

ABOVE: Kurongkurl Katitjin's Professor Colleen Hayward Acknowledging Country at the 2011 Oz Concert at Government House Gardens

## Celebrating the unique Australian Culture

Two significant cultural events, the *Oz Concert* and the *Too Solid Music Festival*, were recently celebrated on the 25 and 26 January 2011.

The *Oz Concert*, held on the evening of the 25 January, brought together hundreds of talented performers from WA's leading creative, cultural and community groups for a spectacular showcase of talent. Over 6000 people attended the free concert at Government House Gardens organised by Celebrate WA.

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

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# Welcome from the Head of Centre

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

In this edition of *Our Place*, we officially welcome our readers to 2011. The new year always brings about new challenges and opportunities to which we always look forward with a sense of optimism and excitement.

As we begin the new year, we welcome our students onto campus, especially those at the beginning of their study journey and new to Edith Cowan University. With a number of events and information sessions as part of ECU's Orientation program, students are well supported with their transition into University life.

Additionally, the near-completed apartments on the Mount Lawley campus will give students an even wider range of accommodation options!

Also in this edition, we highlight the unique and diverse Australian culture, namely through the *Oz Concert* and *Too Solid* concert as part of Australia Day celebrations in Perth.

With big things planned for 2011, the *Our Place* newsletter will be the place to hear news first!

Until next time.....

Happy reading!

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.

## Celebrating the unique Australian Culture

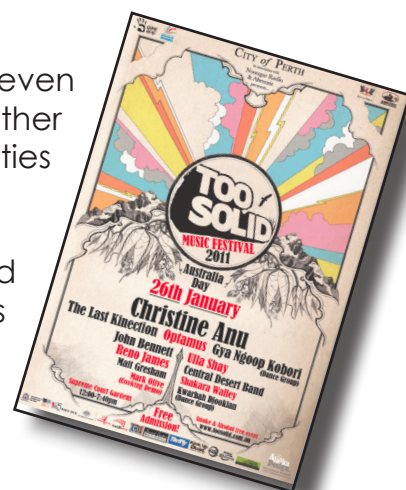
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Over 10,000 people flocked to the Supreme Court Gardens on Australia Day for the Too Solid Music Festival.

Presented by City of Perth, Abmusic and Noongar Radio, the seven hour celebration of Indigenous culture and music brought together live entertainment, community and market stalls with free activities for kids.

Kurongkurl Katitjin's Head of Centre, Professor Colleen Hayward performed the Acknowledgment to Country at both events and was pleased to be associated with these celebrations.

"These are fantastic events and a wonderful opportunity to remind us all of the diverse talent, culture and richness we have here in our community of Western Australia and across the country".



## Faculty Student Information Offices

The Student Information Offices are faculty based service centres dedicated to assisting current and future students, both undergraduate and postgraduate at ECU.

The office provides the following services to assist students:

- Course information and advice;
- Identifies and assists students who require access to academic support;
- Assistance with choosing units and courses;
- Assesses potential graduates;
- Administers eligibility and recognition of prior learning, including student exemptions (advanced standing).

We encourage all students to make the Student Information Office their first point of enquiry within each Faculty.

Faculty	Location	Telephone	Facsimile
Business and Law	Building 6, Room 6.201, Joondalup Campus	134 ECU (134 328)	(61 8) 6304 5300
	Building 10, Room 10.111, Mount Lawley Campus	International (61 8) 6304 0000	(61 8) 9370 6577
Computing, Health and Science	Building 19, Room 19.118, Joondalup Campus	134 ECU (134 328)	(61 8) 6304 5577
	Building 13, Room 13.106C, Mount Lawley Campus	International (61 8) 6304 0000	
Education and Arts	Building 8, Room 8.215, Joondalup Campus (Education and Kurongkurl Katitjin)	134 ECU (134 328)	(61 8) 9370 6614
	Building 13, Room 13.148, Mount Lawley Campus	International (61 8) 6304 0000	
ECU South West	Building 1 Reception, ECU South West	(61 8) 9780 7777	(61 8) 9780 7659

## Nyoongar Season: About Birak

Birak season would usually see the rains finally ease up and the warm weather really start to take hold, fortunately though the afternoons are cooled by the sea breezes that abound for the south west.



