



The Wagyl at the opening of the Chinese New Year Multicultural Concert

## ECU celebrates Chinese 'Year of the Snake'

Staff and friends of Kurongkurl Katitjin performed in the opening of the Chinese New Year Multicultural Concert in Northbridge, held on Sunday 10 February 2013.

In the Chinese calendar, 2013 is the Year of the Snake and Kurongkurl Katitjin was invited to perform a Wagyl\* dance with the giant snake puppet, produced for ECU's NAIDOC celebrations last year.

CAUTION: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that an article in this newsletter does include reference to a person who has passed on and this may cause distress.

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*Kurongkurl Katitjin*, pronounced 'koo-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 Bunuru 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* sees Kurongkurl Katitjin out and about in the community. Firstly, we had the privilege of performing at the opening of the Multicultural concert for Chinese New Year.

In helping celebrate the 'Year of the Snake', our Wagyl puppet (from last year's NAIDOC event) was a particular highlight at the event, with many people wanting photos with the puppet after the performance.

We also had the opportunity to further promote Nyoongar culture with Kingsley Montessori School and Willetton SHS, which were both celebrating Cultural Diversity Week with various activities.

Lastly, some of our team hit the road and visited our colleagues and students at the Bunbury campus. This visit not only promoted our tutorial program, the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme, but also introduced the Indigenous Alumni program currently being developed.

May I also take this opportunity to also acknowledge and pay our respect to Ernie Bridge AM, whose recent passing brings much sadness but without diminishing his tremendous impact on our community.

On behalf of Kurongkurl Katitjin and Edith Cowan University, we extend our deepest sympathies to the Bridge family at this sad and difficult time.

Rest in Peace Ernie.



**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.

## ECU celebrates Chinese ‘Year of the Snake’

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The group, led by ECU’s Cultural Awareness Officer Jason Barrow, weaved its way through the crowd and wowed onlookers, many of whom wanted pictures taken with the Wagyl after the performance.

The Multicultural Concert, held at the Northbridge Piazza, presented vibrant and colourful performances by various groups from around Perth to celebrate the New Year.

Throughout the day, James Street came alive with food and market stalls, lion and dragon dance performances, street performances, and other cultural activities.

The event was presented by the Chung Wah Association and the WA Chinese community, sponsored by the City of Perth, Lotterywest and the WA Office of Multicultural Interests.

\* In Nyoongar culture, the Wagyl (sometimes referred to as the Rainbow Serpent) is a snake-like Dreamtime creature, responsible for the creation and protection of the Swan and Canning Rivers and other waterways and landforms around present day Perth and the south-west of Western Australia.



The team with the Wagyl after the performance

## Paying tribute to WA’s first Aboriginal politician

The WA community is saddened by the recent passing of trailblazing Aboriginal politician and leader Mr Ernie Bridge AM.

Mr Bridge was the first Aboriginal member of parliament in Western Australia and the first Aboriginal cabinet minister in the nation. He paved the way for Aboriginal rights through his fight for remote polling and pressure for land rights. He fought for regional development in his home region of the Kimberley.

Not only was Mr Bridge a successful politician, he had great achievements in the country music scene. His musical talents sent him around the world, and earned him the title of “The Singing Politician”.

In 1993, Mr Bridge was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) “in recognition of service to the WA Parliament and to Aboriginal Affairs” and the Centenary Medal for “service to the parliament and Aboriginal affairs” in 2001.

Most recently, Mr Bridge was made a member of the Order of Australia in June 2012 for “service to the Indigenous community, particularly through support for health management programs and to the Parliament of Western Australia”.

As tributes flood in for the father of four, country music singer and former pastoralist, WA Premier Colin Barnett confirmed Mr Bridge’s family had been offered a state funeral.

Kurongkurl Katitjin wishes to acknowledge and honour Mr Bridge, who will be sadly missed by everybody in the community.

**Ernie Bridge (15 December 1936 – 31 March 2013)**

## Nyoongar Season: About Bunuru

UPDATE: Seasonal articles will also be uploaded to the website at the beginning of each season. Keep an eye out!

Bunuru season is the hottest time of the year and usually with little to no rain, though we have been treated to some early thunderstorms from the north that has kept the ground moist for longer. The seasonally hot easterly winds continue with a cooling sea breeze most afternoons, particularly if you are close to the coast.

