



## Inside This Edition



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for WA



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ABOVE: The 'outdoor room' at ECU's NAIDOC Week Art Exhibition

## **ECU NAIDOC Art Exhibition expands in spectacular style**

ECU's NAIDOC Week celebrations kicked off in spectacular style with the annual *Celebration of Indigenous Art* exhibition, held on Friday 1 July 2011, expanding its gallery to include an 'outdoor room'.

A very large marquee was constructed over the existing garden at the front of Kurongkurl Katitjin to build the 'outdoor room' which provided an enclosed, natural setting for artworks to be hung on trees.

**CAUTION:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that an article in this newsletter does include an image and reference to a deceased person, which may cause distress.

*Story continued on page 3*

*Kurongkurl Katitjin*, pronounced 'koor-ong-kurl cut-it-chin', is a Nyoongar phrase meaning 'coming together to learn'.

# Welcome from the Head of Centre

Welcome to the Makuru 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 friend and colleague Alison Weston, who has sadly passed away after a long illness.

Ali was a well respected and much loved person. As a staff member of our Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet and member of ECU's Indigenous Consultative Committee, Ali's dedication, passion and motivation to make a difference through her work was strong and consistent, even throughout her illness.

On behalf of Kurongkurl Katitjin and Edith Cowan University, I take this opportunity to specifically acknowledge the work, commitment and effort of Ali Weston. In particular, her contribution to Indigenous health and welfare.

We will remember Ali for her warm smile, generosity and fighting spirit. Ali will be sadly missed.

Our deepest sympathies and thoughts are with her family and friends at this difficult time.

Rest in Peace Ali.

Colleen W.

Professor Colleen Hayward



## 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.

## ECU NAIDOC Art Exhibition expands in spectacular style

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The artworks displayed in the outdoor room were by local artists in a special collaboration with True Blue Gallery.

In keeping with the 2011 NAIDOC theme "Change", the overall exhibition focused on taking responsibility for the future and highlights those artists who have used their artistic talent to change their own futures.

Another of the evening's highlights was the unveiling of a six-canvas art work, visually representing each of the Nyoongar seasons.

Created by renowned Indigenous artist Sandra Hill, the piece was commissioned by the University specifically for NAIDOC Week.

This year, the University was also fortunate to acquire, through a generous donor, a set of prints reflecting the six Nyoongar seasons by artists Shane Pickett.

These two prints will join the University art collection, which contains over 700 pieces from both well-known and emerging Indigenous Australian artists.

The University also marked the week with official flag raising ceremonies and an Indigenous film night.

Held on Wednesday 6 July 2011, Kurongkurl Katitjin hosted the film night which screened feature film *Three Boys Dreaming*.

These events showcase the University's relationship with the Nyoongar community and, more broadly, its commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Australian communities.

"NAIDOC Week is an important reflection of the University's dedication to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, along with publicly recognising those within the community who have made significant contributions towards reconciliation," said Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Engagement, Equity and Indigenous) Professor Brenda Cherednichenko.

NAIDOC Week is the first public example of ECU's commitment to reconciliation after the launch of its inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan in May.



*ABOVE: Art displayed in the outdoor gallery*



*ABOVE: Six Nyoongar seasons artwork by Sandra Hill*



*ABOVE: ECU Pro Chancellor, Mr Steve Abbott; Kurongkurl Katitjin's Professor Colleen Hayward; Dr Noel Nannup from Kurongkurl Katitjin; and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Arshad Omari at the art gallery opening*

## Nyoongar Season: About Makuru *as written by Jason Barrow*

Makuru sees the coldest and wettest time of the year come into full swing, winter is defiantly here. Traditionally, this was a good time of the year move back inland from the coast as the winds turned to the west and south bringing the cold, rains and occasional snow on the peaks of the Stirling and Porongurup Ranges.

As the waterways and catchments started to fill, people were able to move about their country with ease and thus their food sources changed from the sea, estuarine and lake foods to those of the lands, in particular the grazing animals such as the kangaroo. It was also a good time to be able to use everything that the animals that were hunted for food could provide you.

