THE WOLLOTUKA INSTITUTE
ANNUAL REPORT 2014

THE
WOLLOTUKA
INSTITUTE
The Wollotuka Institute (Wollotuka) acknowledges the traditional Aboriginal owners of the lands within our footprint areas:

- Awabakal Nation
- Darkinung Nation
- Biripai Nation
- Worimi Nation
- Wonnarua Nation

We also pay respect to our Nguraki past and present.

1 In the language of the Awabakal meaning “now, today, present time”
2 In the language of the Awabakal meaning “eating and meeting place”
3 In the language of the Awabakal meaning “wise person, elder”
DEFINING OUR SPACE
WITHIN THE ACADEMY

Our story is one from the perspective of an Indigenous Institute within a dominant western higher education institution. Although we operate within this space we understand that the true essence and measure of Wollotuka's existence is not simply about the numbers (the University can currently boast that we have one of the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and staff nationally), it is more about the quality of the relationships that our 'community' enjoys with the University and how we create a space that is culturally safe and welcoming for our mob and visitors who seek to engage with us. We define Wollotuka as a ‘community’ as opposed to a centre or unit, as we together share our successes and challenges with the values and principles of a strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Our community (Nguraki, knowledge holders, students, staff, and visitors) relate to Wollotuka as a home, a family, a place they feel grounded and safe.

Ngarralin Marrung⁴ allows us to respect and honour through knowing our histories, honouring contributions, respecting traditions and valuing culturally responsive practices which underpins our operations⁵.

Wollotuka plays two significant roles within the University firstly, one in which we share our knowledges to enable the enhancement of the western environment and secondly, building on the foundations of our ancestors to further grow our knowledges for future generations.

We are positioned within the wider academy as a body of expertise, for providing advice and guidance to embedding Indigenous curriculum, university policy, research practice, contributing to providing a diverse, safe environment and strategies supporting a ‘whole of university’ approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education and research. This is a vital role, however focuses on informing a western knowledge system and should not distract full attention away from claiming our space within the academy, to discuss, debate and critique within our own knowledge system.

Reclaiming, respecting and building on our knowledges is integral to the knowledge space we hold within the academy. It is our responsibility to create a space that can be informed by our own epistemologies (way of knowing) and ontologies (way of being) within our whole community, inclusive of research, learning and teaching, student, staff and community engagement. This strongly relates to our mantra ‘knowledge... our way’.

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⁴ In the language of the Awabakal meaning “listening/learning well”
⁵ The Wollotuka Institute Cultural Standards 2013, p.9
2014 welcomed the appointment of the first Dean of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research, Professor Peter Radoll, to the University.

Professor Radoll’s appointment as Dean will play an integral role in the leadership and ongoing development of Indigenous education, research and collaboration contributing to the strategic directions of the University.

From a Wollotuka perspective Professor Radoll also joins the team of Directors (as Director of Academic and Research) ensuring that Wollotuka continues to maintain a positive community that is committed to providing a culturally affirming and intellectually enriching environment. The four Directors work in collaboration in making decisions that continue to compliment this environment and ensure the best interest of Wollotuka and its community.

With the appointment of Professor Radoll, Wollotuka acknowledges the contribution that Professor John Lester brought to the Directorship whilst he was acting Director of Academic and Research. Professor Lester’s input was highly valued and respected with University Executive hosting a dinner to honour his contribution. Professor Lester will now step back into his substantive role as Lecturer at Wollotuka.

This dynamic Aboriginal-led leadership model continues to advance Wollotuka as a national leader in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education with the University once again boasting one of the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student and staff enrolments as well as graduates in Australia.

We continue to operate from offices on three of the University’s campuses – Awabakal Country (Callaghan Campus), Darkinung Country (Ourimbah Campus) and Biripai Country (Port Macquarie Campus). We respect and honour these lands thereby maintaining a pride in place and custodian responsibilities and obligations.