However, if the sea breeze doesn't come in, the nights too will be uncomfortably hot. Therefore, traditionally this was, and still is, a great time for living and fishing by the coast, rivers and estuaries. Freshwater foods and sea foods made up major parts of the diet during this time of the year.

Bunuru is also a time of the white flowers, with lots of white flowering gums in full bloom, starting with the Pricklybarks or Coastal Blackbutts (*E. todtiana*) and continuing with the Jarrahs, Marris and Ghost Gums. Around the front of the Kurongkurl Katitjin building in the Bunuru gardens, you will see masses of white flowers from the *Eucalyptus victrix* (Snow Queen).

On the Joondalup campus, you will see the bright red caps, followed by the equally vivid yellow of the *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* (Illyarrie) and the wonderful white flower cones that transform to orange of the *Banksia prionotes* (Saw Tooth or Acorn Banksia). Another striking flower that is hard to go past is that of the female *Macrozamia riedlei* (*Zamia*), being much larger than that of its male counterpart, the huge cones emerge from the centre of the plant with masses of a cotton wool like substance.

As the hot dry weather continues, the seed upon the cones change from green to bright red, indicating their ripening and becoming more attractive to animals, particularly the emu, that will eat the toxic red fleshy outer. Traditionally these ripened red cornels were collected in the reed bags made in Birak and a treatment process was started to remove the toxins, so that the seeds could be used in flour production the following seasons.

Around the freshwater wetlands and rivers, after flowering, the root bulbs of the Yanget (bulrush) were also collected and pounded into a starchy paste, then roasted in the coals to form a sort of bread/potato type food staple. Whilst here, it was also a good time to catch some of those frogs from the last season that were now getting bigger, as well other freshwater inhabitants such as long neck tortoises, marron and gilgies, but to name a few.

This is also the time for some migrations to start, as the new moon comes towards the end of February or at the start of March, the Rainbow Bee Eaters will start their migration journey to the far north of Australia and beyond.

As the hot dry weather continues, so too will the activity of the insects. We have already seen a good number of butterflies (both introduced and native), with some areas to the south of Perth, seeing larger numbers of the introduced Wonderer or Monarch butterflies.

The ants too will become busier during the dry periods gathering as many food stores as they can for when the wet weather returns. Ants in the wild and gardens provide a valuable role in aerating the ground and dragging collected seeds underground so that they might germinate after the winter rains.



**Jason Barrow**

**Kurongkurl Katitjin Cultural Awareness Officer**

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# Wongi Nyoongar – Talking Nyoongar

In this edition of Wongi Nyoongar, we take a look at some of the traditional names of the major rivers from the South West of Western Australia.

We will also start to explore the meanings and significance of each of these important rivers. In this edition of Noongar Story Time (below), we will learn about the Avon River or Gagaginindy Bilya as it was originally known.

Nyoongar word	Pronunciation	English translation
Gagaginindy Bilya	Gaga-gin-in-gee Bill-ya	Avon River
Derbal Yardjin Bilya	Der-ball Yara-g-in	Swan River
Pallinup Bilya	Pail-lin-up Bilya	Pallinup River
Kalagn Bilya	Kal-ag-in Bilya	Kalgan River
Moorn Bilya	Moo-rr-n Bilya	Moore River
Kardarkoor Bilya	Kard-ar-koor Bilya	Blackwood River

According to Rivers of Western Australian, Aboriginal people have always had, and still do have a very special relationship with the rivers that they live near.

Rivers were areas where Aboriginal people lived, hunted, collected their water and gathered food such as fish, turtles, birds, frogs and native plant foods. It was along the rivers that Aboriginal people travelled and traded with other groups.

Additionally, Aboriginal people feel connected to many rivers and wetlands in a spiritual way. Many rivers and wetlands are named and linked to creation stories.

<sup>1</sup> Sourced from: [www.rowa.org.au/indigenous.php](http://www.rowa.org.au/indigenous.php)

## Nyoongar Story Time

### Gagaginginy Bilya - Avon River

This river derives its Nyoongar name from the water running over the rocks in the riverbed. As this happens you can experience the therapeutic sight and sounds of the bubbles forming on the water.

Most of this river catchment and the course of the river flow is through the traditional home lands of the Balardong and Wadjuk people.

The word Bilya means River and the Gagaginginy means “laughing or giggling”, thus Gagaginginy Bilya is the Laughing or Giggling River/water.



