, the scholarship has made a huge impact on her study and everyday life.

“I am a single mum with two teenage children. I also work fulltime and study fulltime,” Kelli said.

“Being awarded the scholarship has meant that I can focus on reaching my goal of becoming a high school teacher and developing an education program that will combine sustainability and the sharing of Nyongar culture”.

To find out more about ECU’s scholarships, visit: www.ecu.edu.au/scholarships/overview

Staff Snapshot

Tillara Casey



Kurongkurl Katitjin
Casual Administrative Assistant

Favourite book:

Looking for Alaska by John Green

Favourite music:

I will listen to anything, mainly whatever is in the charts.

Favourite food:

Anything seafood

Favourite TV Program:

House Rules

Favourite Movie:

The Sandlot

If you could meet anyone, who would it be?

I would want to meet Jimmy Fallon

What is something that people don't know about you?

In Language, my name Tillara means 'Big Rain'

Kurongkurl Katitjin Out and About

Each edition, we showcase some of the meetings, activities and events Kurongkurl Katitjin staff were involved or attended 'out and about' in the community.

Here's what we got up to the past few months:

August 2014	
4/8	Celebrate WA meeting with WA Premier
5/8	Leadership WA - Three Chairs Function
11/8	Meeting with Scouts WA
12/8	Australia-Israel Chamber of Commerce & Industry - presentation by Tony Howarth
13/8	ECU Indigenous Science Workshop at Balga SHS
18/8	Principals Australia Function
25/8	Western Australian Aboriginal Advisory Council (WAAAC) Summit
26/8	Westpac Foundation Fundraising Lunch

September 2014	
5/9	Investiture ceremony for Queen's birthday honours
8/9	Rio Tinto Colours of Our Country exhibition opening
10/9	WA Excellence in Aboriginal Education Award Panel

About this Publication

Our Place is Kurongkurl Katitjin's official newsletter.

Produced six times per year, each edition coincides with one of the six Nyoongar seasons and highlights key activities of the Centre and the University, as well as other significant events and information relating to Indigenous education and research.

It is circulated electronically to a range of stakeholders including staff, students and the broader community. Editions can be found online under the News and Events section at www.kk.ecu.edu.au.

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