Graduating our Rhd students is always a significant occasion for us with this year seeing two prominent local Aboriginal students graduate. Worimi man, Dr Joe Perry, Lecturer at Wollotuka graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy (Aboriginal Studies) and Wollotuka Nguraki and Biripai woman, Dr Laurel Williams graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy (Education).

Moving towards global leadership, Wollotuka has taken another step closer to international accreditation with the renowned World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) where the presentation of our Kotabunbilla Self Study received overwhelming approval from the WINHEC Accreditation Board at their annual general meeting in Hawaii during May. The next step in the process will be a site visit in May 2015.

The University continues to value the cultural integrity of Wollotuka where, in collaboration with the Local Awabakal Aboriginal Land Council, Wollotuka arranged a traditional smoking ceremony to cleanse the earth before the first turning of the soil at the University’s NeW Space. These cleansing ceremonies are an important practice for Wollotuka occurring within the Birabahn Building to commence the new University year.

*In the language of the Awabakal meaning “permit to think, remember”*
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Student Enrolments

- Undergraduate (628)
- Postgraduate Coursework (92)
- Research Higher Degree (33)
- Enabling (197)
- Non-Award (1)

By Program Level:
- Business and Law (78)
- Education & Arts (287)
- Engineering & Built Environment (56)
- Health and Medicine (192)
- Science & Information Technology (105)
- English Language & Foundation Studies (197)
- The Wollotuka Institute (33)
- Student Admin Services (3)

(Source: University’s Management Information System, February 2015)
80
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Staff

158
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Completions
Our Nguraki pave the way and guide us through our governance and leadership structures providing valued input and advice, which is honoured and respected, by staff and students within Wollotuka.

In 2014 Wollotuka employed a number of Nguraki on a casual basis bearing in mind their life commitments and circumstances thus allowing them to balance their personal, family and wider community commitments. Aunty Bronwyn Chambers also continues her employment as Elder in Residence. These appointments span across various Aboriginal nations bringing numerous cultural and spiritual customs and beliefs adding to the vibrancy of cultures open to staff, students and community.

A Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training (BATSIEt) provides high level advice to the Vice-Chancellor of the University. BATSIEt is chaired by Conjoint Professor Bob Morgan, an eminent leader in Indigenous education both nationally and internationally. Its membership includes all-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representation (including our Nguraki) with high level skills and expertise in Indigenous educational and community matters. This consultation with Indigenous communities is integral to the University’s approach to supporting Indigenous education furthering our Bula Wiyawiellyi cultural standard. A review of BATSIEt will take place in 2015 ensuring the continuation of this expert advice.

Wollotuka’s unique director management structure (four Directors) based on a traditional collaborative leadership perspective forms a dynamic decision making process that is achieving outstanding results in Indigenous education locally, nationally and internationally. The Directors share responsibility for strategic planning, evaluating, budgeting and managing resources. Each Director drives a specific portfolio within their areas of expertise actively negotiating and engaging with staff, students and community both inside and outside of the University to achieve outstanding results.

- Professor John Lester – Director, Academic and Research (with Professor Peter Radoll moving into the position in September 2014)
- Leanne Holt – Director, Indigenous Student Engagement, Employment and Collaboration
- Associate Professor Peter O’Mara – Director, Indigenous Health
- Professor John Maynard – Director and Chair of Indigenous History

This alternative successful approach has been endorsed and supported by the University’s senior management team who continually work in collaboration with the Directors to strengthen the University’s understanding of Indigenous education.

The governance and leadership structure of Indigenous education at the University guarantees strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community participation in the setting of key directions and priorities to advance Wollotuka’s goals and provide an environment where our Cultural Standards are respected, realised and celebrated.
OUR STAFF

Staff are strong in their own cultural knowledge, heritage and identity in order to be positive contributing members of the community.8

Wollotuka stands alone from other Australian higher education Indigenous units as an all-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staffed unit. Each of our staff members has input into the decision making processes via their own reporting lines to the Wollotuka Executive Committee (see Wollotuka organisational chart). Wollotuka’s successes can be attributed to our dynamic and vibrant staff who are highly skilled culturally, professionally and academically. Our staff originate from a diverse range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds with this diversity bringing an extensive range of worldviews and knowledges.