Dr Noel Nannup

ECU Cultural Ambassador and Kurongkurl Katitjin Elder-in-Residence

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## Kurongkurl Katitjin connecting with Nyoongar Elders

Kurongkurl Katitjin's Elder-in-Residence Dr Noel Nannup recently hosted a morning tea for a small group of Nyoongar Elders.



Oriel Green, Doolan-Leisha Eatts, Walter Eatts and Kurongkurl Katitjin's Dr Noel Nannup (right)

The morning tea was an opportunity to connect and strengthen networks between local Nyoongar Elders, community representatives and Edith Cowan University.

It is intended that a small number of similar events will be held throughout the year to maintain the linkage and further engage local Elders with the work of Kurongkurl Katitjin and the wider University.

Of particular interest to the group, was the proposed development of protocols for engaging with Elders around events and special occasions. Kurongkurl Katitjin will work closely with Elders to develop such useful protocols.

## Kurongkurl Katitjin helps to mark Cultural Diversity Week

In late March, Kurongkurl Katitjin's Cultural Awareness Officer Jason Barrow visited Kingsley Montessori School and Willetton SHS to participate in various activities to celebrate Cultural Diversity Week.



Kurongkurl Katitjin's Jason Barrow, at Kingsley Montessori School

At Kingsley Montessori School, Jason hosted a stall, featuring a variety of tools and implements that were utilised in a traditional hunting and gathering lifestyle.

Also on display were the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags and a large Australian map, featuring all the Aboriginal language groups before colonisation.

For many of the students, staff and parents, this was the first time they had seen and explored such a map.

Later in that week, Kurongkurl Katitjin staff Jason Barrow, Gail Barrow and Francesca Robertson were invited to Willetton SHS to spend time with Aboriginal students and explain the significance of the Wagyl in Noongar country.

As a special treat, Kurongkurl Katitjin's giant Wagyl puppet was taken along as part of the visit, where students learnt how to perform with it.



Kurongkurl Katitjin's Jason Barrow and Gail Barrow with students and staff from Willetton SHS

This culminated in a performance to the senior student group and leadership team of the school at their weekly assembly. The students performed with live didgeridoo playing by Tom Little and Scott Chisholm.

Kurongkurl Katitjin staff thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to visit these schools and celebrate Cultural Diversity Week.

## Kurongkurl Katitjin strengthening links with Bunbury campus

Following a recent trip to ECU's South-West campus, Kurongkurl Katitjin has strengthened its links with Indigenous staff and students based in Bunbury.

The visit was opportunity to meet and greet, as well discuss the **Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)**, highlight additional support mechanisms through Kurongkurl Katitjin and introduce the Indigenous Alumni program being developed this year.

A BBQ lunch completed the visit, which was coordinated by Bunbury's Noongar Support Officer Dellas Yarran and Guild staff.

Creating more sustainable links with staff and students from the Bunbury campus is a high priority for Kurongkurl Katitjin and this visit is only the first of many for 2013.



Kurongkurl Katitjin's Jason Barrow, Tracey Lee Edwards and Sophie Karangaroa, with Bunbury's Noongar Support Officer Dellas Yarran (second from right)

## Reconciliation: Measuring the momentum

Reconciliation Australia\* recently launched two reports, the **Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2012** and **Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Report 2012**, which together offer an insight into the progress being made towards reconciliation in Australia and the successful approaches that organisations across the country are taking to contribute to this goal.

While the **Australian Reconciliation Barometer 2012** shows that most people in Australia do not believe the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians is strong, this is not the case in organisations with a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).



The **Reconciliation Action Plan Impact Measurement Report 2012** shows the relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other employees in RAP organisations is good, trust is high and prejudice is low. RAPs are changing attitudes and are making a significant difference to the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia, particularly through employment and business opportunities.

To view these reports in full, visit: [www.reconciliation.org.au](http://www.reconciliation.org.au)

\* Reconciliation Australia is the national organisation promoting reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other Australians

# National Reconciliation Week 2013

May 27 to June 3  
[www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw](http://www.reconciliation.org.au/nrw)

Let's talk Recognition

As a universal language music has the power to break down barriers and unite people—Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians alike. This National Reconciliation Week join singer-songwriters Emma-Louise and Thelma Plum as they team up with a host of other musicians and ambassadors to talk recognition.