For example, kangaroos not only provide meat but also 'bookas' or animal skin cloaks that were a must, especially as the nights become colder. Nothing was left to go to waste, even the bones and sinews were used in the manufacturing of 'bookas' as well as hunting tools such as spears and spear throwers.

Makuru is also a time for a lot of animals to be pairing up in preparation for breeding in the coming season. If you look carefully, you might now see pairs of Ravens or 'Wardongs' flying together. You also notice these pairs not making the usual 'ark ark ark arrrrrk' that these birds are well known for when flying solo.

Upon the lakes and rivers of the south west, you'll also start to see a large influx of the Black Swan or 'Mali' as they too prepare to nest and breed. A good sign that swans have bred is that they lose their flight feathers and thus are ground bound for a large portion of the season until the eggs start to hatch. This meant that if numbers were plentiful then they were also included in the traditional diet for the season as they are easy to catch at this stage of their life cycle.

On the plant front there is a load of new growth that plants will start to show with some even preparing their flowers now for a couple of seasons time!



Around the Kurongkurl Katitjin building, you'll see a continuation of the beautiful flowers of the Silver Princess (as pictured) starting to flower, along with the Eucalypts, or gum trees, throwing masses of new growth.

Of these, the most noticeable will be the Red Flowering Gums at the front of the building with their deep red foliage and the Coral Gums already producing their flowers for much later in the year.

Other flowers that will start to emerge will be the blues and purples of the Blueberry Lilly (*Dianella revoluta*) and the Purple Flags (*Patersonia occidentalis*) at the east and southern sides of the building and the very striking Blue Leschenaultia (*Lechenaultia biloba*) that will emerge in bushland areas.

Finally as the season comes to a close, you should also start to notice the white flowers of the weeping peppermint (*Agonis flexuosa*) as the blues start to make way for the white and cream flowers of Djilba.

## Wongi Nyoongar – Talking Nyoongar

The six Nyoongar Seasons describe the weather and climate patterns that occur in their country. Just like European descriptions, the six Noongar Seasons are cyclic, meaning that it occurs every year in a circle motion<sup>1</sup>.

Nyoongar people also associated different colours with the six seasons. This helped the younger people to learn the seasons from their elders and it taught them to respect their land, harvesting and hunting only what they needed for their families, at the correct time of the year<sup>1</sup>.

In this edition of *Wongi Nyoongar*, we take a look at the colours of the Nyoongar seasons<sup>1</sup>.

Season	Colour	Nyoongar Name	Colour description
<b>Birak</b>	Red	<i>mirda</i>	Red symbolises heat, sun and fire.
<b>Bunuru</b>	Orange	<i>yoorn t mirda</i>	Orange symbolises abundance of fishing and lack of rain.
<b>Djeran</b>	Green	<i>nodjam</i>	Light green symbolises cooler weather and eucalyptus trees.
<b>Makuru</b>	Blue	<i>wooyan</i>	Dark blue symbolises rain and cold weather.
<b>Djilba</b>	Pink	<i>mirda mokiny</i>	Pink (or purple) symbolises growth of wildflowers and plants.
<b>Kambarang</b>	Yellow	<i>yoorn t</i>	Yellow symbolises return of hot weather.

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from: [www.exceliorsps.det.wa.edu.au/Turtle Warriors New/favorite.htm](http://www.exceliorsps.det.wa.edu.au/Turtle_Warriors_New/favorite.htm)

### **Nyoongar Story Time** as told by Dr Noel Nannup

#### **Birinjee: Special Wind**

The Nyeeting (Cold Time) story related to how the spirits came out of the dark and into the light to Care for Everything.

*Birinjee*, a special wind, took the spirits of all the plants and animals that had passed away and raced out into the sea.

During Makaru is the time when the *Birinjee* returns to the land. As they come spinning across the water, they reach the land as mini tornadoes smashing the trees and provide lots of broken wood for the fires of the people.