The Wollotuka Institute – Organisational Chart 2014

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8 The Wollotuka Institute Cultural Standards 2013, p.13
Dr. Joe Perry, Worimi man and Lecturer at Wollotuka graduated at the April 2014 ceremony with his Doctor of Philosophy (Aboriginal Studies). His thesis titled "Mission Impossible": Aboriginal survival before, during and after the Aboriginal Protection Era" focuses on the history of the small Aboriginal mission at Karuah where he was raised. He undertook this important study for his family, local Worimi Community and wider community.

Associate Professor Stephanie Gilbert received the Faculty of Education & Arts Award for RHD Excellence 2013 Commendation at their awards ceremony in August. This was in recognition of the outstanding quality of her RHD thesis.

Professor John Maynard has been honoured by his peers with his election as a Fellow of the esteemed Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia (ASSA). The honour recognises his outstanding achievements promoting the advancement of the social sciences, through his work in Indigenous history.

Karen Moran, Indigenous Education Coordinator, Port Macquarie Campus was awarded the Faculty of Health & Medicine External Professional Staff Award. She has been working extensively with the faculty staff and her work has assisted in the development and strengthening of relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and faculty staff at Port Macquarie campus.

Cheryl Newton, Senior Administrator at Wollotuka, was one of five University staff awarded with the Vice Chancellor’s Award for Professional Staff Excellence in recognition and appreciation of outstanding performance and contribution to the University and in particular her work associated with Wollotuka’s WINHEC accreditation process.

Denise Emmerson, Lillian Eastwood and Deirdre Heitmeyer were recognised for 15 years of service under the University’s Staff Service Recognition Awards in April 2014.
HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Dean of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Education and Research

Wollotuka welcomes Professor Peter Radoll as the University’s first Dean of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research. Commencing in September 2014, Professor Radoll received a warm welcome to Awabakal Country from Wollotuka Nguraki, staff and students and the wider University community. He was already well known to a number of Wollotuka staff through Community networks and having been a member and Deputy Chair of BATSIE.

Professor Radoll is a descendant of the Anaiwan People of northern NSW. As Director of the Tjabal Indigenous Higher Education Centre at the Australian National University for five years and more recently Acting Director at the Ngunnawal Indigenous Higher Education Centre at the University of Canberra, he has developed a wealth of experience in education and research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as well as demonstrating significant institutional and community leadership. He holds a Bachelor of Information Technology and Master of Information Technology from the University of Canberra and a PhD from the Australian National University.

Professor Radoll’s appointment is a valuable addition to the University and the already innovative Director management structure of Wollotuka. He is located within Wollotuka’s Birabahn Building.

International Engagement

Indigenous people are increasingly exploring new worlds and developing new global relationships, blending newly discovered knowledge with age-old Indigenous wisdom. This newly discovered knowledge, when it is blended with Indigenous wisdom is essentially a compass for navigating the non-Indigenous world but it also serves as a cultural umbilical cord providing Indigenous peoples with the knowledge and the means to remain grounded in culture and to be secure in identity.

A core feature for Wollotuka’s aspirations for the future is international collaboration and to achieve the full potential of our objectives in this area a new International Collaboration Officer position has been created and added to Dr. Joe Perry’s portfolio. Dr. Perry commenced with the development of a strong strategic plan that will provide a structural roadmap enabling the opportunity to move beyond simply negotiating and signing memorandums of understanding with collaborating international Indigenous higher education programs and institutions. This strategic plan will assist with negotiating and achieving the inherent potential associated with international collaborative ventures.