However this time around, we can expect to see some summer rain that will accompany the summer wildfires that are often started with lightening strikes at this time of the year.

After a rather dry Makuru and Kambarang, there are signs that we'll receive some summer rains as several plants continue to flower long after they're supposed to have finished. These include the Candle Stick Banksia (*B. attenuata*) as pictured and the Bull Banksia (*B. grandis*).

Fortunately, an almost clockwork cycle of easterly winds in the morning and seas breezes in the afternoon, meant that traditionally this was the burning time of year for Nyoongars.

They would burn the country in mosaic patterns for several reasons including – fuel reduction, increasing the grazing pastures for animals (game), to aid in seed germination for some plants and for ease of mobility across the country. Interestingly these days, Birak season is the start of the fire ban season.

Traditionally, this was a good time to collect bush honey made by the many different native bees that had made good use of the abundance of flowers. It was also a good time to make reed bags for carrying things as life was centred adjacent to the wetlands where various reeds could be utilised.

In addition to this, it was also a good season to collect wattle seeds after their flowering from the previous season for grinding into flour for breads and dampers.

Around the gardens of the Kurongkurl Katitjin building, you'll see the wonderful flowers of the Coral Gum (*E. torquata*) and the Fuchsia Gum (*E. forrestiana*). As well the flowers and seeds, you'll also see loads of new growth on many of the Eucalypts (or Gum trees) and the Banksias as they all look to put their new leaves out to work in the sun shine before the full force of summer arrives.

Some of this growth in some of the trees will also serve as an indicator of the rainfall for the year to come, but we'll learn more about this later.

As for the animals, there are now many fledglings now venturing out of nests, though some are still staying close to their parents. Listen and you'll hear them calling for food! You may even be fortunate enough to come across the odd sloth or old skin from a reptile as they look to shed their old ones for new.

Finally, with the rising temperatures and the lessening rainfall, it's also time for the baby frogs as many complete their transformation into adulthood.

## Wongi Nyoongar – Talking Nyoongar

In this edition of *Wongi Nyoongar*, we will specifically look at an *Acknowledgement of Country*, including an example you may wish to use for your own events and special occasions.

An *Acknowledgement of Country* is a way the wider community can demonstrate respect to the traditional custodians and can be performed by any individual, Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

It is important to remember that an *Acknowledgment of Country* does not replace the role of a traditional Welcome. Rather, the significance of the event or occasion or the availability of an Elder, usually determines whether a *Welcome* or an *Acknowledgment* is performed. For example, you would use a *Welcome* for the opening of a new building or the launch of a NAIDOC event. You would use an *Acknowledgement* at small meetings or gatherings.

Below is a simple phrase, both in language and English, of a Nyoongar Acknowledgment of Country.

Nyoongar Acknowledgment of Country	
Nyoongar Phrase	Ngaala Kaaditj Nyoongar Moort Keyen Kaadak Nidjar Boodjar
Pronunciation	<i>Narla Cud-itch Noong-ar Moor-t Key-n Kad-ak Nij-ar Bood-jar</i>
English Translation	We acknowledge the Nyoongar people, their elders past and present as the custodians of this land.

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

#### **Cobong: Totem**

Nyoongar people have strong food totems. A totem is a person's link to their place in Boodja (country) and can be represented by a bird, plant, animal or tree.

My totem is the Karda (goanna).

A person's totem is either inherited or given based on the characteristics of their personality. Only Elders pass on this knowledge.

During their life, each person is responsible for their totem and must not consume or eat their totem in any way. For example, a person with a fish totem may not eat fish, but can eat other seafood and red meat.

Additionally, they must ensure that their totem is not eaten by others during the totems breeding or reproductive cycle.

Food was in abundance at this time of the year and was indicated by the whales leaving to the south. People on the coast would hold special ceremonies to call upon dolphins to help with their fishing.

