Dear NIRAKN Members and Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of the NIRAKN newsletter for 2017. The last couple of months have proved to be a busy yet rewarding time for NIRAKN and its affiliates. The year began with postgraduate engagement through the Level A Workshops, followed by management meetings and the resoundingly successful Critical Race, Whiteness and Indigeneity International Conference.

There has been significant progress in meeting NIRAKN’s goals and objectives, with the research capacity building program a particular highlight. Additionally, NIRAKN has made a significant contribution to the Australian Higher Education sector through policy submissions and lobbying for change: the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020 and the Final Report of the Review of Australia’s Research Training System by Australian Council of Learned Academies are but two recent policy developments where NIRAKN has made a significant contribution.

The Australian Research Council (ARC) has approved a one-year funding extension which will allow NIRAKN to continue, albeit in revised form, until June 2018. The new NIRAKN model is well placed to keep pace with developments in the sector, as well as build on the existing strengths of the Network. The National Hub located at the Queensland University of Technology will coordinate State Hubs at Flinders University (covering South Australia and the Northern Territory), University of Western Australia (covering Western Australia), University of Newcastle (covering New South Wales) and RMIT University (covering Victoria, Tasmania and the ACT). The Research Capacity Building Program will continue, as will the Collaborative Research Program, but in augmented form, with projects attracting increased funding so as to realise broader ambitions.

As NIRAKN moves into a new phase, I am confident that we shall continue to build a legacy that will serve generations to come.

Sincerely,

Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson
NIRAKN Director
Both the NIRAKN management and events team have been busy for the first half of 2017, with several NIRAKN activities occurring around Australia. The NIRAKN Management committee held their first 2017 meeting on 2-3 February held in Adelaide and a second meeting occurred on June 5 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel and preceded the Race, Whiteness and Indigeneity international conference.

**Level A Workshops**

NIRAKN had the opportunity to hold two Level A Workshops at the beginning of the year, both aimed towards Indigenous PhD and Masters by Research Postgraduates in the starting stages of their candidature. Following NIRAKN’s renewed model, the first workshop was hosted by the Indigenous Research and Engagement Unit at QUT for Queensland participants, while Professor Mark McMillan and RMIT hosted the Melbourne workshop for Victoria, ACT and Tasmania.

The two workshops saw a combined attendance of over twenty-five prospective postgraduates all of which experienced a three day curriculum of Indigenous Research Methodologies from the NIRAKN Academic staff. The cohort learned of efficient project management, effective supervisory practice, research ethics, journal publications, academic career paths and much more. Keep an eye on NIRAKN’s social media and Weekly News for future Level A Workshop announcements.

As NIRAKN 1.0 winds down and NIRAKN 2.0 approaches, Train the Trainer sessions were run by the NIRAKN Hub staff at RMIT for key node leaders to embed Level A Workshops curriculum and teachings into their respective state hubs. The NIRAKN State Hub leaders are as follows:

- **Queensland** – Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson, QUT
- **New South Wales** – Professor Steve Larkin, University of Newcastle
- **Victoria, Tasmania, ACT** – Professor Mark McMillan, RMIT
- **South Australia, Northern Territory** – Associate Professor Simone Tur, Flinders University
- **Western Australia** – Professor Jill Milroy, University of Western Australia
Critical Race, Whiteness and Indigeneity International Conference

The Race, Whiteness and Indigeneity International Conference proved to be NIRAKN’s biggest initiative and event so far. The conference took place on June 6-8 at the Gold Coast, Queensland and was created to further interdisciplinary conversations focusing on race, whiteness and Indigeneity within the context of settler colonialisms in the USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Hawaii. Across the three days, 170 delegates had the opportunity to engage with 12 internationally renowned senior academic keynote speakers through plenary sessions as well as 72 papers across concurrent presentations, all relating to future directions for teaching, research and policy.

This event offered rich and diverse opportunities to participate in global conversations about the denial and significance of race, whiteness and Indigeneity in the 21st century. cutting edge new theoretical developments and knowledge were debated with the conference providing researchers and policy makers with an engaging and culturally diverse forum in which to discuss the historical and contemporary links between race, Indigeneity and whiteness.