Adding to the current formalised partnerships with Te Whare Wananga O Awanuiarangi and University of British Columbia (UBC) a new relationship in the country of China was one other avenue explored by a small delegation of Wollotuka staff including Dr. Joe Perry, Leanne Holt and Conjoint Professor Bob Morgan. They visited Minzu University, Beijing Normal University and Nankai University. The purpose of the trip was to explore the possibility of creating collaborative working partnerships between institutions to explore potential research teaching and cultural exchange programs. These initial meetings were productive and were received well with each individual university providing positive feedback. An outcome being to host a Chinese delegation from these Universities in June 2015 to discuss further the possibility of establishing academic relationships.
Kotabunbilla – The Story of the Wollotuka Community

As previously mentioned we have taken a step further with our international accreditation through WINHEC. A team of Wollotuka staff and students attended the 2014 WINHEC annual general meeting in Hawaii from 15-16 May to present our Self Study. The presentation focused on the Wollotuka journey, a journey from our rich traditional beginnings, through to defining and creating our space within the Academy and moving towards national leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The presentation was met with outstanding support from the accreditation panel as well as other members of the WINHEC audience. The presentation focused on the Wollotuka journey, a journey from our rich traditional beginnings, through to defining and creating our space within the Academy and moving towards national leadership in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. The presentation was met with outstanding support from the accreditation panel as well as other members of the WINHEC audience. After the presentation other institutions in the early stages of accreditation approached us to provide advice towards their process. A team from the panel will visit Wollotuka in May 2015 to further assess our ability to meet our cultural standards.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and Innovation Cluster (ATSIRIC) Launch

The launch, which also included an information and planning component, was held 1 October 2014 focusing on initial formation of relationships, sharing information and identifying the issues that are important to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and communities and what the University can do to make a difference in these areas of importance. As well as this, it was hoped that participants could start identifying the direction the Cluster should take and activities the Cluster should focus on to start making an impact.

70 University staff and local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations, including a number of our Nguraki, attended the event. After the Welcome to Awabakal Country by Aunty June Rose, The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Caroline McMillan also welcomed participants to the forum suggesting that the Clusters operate a bit like communities, in that they aim to bring together organisations and individuals with distinct but complementary strengths to build stronger outcomes for all. ATSIRIC’s mission is about bringing these groups together with the primary focus on improving the outcomes for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people and the day was the start of developing these outcomes. The Vice-Chancellor stated ‘to the members of our local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations who have given us their time today, my warmest and most sincere welcome. Particularly at this early stage of development, it is critical for us to hear – and listen to – your voice, to ensure that the cluster is representative of the vision you have for your community and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders nationally’.

Some of the main discussion points from the morning sessions were topics such as:

- The importance of cultural safety
- The role of the cluster in providing capacity building for both the community and the university
- The value of Indigenous knowledges
- The community challenges and concerns include: health, education, sport, land, housing, employment, human rights and social justice

The first step for the Cluster leadership group in advancing the Cluster was to disseminate the feedback and discussion points that arose throughout the day to the participants.
ARC Discovery Project funding success

Professor John Maynard and Associate Professor Victoria Haskins have been awarded more than $610,000 in ARC Discovery Project funding commencing in 2015 for their research project *The NSW Aborigines Protection/Welfare Board 1883-1969: A History.*

**About the project**

Between 1883 and 1967 the lives of Aboriginal people in New South Wales (NSW) were in the hands of the NSW Aborigines Protection/Welfare Board. The impact of the Board’s systematic control over Aboriginal communities through policies of segregation, assimilation, child removal and wage withholding would endure for decades, and the negative results of those government directives are still being seen today. To date, however, no substantive history of the NSW Aborigines Protection/Welfare Board exists. This project aims to provide such a history, based on extensive archival and oral history research. Holding critical importance to NSW Aboriginal communities, the project expects to encourage the development of Indigenous historians in the process.

Malgagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy 2014-2016

The Strategy was launched in early 2014 and is accessible via the University website. The Strategy’s vision is for University to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with employment that values the culture and the aspirations of the individual, working together to build strong, dynamic and vibrant communities. The strategy focuses on key areas including: attraction and recruitment; environment and retention; development and extension; governance.