## ECU welcomes students for Orientation

New students are encouraged to attend a number of free activities at the Joondalup, Mount Lawley and Bunbury Campuses as part of ECU's 2011 Orientation program of events.

Starting on Wednesday, 16 February and running till Saturday, 26 February, events include:

- *Unistart 1 & 2*: which provide tips on online resources, academic skills and computer basics;
- *Student Support at ECU*: which informs students about the support services available on campus and what to expect from a typical semester, and
- the Orientation Fair.

Additionally, **Get Set Saturday** is a great opportunity ask questions and tour the campus so you'll be able to hit the ground running in your first week of classes.

<b>22 January 2011</b>	Get Set Saturday - Joondalup
<b>5 February 2011</b>	Get Set Saturday - Mt Lawley

Interested students can also take a tour of the ECU Sports and Fitness Centre and the ECU Library, attend the Vice-Chancellor's welcome and meet fellow students at the Orientation Party, hosted by the ECU Student Guild.

All new students are also required to attend specific Course Induction sessions, which provide an introduction to their course and faculty before semester starts.

Coordinator of Student Retention, Ms Melanie Johnston, encourages all new students to take part in the variety of activities offered.

"Orientation week is a great way to familiarise yourself with the campus, learn about your course and meet fellow students," she said

"We look forward to seeing you on campus as you embark on your studies in 2011."

Students must register to attend each event. For more information and to register, please visit: [www.ecu.edu.au/new-students/orientation](http://www.ecu.edu.au/new-students/orientation)

## Additional accommodation at ECU Mt Lawley Village



In early 2011, over 350 new rooms will be opened at the Mt Lawley campus to provide students with an even wider range of accommodation options.

The brand new accommodation will also provide state-of-the-art facilities including a pool, student lounge, e-library and more.

For more information on the ECU Village, please visit: [www.ecuvillage.com.au](http://www.ecuvillage.com.au)

## Speaker announced for 2011 Edith Cowan Memorial lecture

The *Edith Cowan Memorial Lecture* is held on International Women's Day each year to honour ECU's namesake, Edith Dircksey Cowan, who dedicated her life to equal rights and reducing the barriers to education and leadership for women.

This year, 2011 marks the 150th year since Edith's birth, the 90th year since her election to Western Australian Parliament, and the 20th year since ECU was founded as a university in her honour.

ECU is pleased to welcome Dr Sue Gordon to the Mount Lawley campus for the annual *Edith Cowan Memorial Lecture*, entitled: **100 Years: Obstacles for Aboriginal women in work and community**, to celebrate International Women's Day on Tuesday, 8 March.

Dr Gordon is an influential member of the Aboriginal community, and was the first-full time Aboriginal magistrate in WA history.

In 2004, she was appointed head of the inaugural National Indigenous Council, and was the recipient of both the Centenary Medal in 2003 and the Defence Service Medal in 2006, along with an Order of Australia Medal in 1993 for her work with Aboriginal people and community affairs.

Professor Brenda Cherednichenko, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Engagement, Equity and Indigenous) is pleased to welcome Dr Gordon to ECU.

"Dr Gordon is an inspiration to all men and women and we are pleased to welcome her to the campus as we celebrate International Women's Day and pay tribute to ECU's namesake, Edith Dircksey Cowan," she said.

The lecture is open to staff, students and members of the ECU community and will be followed by refreshments.

For more information on this year's Edith Cowan Memorial Lecture, please visit: [www.ecu.edu.au/news/events/2011/03/2011-international-womens-day-lecture](http://www.ecu.edu.au/news/events/2011/03/2011-international-womens-day-lecture)

## 2011 marks International Women's Day Centenary

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future.

The first International Women's Day events were run in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland in 1911 and attended by over one million people.

100 years on, International Women's Day (IWD) has become a global mainstream phenomena celebrated across many countries and is an official holiday in approximately 25 countries including Afghanistan, Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam and Zambia.