NIRAKN would like to warmly thank all delegate feedback we have received and to extend our thanks to those who attended and presented. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the keynote speakers that headlined the event: Professor Cheryl Harris (UCLA), Professor Devon Carbado (UCLA), Professor Angela Riley (UCLA), Professor David Roediger (University of Kansas), Professor Brendan Hokowhitu (University of Waikato), Professor Linda Tūhiwai Smith (University of Waikato), Associate Professor Hokulani Aikau (University of Hawaii), Professor Chris Andersen (University of Alberta), Associate Professor Fiona Nicoll (University of Alberta), Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson (QUT) and Professor Steve Larkin (University of Newcastle).

Research Affiliates

NIRAKN extends a warm welcome to four new research affiliates:

Ms Ambelin Kwaymullina, lecturer at the UWA Law School, University of Western Australia;

Mr Brian Marshall, Research Project Manager, School of Education and Social Work, University of Sydney;

Ms Carol Dowling, Associate Lecturer, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University; and

Associate Professor Peter Anderson, who also joins the Indigenous Research and Engagement Unit as Associate Director, Indigenous Research and Engagement QUT. Associate Professor Anderson was previously from the Faculty of Education, Monash University.
2017 NIRAKN Undergraduate Essay Prize

The Critical Race and Whiteness International Conference saw the attendance of over 170 scholars and researchers on the Gold Coast. Amongst these were three outstanding Indigenous Undergraduate students who were invited as recipients of the 2017 NIRAKN Undergraduate Essay Prize.

The Essay Prize rewards and recognises the academic skill, talent and research of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander university undergraduates.

NIRAKN is proud to congratulate Mr. Noah Bedford (UNSW), Ms. Michelle Kerrin (University of Melbourne) and Mr. Keegan Rylance (University of Queensland) as the winners of the 2017 prize.

Date Claimers for Forthcoming Events

NIRAKN Seminar Series:
We are currently finalising an exciting seminar program. Please check out our NIRAKN website for information and these seminars will also be promoted via the weekly Friends of NIRAKN newsletter.

Monday 31st July, 2017
“New Challenges in Indigenous education in post-imperial Australia” by Associate Professor Peter Anderson at the Queensland University of Technology, Kelvin Grove

Wednesday 20th September, 2017 - TBC
Monday 23rd October, 2017 - TBC

Research Methodologies Workshop
The next Research Methodologies Workshop will take place Thursday 7th September 2017. Please keep an eye on the NIRAKN social channels for more information - registration will be opening soon.

Critical Reading Group
Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th October 2017
Each NIRAKN newsletter profiles Indigenous academics who attribute their path to success to working as a collective with communities, keeping connected to country and driving a national Indigenous led research agenda. In this edition we interview Associate Professor Rowena Ball, Researcher at the Australian National University and Chris Wilson, Senior Lecturer at Flinders University.

1. **Where is your traditional country and what do you love most about it?**

My ancestral country is the central Queensland highlands (I also have ancestral country in Ireland!). The Frontiers Wars were particularly fierce there in the 1860s – it is beautiful country, worth fighting for. But I feel acute, deep connections to country everywhere I travel throughout Australia. The light, the scent, the textures, the characteristic angles and space scales – all special! All different landscapes, too, yet I feel at one with them. And I marvel that after all the vandalism inflicted on country by the invaders and settlers it is still so beautiful and resilient! I feel nothing but deepest respect and admiration for the ancestors who cared so well for every detail of country and waterways.

2. **In your capacity as an Indigenous Academic, what are your areas of expertise? How important is this work for Indigenous people?**

I am a scientist and mathematician, with research expertise in nonlinear and complex dynamical systems. Since my PhD I have held research-only positions, funded by ARC fellowships and grants, most recently a Future Fellowship. My research is essentially interdisciplinary, and I have worked with physicists, engineers, and chemists on interesting problems such as combustion and explosives, magnetic fusion plasmas, and decarbonising fuels. Research I am currently leading is elucidating the origin of life on Earth!