## IWD: Edith Cowan Memorial Lecture 2013

The remarkable story of an Indigenous woman who raised three children after suffering a stroke was one of the inspiring stories to feature in the **2013 Edith Cowan Memorial Lecture** by Professor Beth Armstrong.

Speaking on International Women's Day, Professor Armstrong spoke about 'Mary', who managed to communicate through gestures, facial expressions and a handful of words after losing the ability to speak when she suffered a stroke at age 30.

The condition, known as aphasia, affects one in three stroke victims and is the speciality of Professor Armstrong, who is ECU's Foundation Chair for Speech Pathology.

Professor Armstrong said Mary had learnt to work around her aphasia despite only being able to use a handful of words including yes and no.

"She's living quite an active life again despite having no speech which is quite remarkable," Professor Armstrong said.

"I consider Mary a real missing voice but a real success story."

Professor Armstrong's presentation, **Missing Voices: A journey into language, brain and culture**, provided a valuable insight into the world of women and men suffering from aphasia.

Affecting the language centre of the brain in about one third of stroke sufferers, aphasia can severely limit the communication of sufferers limiting speech, reading and comprehension of spoken words.

Professor Armstrong spoke of the enormous mental strength and fortitude required by sufferers of aphasia.

Professor Armstrong's research is investigating whether targeted early intervention can improve the likelihood of recovery for aphasia sufferers.

An internationally recognised expert in aphasia, Professor Armstrong received two NHMRC grants for her work around aphasia and rehabilitation for stroke victims totalling almost \$1.4 million in the September 2012 round of funding.

## 2013 CME Women in Resources Awards



Professor Colleen Hayward AM (third from left) at the CME Women in Resources Awards

Kurongkurl Katitjin's Head of Centre, Professor Colleen Hayward AM was recently invited to perform the Acknowledgement of Country at the **2013 CME Women in Resources Awards** breakfast.

Coinciding with International Women's Day, the event was attended by around 800 people.

The Women in Resources Awards recognise individuals and organisations working to build a world-class industry which provides attractive career opportunities and enhances the recognition and participation of women in the sector.



## Staff Snapshot

*Sophie Karangarua*



Executive Officer to Pro-Vice-Chancellor  
(Equity & Indigenous)

### **Favourite book:**

Bossypants by Tina Fey

### **Favourite music:**

Most genres – but usually what's on Triple J

### **Favourite food:**

Haianese Chicken Rice

### **Favourite TV Program:**

SBS Docos

### **Favourite Movie:**

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

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

Oprah and Barack Obama

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

I speak fluent Japanese

## NAIDOC Week theme announced

NAIDOC Week 2013, from 7–14 July, is an opportunity for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to join together to recognise the valuable contribution Indigenous people have made to this country.

This year's national NAIDOC theme is '**We value the vision: Yirrkala Bark Petitions 1963.**'

This year's theme was selected by the National NAIDOC Committee to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the presentation of the Yirrkala Bark Petitions to Federal Parliament.

In 1963 the Yolngu people of northeast Arnhem Land presented the petition framed by traditional bark paintings to seek recognition of rights to their traditional lands on the Gove Peninsula.

The National NAIDOC Poster Competition is now open for entries. The competition is an opportunity for talented Indigenous artists to have their artwork, based on the theme, showcased across Australia as part of NAIDOC celebrations.

Entries close **Friday 29 March 2013.**

Nominations for the annual NAIDOC Awards are also now open. These awards recognise the outstanding contributions Indigenous Australians make to improve the lives of Indigenous people in their communities and beyond; the exceptional role they've undertaken to promote Indigenous issues in the wider community; or the excellence they've shown in their chosen field.

NAIDOC encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to nominate a community member who deserves to be recognised for their contribution.

Nominations close on **Friday 26 April 2013.**

For further information about NAIDOC 2013, visit: [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au)



7 - 14 July

**2013**

We value the vision:  
**YIRRKALA BARK  
PETITIONS 1963**

## 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](http://www.kk.ecu.edu.au).

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## Join our Mailing List

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

There are two options to subscribe to the mailing list;

- Either complete the online form under the News and Events section at [www.kk.ecu.edu.au](http://www.kk.ecu.edu.au); or
- email Tracey Lee Edwards at [tracey.edwards@ecu.edu.au](mailto:tracey.edwards@ecu.edu.au) with your name, title, organisation and contact details (including preferred email address).



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