This year's fires are made with the wood from last year's *Birinjees*.

## Vale: Alison Weston

Alison Elizabeth Weston passed away peacefully in the company of her family on Wednesday 6 July 2011, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Alison, affectionately known as Ali, was a descendant of the Meriam Mer people of the Torres Strait on her mother's side, with Scottish heritage through her father.

Growing up in Perth, Ali completed her nursing training through the Western Australian School of Nursing and became a registered nurse in 1988.

After working in the hospital setting for a few years, Ali wanted a change in career and commenced a law degree at UWA in 1995. During this time, Ali also worked as a Project Development Officer with the Department of Health WA.

Ali's strong social conscience and journey into social activism was driven by her time at university and was later reflected in her post-university career path.



Over her 20 year work career, Ali held numerous positions in government and community organisations.

Her most recent position was that of Research Officer at the Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet within Kurongkurl Katijin at ECU.

Ali worked part-time while completing a Masters of Public Health at the Institute of Koori Education, Deakin University.

Ali's commitment to making a difference to the lives of Indigenous people, especially women, was more recently reflected by her representation on the Indigenous Consultative Committee at ECU.

In 2011, Ali was also awarded an ECU Leading Edge scholarship (one of only two offered) in recognition of her leadership potential.

Ali was the mother of three girls, and grandmother of one. Among her many achievements, she was most proud of her ability to remain positive and committed to making a difference for her children.

Ali was a wonderful friend and colleague. Her warmth, passion for life, and sense of humour touched all who knew her.

She will always be remembered for her spirited nature and ability to laugh out loud.

Ali's presence will be greatly missed yet she will forever remain in our hearts.



## Farewell Dr Ken Michael. Welcome Malcolm McCusker

Malcolm McCusker was sworn in as WA's Governor at a ceremony held on the 1 July 2011.

The philanthropist and noted barrister, who left a distinguished legal career, took the oath to become the State's 31st Governor and the successor to Dr Ken Michael.

Around 400 people gathered in the ballroom of Government House for the ceremony, including Kurongkurl Katitjin's Professor Colleen Hayward.

Professor Hayward performed the Acknowledgment to Country at the ceremony and took the opportunity to present the outgoing Governor Dr Ken Michael, with a unique message stick.

The message stick was a gift to thank and acknowledge Dr Ken Michael for his work and commitment to Aboriginal people during his time as Governor.

© Photo reproduced courtesy of the Scene Team and the Department of Premier and Cabinet



*ABOVE: Professor Colleen Hayward presents the message stick to Dr Ken Michael.*

## \$100,000 boost for Indigenous health research

Edith Cowan University's (ECU's) research into Indigenous health has been strengthened by a \$100,000 donation from not-for-profit organisation Bellberry Ltd.

The funding has created a new Senior Research Fellow position within Kurongkurl Katitjin, ECU's Centre for Indigenous Australian Education and Research. Dr Dan McAullay has been appointed to the role.

Dr McAullay said the funding will allow him to further develop his research into Indigenous health issues.

"My PhD study examined the contribution primary health care has made to the maternal, infant and child health in WA.



With the support from Bellberry and Kurongkurl Katitjin I will be building on this, aiming to improve the ethics and processes of collecting data on Indigenous health and ultimately improving outcomes for Indigenous communities," Dr McAullay said.

The research will complement the world-class work already being conducted at Kurongkurl Katitjin.

The Centre also offers a range of courses to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and as well as providing ongoing support to Indigenous students.

Bellberry Ltd is a national, private not-for-profit organisation based in Adelaide providing human research ethics committee services to the Australian research community.

## National Congress has its first elected Board

The National Congress of Australia's First Peoples announced its first elected Board of Directors.

The first elected board took office and held their first official meeting during NAIDOC Week at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence in Sydney.

The eight Directors were recently elected by Congress Members and Delegates and the board meeting follows the first policy summit held in June at Homebush.