I am passionate about researching Indigenous sciences and engineering. It is a complete nonsense to say that us mob had no science, or that science is some sort of Western whitefella business. The science we know today comes from the synthesis of knowledge from many cultures. But much of Indigenous scientific and engineering heritage was wilfully destroyed or damaged by the British colonisers.

I feel it is important for Indigenous knowledges to join and enrich the universal pool of scientific knowledge, providing a broader dimension to science and opportunities to create new knowledge at the interface. Unless a nation or community reaches out to the knowledge of the world, makes it their own and adds to it, and trains its own people, history shows that it is impossible to remain free of colonisation and exploitation.
3. Your research contributes significantly to a number of academies and universities across Australia. What are some of your recent highlights?

- The power without the glory: mathematical modelling elucidates the multiple roles of hydrogen peroxide in mediating the origin of life on Earth.
- Using the second law first: entropy generation analysis to optimise carbon capture systems.
- STEM the gap: science belongs to us mob too. Influential paper published in Australian Quarterly.
- Bringing ancient unwritten histories alive: dating events in Indigenous Australian deep (pre-colonial) history using phylogenetic methods.
- Fractal enlightenment: Science and maths enrichment activities with Aboriginal school students at STEM camps and at remote Indigenous schools under the CSIRO Scientists and Mathematicians in Schools program.

4. What vision do you have for Indigenous academia in Australia? How do you see the future?

Vision: An independent national Indigenous Academy, with a permanent home, to celebrate and support excellence in Indigenous research and researchers, promote international Indigenous engagement, build public understanding of Indigenous knowledges, support early career Indigenous researchers, and provide independent, authoritative and influential advice to policymakers.

Future: The Australian Indigenous University! The AIU would be a research and teaching university, with full undergrad and postgrad faculties in engineering, physical and life sciences, mathematics and statistics, as well as arts, law, business and medical sciences. A feeder Indigenous senior secondary college attached.

The AIU would aim to become one of the world’s top 100 research-intensive universities within 10 years. Like all top research universities, the AIU will attract talented staff and students world-wide, but in particular attract Indigenous talent from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region, via a system of targeted scholarships.

The AIU will become a major driver of stability, social and political advancement, and economic empowerment of Indigenous communities over the whole region. It is therefore in Australia’s national strategic interest and will benefit us all. We’ll give them PhDs not guns! They’ll join the Academy not militia! Professional training and jobs, not unemployment and poverty! Minority culture and language revival, not dissipation and dilution!

5. What message would you like to express to the future generations of Indigenous academics?

Gofer it – you are up there with the best!
1. Where is your traditional country and what do you love most about it?

Ngarrindjeri Ruwe/Ruwar (Land, Body, Spirit) Southeast South Australia. Also known as the Lower Murray River, Lakes Albert and Alexandrina and Coorong region. My grandfather was born at Raukkan (formally called Point McLeay Mission, which features on the $50 Australian note). My grandmother was born at Dimboola across the SA border. My father was born at Karoonda and my mother identifies as Australian with Irish heritage. I have connections to Latji Latji and Kaurna through my father and grandparents and my birthplace is in Adelaide. I grew up in Noarlunga, southern suburbs of Adelaide and still live here. I travel back and forth and always learning about both my Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage and proud to be Aboriginal Australian.

My Ruwe/Ruwar is a stunning region in Australia, significant culturally (through Ngurunderi creation ancestor Ponde (the giant Murray Cod) and the formation of the landscape according to Ngarrindjeri) historically (colonial encounters through Badin and Flinders scientific expeditions of the southern coastline as well as recent development in the letters patent). The region is connected ecological to other First Nations nationally (through the River Murray System) and globally (RAMSAR and migratory wildlife). There are intersections between fresh and salt, as well as the narratives through time many of which are intangible aspects that are not recorded by archaeologists and historians. For the Ngarrindjeri, everything is connected and this philosophy is integrated throughout aspects of daily life, culture and work in academia. I acknowledge the passing of many elders including Uncle Tom Trevorrow, Uncle George Trevorrow, Uncle Matt Rigney, and Uncle Neville.