For more information, please visit: [www.internationalwomensday.com](http://www.internationalwomensday.com)

## 2011 NAIDOC Theme announced

NAIDOC Week preparations have begun with the National Committee selecting the theme: **Change: the next step is ours.**

The theme is about taking responsibility for the future. The Committee urges everyone to embrace the new theme during their celebrations of Indigenous culture, history and achievements in NAIDOC Week.

The 2011 National NAIDOC Poster Competition and nominations for the National NAIDOC Awards are now open!

National NAIDOC Awards recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are making a difference to the lives of others. All Australians are encouraged to nominate Indigenous people to receive an Award.

Indigenous artists can now start working on entries for the National NAIDOC Poster Competition to reflect this year's theme.

The competition has a \$5,000 cash prize and the winning artwork will appear on the National NAIDOC Poster.

For entry forms and further information on NAIDOC Week, please visit: [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au) or contact your local Indigenous Coordination Centre.



3-10 JULY | **Change:**  
2011 | the next step is ours

## Early Successes in Efforts to 'Close the Gap'

The Minister for Indigenous Health, the Hon Warren Snowdon, launched the *Indigenous Chronic Disease Package Annual Progress Report 2009-10* and a new GP Resource Kit on 9 December 2010 at the Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory.

The Annual Progress Report highlights the first twelve months of progress in implementing the Indigenous Chronic Disease Package.

The GP Resource Kit is a tool for doctors, health professionals and staff working in Indigenous health services and general practices to understand how to access and make the most of the new initiatives in the *Indigenous Chronic Disease Package*.

"The *Indigenous Chronic Disease Package Annual Progress Report 2009-10* is testament to the progress being made by the Australian Government to Closing The Gap in Indigenous Health outcomes.

"We know that as a group, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the nation and much of the excess burden of disease experienced by Indigenous people can be prevented and managed with better access to health services, education, and support for lifestyle.

*continued over page*

## Staff Snapshot

### Keith Truscott



Lecturer

#### **Favourite book:**

*The Bible, especially Book of James*

#### **Favourite music:**

*Joe Cocker's 'You are so beautiful' and Black Gospel*

#### **Favourite food:**

*Kangaroo Tail Stew*

#### **Favourite TV Program:**

*Channel 7 News at 6.00pm*

#### **Favourite Movie:**

*The Fugitive (set in Chicago)*

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

*Alan Border - past Australian Cricket champion*

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

*I was Athletics Champion (of my age group) at Gosford High School (NSW) five years in a row*

"That's what this Indigenous Chronic Disease Package aims to achieve, as it helps build a primary health care system that meets the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We are taking positive steps towards this goal and this report illustrates that.

"The Indigenous Chronic Disease Package Annual Progress Report 2009-10 shows the Australian Government has funded an extra 294 positions around the nation for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health workforce.

We know a strong and culturally competent workforce is a key component of ensuring Indigenous people get access to health services, so this is a very important milestone.

"The report also shows that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are accessing health services with 29,799 Indigenous adult health checks completed, an increase of 26 per cent on 2008-09 and a 35 per cent increase of the number of Indigenous clients using chronic disease management plans to 138,055 Indigenous clients (up from 2008-09)."

"While we are making positive steps forward, the report also points out that there are still challenges ahead to ensure our health system is more responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the Australian Government is committed to achieve this," Mr Snowdon said.

"I acknowledge and thank the many people, organisations and communities which have dedicated themselves to closing the gap and supported work undertaken through this package, this progress would not have been achieved without your assistance."

"This year we will see the primary healthcare workforce expanded, and a new targeted national campaign launched to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's awareness of chronic disease and promote how they can access healthcare. Local community-run campaigns will also promote better health and wellbeing within communities."

To view a copy of the *Indigenous Chronic Disease Package Annual Progress Report 2009-10*, please visit: [www.health.gov.au/tackling-chronic-disease](http://www.health.gov.au/tackling-chronic-disease)

*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.

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# Mailing list

## *Join our Mailing List*

To keep up to date with what's happening at Kurongkurl Katitjin, join our mailing list.

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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Title \_\_\_\_\_

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