The University and the BATSIET also approved for a University Employment committee to be established co-Chaired by the Director, Workforce Planning and Strategy and the Dean, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Research with representation from every Faculty and Division. The committee will contribute to providing advice that assists the University in meeting their strategic KPI’s related to Indigenous employment.
Wollotuka Yarning Circle on Constitutional Recognition

This inaugural yarning circle is the flagship event for the Wollotuka Institute’s new direction in social engagement and discussion, ensuring the local Aboriginal people and the wider community take a more active role in Indigenous affairs and issues. We want to engage young people as part of this discussion to ensure we are encouraging a new generation of strong, informed Aboriginal people who are connected to their culture and country and are passionate and positive about their futures.

The event hosted at the Birabahn Building on 11 December 2014 discussed how constitutional recognition impacts the lives and social justice aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Panelists for the discussion were:

Mr. Jeff McMullen AM
Jeff McMullen has been a journalist, author and filmmaker for the last 45 years. Throughout his professional life, Jeff has written, filmed and campaigned around the world to improve the health, education and human rights of Indigenous people.

Ms Sharon Claydon
Federal Member for Newcastle
Sharon is a fifth generation Novocastrian with more than 15 years’ experience working in her local community. Sharon has completed an Honours degree in Anthropology and worked in remote Aboriginal communities and the community-based disability services sector.

Ms Teela Reid
An Aboriginal woman from Gilgandra NSW, a University of Newcastle Alumni graduating with a Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor Physical Education and currently working with Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers in Sydney whilst completing her Juris Doctor at UNSW.

Moderator
Conjoint Professor Bob Morgan (Gumilaroi), The Wollotuka Institute
To an audience of 80 people, panelists discussed their views and opinions on the topic and afterwards took questions from the audience.

Director of the Wollotuka Institute, Professor Peter Radoll said it is essential to the progression of social justice in our country that Aboriginal people play an active role in the conversations that directly impact upon us.

“Constitutional recognition is one such conversation and we have a responsibility to not only our own people and communities, but also to the wider community, to discuss this issue alongside one another.”

“Australia’s founding document does not recognise Australia’s First Peoples. By amending this, by acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and the traditional owners of the land, we will be better placed to move toward our goal of unification and true equality.”
Indigenous scholars head to world’s most prestigious universities

Two outstanding young scholars from the University have been awarded competitive Indigenous scholarships to continue their studies at Oxford and Cambridge – ranked among the world’s most prestigious universities.

Nathan West, recipient of the Roberta Sykes Scholarship, will pursue postgraduate studies in social anthropology at either the University of Oxford or University of Cambridge. This is the second consecutive year this prestigious scholarship has been awarded to a University of Newcastle student; the 2013 scholarship was awarded to the University’s Kathleen Jackson, now undertaking a PhD in African and African American Studies at Harvard University.

Jessica Buck, recipient of a Charlie Perkins Scholarship and a James Fairfax Oxford Australia Scholarship, will commence postgraduate studies in Neuroscience at the University of Oxford. Two to three scholarships are awarded annually in memory of Charlie Perkins – Australia’s first Indigenous man to graduate from a university.

As outstanding scholars in their disciplines, Mr West and Ms Buck have a valuable opportunity through these scholarships to develop their expertise and knowledge at two of the world’s top universities.

Ms Buck, whose undergraduate degree is in Biomedical Science, developed an interest in health and medicine from a young age after watching her grandmother suffer from breast cancer. “As a kid I always wanted to fix things. My favourite toys were not Barbies but bandages, and my poor brother was forced into slings and mummified on many an occasion,” said Ms Buck.

“As an Aboriginal woman, I chose to study at the University of Newcastle because of its strong record of leadership in supporting Indigenous students. Almost half the Indigenous doctors in Australia graduate from the University of Newcastle.”

Cross cultural interactions with Indigenous populations in Arnhem Land, Canada and South America were the driver for Mr West’s entrée into social anthropology research. “While volunteering as a mentor in Arnhem Land and a remote part of Vancouver Island in Canada, I became interested in what occurs when different cultural lenses come together,” said Mr West.