2. In your capacity as an Indigenous Academic, what are your areas of expertise? How important is this work for Indigenous people?

My discipline is archaeology, more specifically the archaeology of Indigenous peoples (in Australia and colonised nations). This includes challenging the dominant western versions of history and archaeological narrative that emerges from academic research and government policy. I am interested in Indigenous archaeologies, the archaeology of Ngarrindjeri Ruwe/Ruwar, radiocarbon dating techniques, methods, and narratives that emerge from encounters between Indigenous peoples and the colonial experiences.

I am a Senior Lecturer/Academic Adviser in Yunggorendi (to impart knowledge, to communicate to inform) Student Engagement at Flinders University. My role is a balanced teaching and research and my core duties include Indigenous student support across all faculties in the university. I began working here in 2004 and worked across several programs for all levels of the education sector in South Australia which has focused on encouraging ATSI people to engage in university education and improve educational outcomes. I also teach Australian/Indigenous Studies and contribute to disciplinary programs in Humanities and Archaeology. Where possible I also regularly contribute to community programs for the Ngarrindjeri nation and City of Onkaparinga (Noarlunga) for Nunga students, particularly community training programs and special events (i.e. during reconciliation week and NAIDOC week events).

This work is important in higher education as Indigenous peoples continue the resistance struggle for our community. For the government it has significance as they have increased targets for the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the sector.
3. **Your research contributes significantly to a number of academies and universities across Australia. What are some of your recent highlights?**

I recently submitted my PhD in May 2017. My current research is focused on the Archaeology of Ngarrindjeri Ruwe/Ruwar. I focused on critical Indigenous understandings of archaeology in Ngarrindjeri Ruwe/Ruwar where I conducted a series of archaeological surveys and excavations for the Ngarrindjeri community. The project involved western scientific investigations and Ngarrindjeri cultural knowledge to provide a more holistic archaeological narrative of the Lower Murray River, South Australia. More specifically, I refer to the development of Ngarrindjeri Archaeological Standpoint in my research as theoretical and methodological framework to assist in challenging positivist disciplines such as archaeology.

I am currently involved with two ARC projects including the Australian Research Council Linkage Scheme (LP130100131) Return, Reconcile Renew Project (led by A/Prof Cressida Fforde ANU) on understanding the history, effects and opportunities of repatriation and building an evidence base for the future. The second is NIRAKN led by Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton Robinson.

I have been involved in Repatriation Ngarrindjeri Old People from Museums in the UK and Australia where I assisted my community in repatriating 74 Old People from Museum Victoria back Ngarrindjeri ruwe. Also reburial of 26 Old People along the Coorong in September 2006. My current involvement in this ARC with colleagues A/Prof Steve Hemming and Professor Daryle Rigney with the Ngarrindjeri Regional Authority. NIRAKN has provided a national and international network for engaging in scholarly research that has application to my field. It has helped shape a theoretical and methodological framework in archaeology for Indigenous peoples engaging in academic research.

Indigenous Peoples, Colonial Encounters, Museums and Identity are also research interests for me. Repatriation of Old People has enabled me to engage in my discipline but also be multi-disciplinary in Indigenous/Australian Studies, History, Museum Studies and frame my research so it has broader relevance and understanding to communities today. International conferences and workshops have enabled me to network internationally with some of the critical thinkers in my field but also enable a platform to learn from senior academics in the field, particular our own mob.

4. **What vision do you have for Indigenous academia in Australia? How do you see the future?**

Working with local communities, elders, organisations such as the Office of Indigenous Strategy and Engagement at Flinders University are unique spaces that provide the ongoing daily support towards this research and learning process for early career researchers. Indigenous Research Methodologies masterclasses and NIRAKN have provided invaluable support and theoretical training to challenge the discourse in my discipline and thus write the narrative for our own mob.