"We are all very humbled and energised at the same time, about our role and the work ahead," said Ms Broun.

"The new board has hit the ground running, as we continue to canvass our members and adopt positions on a range of issues that they have identified," she said.

Mr Malezer said the Co-Chairs and Directors are committed to some key principles and priorities. "Governments are on notice that the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be protected and promoted," said Malezer.

"We are also focused on growing the Congress and fulfilling our potential as a new voice in the nation's political landscape," he said.

The National Board identified critical areas of the work ahead:

- Our top priority is our people: building on our existing membership base
- Ensuring any constitutional reform accords with the aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Ensuring that our peoples and communities voice is heard during consultations on the Northern Territory Emergency Response
- And further to that, the Congress establishes a formal position on the future of Federal Government policies and investment under this program in the Northern Territory
- Publishing the final report of the National Congress meeting
- Publishing the membership survey on policy priorities



*ABOVE: L-R: Venessa Curnow, William (Brian) Butler, Co-chair Les Malezer, Rodney Little, Co-chair Jodie Broun, Dennis Eggington, Daphne Yarram, Tammy Solonec*

Joining Co-chairs Jody Broun and Les Malezer will be:

- Venessa Curnow (QLD),
- William (Brian) Butler (SA),
- Rodney Little (ACT),
- Dennis Eggington (WA),
- Daphne Yarram (Vic), and
- Tammy Solonec (WA).

For more information on each of the new Directors, visit: [www.nationalcongress.com.au/national-board](http://www.nationalcongress.com.au/national-board)

© Photo reproduced courtesy of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples

## New look Kurongkurl Katitjin website goes live

Kurongkurl Katitjin's website has recently undergone a transformation.

The new look website has been designed to compliment the broader University's website, as well as link into the systems that support it.

With the new site in place, visitors can expect easier navigation, relevant links and regular updates.

Kurongkurl Katitjin's website is still the same, visit: [www.kk.ecu.edu.au](http://www.kk.ecu.edu.au)



## Follow the Dream Acknowledgment night

On Friday 3 June 2011, 26 Indigenous students in Years 11 and 12, were celebrated at an 'Acknowledgment Evening' held at Kurongkurl Katitjin.

The students were from the Mount Lawley Senior High (MLSHS) School/Outreach *Follow the Dream: Partnerships For Success* program.

The 'Acknowledgment Evening' was an opportunity to recognise the students for their commitment to study and being a part of the program.

In front of family, friends and teachers, each student was presented with a framed certificate and custom message stick by Kurongkurl Katitjin's Elder-In-Residence Dr Noel Nannup.

Co-ordinator for MLSHS/Outreach Paul Stein said the main aim of the program was to give opportunities to Aboriginal students in the form of university entrance, VET, TAFE entrance or meaningful employment.

"This takes the form of tutoring, mentoring, access to WACE revision programs and career guidance," he said.

Students meet two afternoons a week after school at Kurongkurl Katitjin, where they have access to facilities such as the student lounge and computers.

Mr Stein said the program began after it was discovered many bright Aboriginal students were dropping out of school.



ABOVE: *Follow the Dream* students with Coordinator Paul Stines and Associate Professor Robert Somerville



ABOVE: Professor Colleen Hayward with Associate Professor Robert Somerville

## Indigenous leader recognised with prestigious award

More than 600 guests shared in the celebration as Adjunct Professor Dennis Eggington was crowned the *Indigenous Leadership Award* recipient at the 2011 Western Australian Citizen of the Year Awards. The announcement was made at a glittering gala ceremony at Burswood Entertainment Complex on the 28 May 2011.

The *Indigenous Leadership Award*, sponsored by Wesfarmers, recognises the significant professional and personal achievements and contribution of an outstanding Indigenous leader who serves as an inspirational role model for Indigenous people and the broader Western Australian community.

Professor Eggington, a member of the Noongar community from the south-west region of Western Australia, has worked tirelessly for more than four decades to ensure there is a strong voice for Indigenous people within the Western Australian justice system.