A self-labelled ‘mediocre high school student’, Mr West said he had no aspirations for university study until he attended a University of Newcastle Open Day. “Tertiary study was something I had dismissed until I attended a University of Newcastle Open Day. From then, I wanted to make tertiary study a part of my future,” said Mr West.
TEACHING QUALITY
AND DEVELOPMENT

The priority area for developments in the Teaching Quality and Development portfolio in 2014 is:

The development of learning spaces that are constructed to embody culturally safe teaching, learning and sharing practices.

Aims
The enactment of excellence in teaching, valuing all knowledges bought to the learning space, sharing knowledges between participants and always prioritising Indigenous knowledges.

The following excerpt from the Cultural Standards show some of the standards in the academic area which are being focused on in 2014.

- Knowledge is acquired through a culturally responsive and embedded process;
- The knowledge and wisdom of Elders and Cultural Mentors is incorporated throughout the curriculum and within classroom teaching contexts;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge is applied to privilege and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wisdom;
- Standards of excellence are applied by integrating language and culture into our academic programs to strengthen cultural awareness and understanding;
- Staff are provided with continued professional development opportunities to maintain the highest levels of teaching and research standards;
- Individual and diverse learning styles are included within epistemologies (knowledges) and pedagogical (teaching) practices.

Bachelor of Aboriginal Professional Practice (BAPP)

In 2014 we had the fourth year of offering of BAPP. Total enrolments in 2014 increased to 24, increasing 29% from 2012.

The program has instilled the Cultural Standards, which has lead to an increase in cultural safety and pride within the cohort throughout the year.

2014 saw the BAPP now being Australian Quality Framework (AQF) compliant with all ABOR courses being mapped against discipline and teaching and learning standards including graduate attributes for their respective degrees. AQF mapping for BAPP and Aboriginal Studies Honours was approved through the University’s Program & Course Approval Committee (PCAC).

Crucially we note the relationship in our student cohort between a high female number of students, a high number of self-reported disabilities and a high number of first in family. This leads to a significant impetus for high level comprehensive responsiveness to this unique cohort.

Gail Tillman, Lecturer at Wollotuka, has been working on setting up new processes for her online courses in where students that are
required to complete online discussion boards have to submit a response before they are able to view other student responses. The feedback from students is positive with students feeling more confident in posting their discussions and maintaining originality in students work. This process is being taken up by other academics teaching online courses to increase the submission of online discussion pieces.

The offerings within BAPP such as ABOR1370: Working with Aboriginal communities has benefited by the input of our involvement with partners such as Barnardos and The Family Action Centre, as we create reflective teaching practices for the benefit of both students of the University and staff of our partner employers. Lecturers within BAPP continue to build on their expertise including in local, national and international forums. We also provide on a fee for service basis specific learning experiences for employees of community agencies such as Barnardos to equip those workers with skills to enable them to stream directly into the BAPP.

We also create and maintain relationships with industry and agencies for students enrolled in the core ABOR3999: Aboriginal Professional Experience where they undertake 210 hours of a work-based placement in the associated workforce related to the student’s major studies. Such placements maximise Aboriginal related experiences in a cross-cultural work environment as a minority worker.

Work Integrated Learning (WIL) collaboration
A WIL opportunity is being investigated between the University, Wollotuka and the First People’s House of Learning, University of Victoria. It would provide the opportunity of a student exchange based on programs that have a practical component (such as BAPP). Currently the logistics are being explored before further progress is made.

We also continue to form close partnerships with local and mid north coast TAFE as these students could be potential BAPP students. 22 students visited from the Community Services course delivered at Tighes Hill. This is the second year we have had a cohort visit. Michelle O’Brien, the TAFE teacher that facilitated the visit, sent an email expressing ‘a huge thank you for hosting our recent TAFE visit... and for sharing Indigenous knowledge and experience. The students thoroughly enjoyed the day and have taken a huge amount of learning from the experience.’