For Indigenous peoples to be leaders in their field of expertise/discipline and competitive researchers internationally. I would also like to see opportunities for Indigenous academics to collaborate with institutions such as Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford UCL and those that have particular relevance for our communities.

5. **What message would you like to express to the future generations of Indigenous academics?**

To value the experiences and knowledge of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academics who are leading in their fields. Collectively we are able to engage in ATSI teaching and research that is rigorous and produces new knowledge that are creative, highly theoretical and help to strengthen Indigenous scholarship.
Indigenous peoples from around the world share common experiences of colonisation and have been involved in the struggle for self-determination at the global level. Our collective politics have been shaped by our intellectual traditions which inform our work within the academy. The International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies (IJCIS) offers a virtual intellectual space for the dissemination of international scholarship from scholars across disciplines that include the Humanities, Social Sciences, Health Sciences, Law and Education in the field of Indigenous Studies. As Critical Indigenous studies is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary field we are seeking articles, review essays and book reviews from a variety of disciplines related to but not exclusive of the following topics:

- Indigenous sovereignty and colonisation
- Indigenous people and the environment
- Indigenous politics and rights
- Indigenous people and the law
- Indigenous people and racism
- Indigenous people and new technologies
- Indigenous visual art and performance
- Indigenous people and media
- Indigenous methodologies and research
- Indigenous cultures, heritage and repatriation
- Indigenous science
- Indigenous economies
- Indigenous literature
- Indigenous pedagogy and education
- Indigenous health
- Indigenous feminisms
- Indigenous queer politics and theory
- Indigenous critical theory
- Indigenous history
- Indigenous identity
- Indigenous philosophy
- Indigenous film making

As a refereed journal with distinguished scholars across a range of disciplines on the editorial board, the quality of accepted submissions will be of the highest standard. The journal offers scope for critical international engagement and debate by bringing together emergent and ground breaking research in the field of Critical Indigenous studies from around the globe.

Left Side: Professor David Roediger; Associate Professors Fiona Nicoll, Hokulani Aikau and Professor Steve Larkin receiving gifts from Professor Brendan Hokowhitu; Conference Dinner; Professor Cheryl Harris presenting her keynote.

Right Side: Professor Angela Riley; Professor Steve Larkin; Professor Devon Carbado; Professors Chris Andersen, Cheryl Harris, Linda Tuhiai Smith and Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson; Welcome to Country by Uncle Graham Dillon.
Attention NIRAKN Members:

Please remember to log onto the members only section of the NIRAKN website and gain access to meeting papers, Node research projects, participate in discussion boards and join NIRAKN programming & events.

Keep up to date with NIRAKN and its affiliates by following us on Twitter and Facebook. Simply search the following links to join the conversation:

@TheNIRAKN

@The_NIRAKN


Edited by Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson (QUT), Professor Mark McMillan (RMIT) and Dr David Singh (QUT), the IJCIS offers scope for critical international engagement and debate by bringing together emergent and ground breaking research in the field of Critical Indigenous Studies from around the globe.

Previous editions and more information can be found at:


2017 Scholarships & Fellowships

Victorian Government Early Childhood Scholarships for Aboriginal People
Always Open

Charles Perkins Scholarship
Opens 28 August 2017
Closes 15 January 2018

AIEF-BHP Tertiary Scholarship
Opens September 2017

Advance Queensland ATSI PhD Scholarships + Fellowships
Always Open

Fulbright Indigenous Scholarship
Closes 1 August 2017

QUT/NIRAKN Indigenous Postgraduate Research Award
Closes 31 July 2017

Become a Network Affiliate of NIRAKN

If you missed the chance to become a member of NIRAKN, you may be interested in becoming an Affiliate Member! Affiliate membership of the network is open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander academics across Australia. For an application form and more information on how to apply, please contact nirakn@qut.edu.au

If you’re an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate student, contact us now to ensure you’re receiving information about access to our events and programs through our Indigenous Postgraduates email list. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous community members are also welcome to keep up with our news through our ‘Friends of NIRAKN’ email list.

Email nirakn@qut.edu.au for more information.