He advocates that people and cases are dealt with in a culturally sensitive manner and that cultural protocols are followed.



ABOVE: Adjunct Professor Dennis Eggington and Wesfarmer's Tim Bult

Celebrate WA Chairman John Poynton AM CitWA said the Awards night was a truly memorable event and a great opportunity to recognise a group of inspiring people making massive contributions to our great State.

"Professor Eggington is widely known and highly respected for his extensive work within the justice system," said Mr Poynton. "His commitment to social justice and advancing the rights of Indigenous people is inspiring and makes him a very worthy recipient of this year's Indigenous Leadership Award."

Starting his career as a school teacher, Professor Eggington has been a lecturer at Curtin University's Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Chair of the State Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and the Assistant Regional Manager of Aboriginal Hostels Limited. He can also be credited with creating the Western Australian Aboriginal Media Association.

Since 1996, he has been the Chief Executive Officer of the Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia and, in that role, he sits on a number of committees including the National Aboriginal Justice Council and the nation's Aboriginal Legal Services.

This isn't the first time he has been recognised for his extraordinary contribution, having been awarded a John Curtin Medal in 2007 and being named the National NAIDOC Person of the Year in 2010. Last year, he was invited to participate in the United Nations Permanent Forum on the Rights of Indigenous People in New York, and most recently was named as one of The West Australian's 100 Most Influential People in 2011.

Professor Eggington joined an impressive list of exceptional and inspiring individuals and one exemplary community organisation in receiving Awards on the night.

## Staff Snapshot

Jackie Goldfinch



School Officer

### **Favourite book:**

*Anything written by Patricia Cornwall*

### **Favourite music:**

*No particular favourite type of music or artist, although I am partial to 80s music – only because I can understand the words to the songs!*

### **Favourite food:**

*Chocolate*

### **Favourite TV Program:**

*Midsomer Murders, House, Torchwood*

### **Favourite Movie:**

*True Lies, the Harry Potter series, the Twilight series and Pirates of the Caribbean*

### **If you could meet anyone, who would it be?**

*The Wright Brothers*

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

*I love Speedway (dirt track racing). I also enjoy going to Bingo once a week – winning is a bonus ☺*

## ECU helping to build Indigenous leaders

ECU staff member Kelvin Morrison recently returned from the *One Sky, Many Paths* Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, which provides leadership training for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals.

The program provides the chance for participants to develop self-awareness, self-esteem, and leadership qualities by meeting Aboriginal leaders and participating in team-building activities.

An administrative assistant with the Centre for Learning and Development (CLD), Kelvin was employed by ECU through the ECU Indigenous Australian Employment Strategy and Action Plan. The plan is part of the National Centrally Funded Indigenous Australian Recruitment and Study Program.

Kelvin began his career at ECU through a 12-month traineeship with ECU South West in 2009. In 2010 he moved to ECU Joondalup to work for CLD

"I began doing temporary work but now I'm a full-time permanent employee, which has opened so many doors," said Kelvin

"The program allowed me to meet new people and extended my networks.

"Hearing how our guest speakers grew up in a harder time, and still became so successful, both personally and professionally was really inspirational.

I'm truly grateful to be a part of the program and I can't wait for the return trip to catch up.

"I would definitely recommend the program to my community, it was an awesome experience and I want to thank Melanie for nominating me and giving me this great opportunity."

Kelvin was recommended for the *One Sky, Many Paths* program by Coordinator of Indigenous Employment, Melanie King.

For more information about the *One Sky, Many Paths* program, visit: [www.youth.wa.gov.au](http://www.youth.wa.gov.au)

*Our Place* is Kurongkurl Katitjin's official newsletter and is produced six times a year.

It is circulated electronically to a range of stakeholders including staff, students and the broader community.

**PRODUCED BY**

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# Mailing list

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Simply print and complete this page, then return by mail/fax or email [tracey.edwards@ecu.edu.au](mailto:tracey.edwards@ecu.edu.au) with the following information:

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