An Indigenous Student Engagement Officer was recruited in 2014 to track the progress of students within Yapug and other University enabling programs with a decision being made to review the program and the position in 2015.

Inclusive Curriculum
To ensure the strategic goal of the University to embed Indigenous curriculum into programs across the university continues to be a commitment an Indigenous staff member or community representative with relevant experience is represented on all program review committees.

A strategy is being developed that will ensure the invitation of faculties to discuss their recommendations and related reports to ensure that the consultation and expertise is continued past the panel representation. Part of this strategy is the establishment of an Indigenous teaching and learning committee to oversee these recommendations.

Yapug Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Enabling Program
Enrolments into this program remain steady with 78 commencing the program in 2014, although as with other enabling programs, success rates remain low (39.3% in 2014). It should be noted that 81.3% of completions to enrol in undergraduate study the following year.
Revitalisation of Aboriginal Languages

Language revitalisation is accessible and celebrated, strengthening a sense of identity, self-esteem and links to country. Wollotuka continues to view that the revival and maintenance of Aboriginal language and culture strengthen sense of identity, self-esteem and links to country.

Lingo lunches commenced this year whereby staff meet in an informal session and discuss different aspects of their own language and languages from surrounding areas and how the language can be integrated into everyday life including the working environment. From these sessions Aboriginal language has been displayed on signage within our buildings and different words have been displayed throughout offices. Some staff have also commenced acknowledging country in language.

Learning Indigenous Languages – can universities help? Forum

This forum was held on the 9 December 2014 exploring how universities can assist with Indigenous language awareness, which is essential for professions such as teachers, legal and health professionals, community and language revitalisation workers. It has been found that training in Indigenous languages is rarely available to them through university courses on Indigenous Australian languages. Nor are there many tertiary courses for speakers of Indigenous languages to enrich their study of their first language. None of the languages still spoken by children have a university on their country, thus restricting their access. This workshop aims to bring together people who want to improve the situation, and to discuss what universities could do to get more language skills into the hands of people doing grassroots language work.

Conference and Professional Development Activities

- 12th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Education, Honolulu, 5-8 January 2014 – Dr Greg Blyton presented paper at this conference “Native Peoples and Statues: Comparative Analysis of Statues in Australia and the United States of America” This paper provides a comparative analysis of statues which have been commissioned in Australia and the United States to commemorate significant Indigenous People. In the presentation he compared and contrasted the value of these statues in contemporary society and how they serve as important symbols of past relations between colonial and native peoples.


- World Indigenous Peoples Conference: Education, Honolulu, Hawaii 18-24 May, 2014 – Following on from the WINHEC meeting in Hawaii the team of Wollotuka staff, students and Nguraki also attended this conference. This conference is a culturally significant for Indigenous peoples

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* The Wollotuka Institute Cultural Standards 2013, p.11
working in education across the globe and is held on the traditional Indigenous lands of the host country every three years. The following papers were presented:

- "Miroma Bunbilla, Pre Entry to the University of Newcastle and University of New England Joint Medical Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people", Vicki Holliday
- "Building Cultural Competence in Non-Indigenous Students in Social Work and the Helping Professions", Associate Professor Stephanie Gilbert
- "Empowering Indigenous Management in Tertiary Education - Aied Traditional Collaboration Model", Professor John Lester, Dr Robert Morgan and Professor Andrew Parfitt, DVC(A) University of Newcastle
- "Embedding Wollotuka’s Cultural Protocols at the Coal Face of Teaching in Higher Education" Associate Professor Stephanie Gilbert & Mrs Gail Tillman
- "International Indigenous Student Leadership Program – A Student Perspective", Mr. Jake MacDonald, Ms Jordyn Pol & Ms Elise McCarthy, Wollotuka undergraduate students
- "‘Flight of the Eaglehawk’ – Developing Cultural Standards for an Aboriginal Higher Education Institute within a western dominant University", Mrs Holt Leanne & Mrs Cheryl Newton
- "An Introduction to the Endangered Languages Project", Mr Kevin Lowe, Rhd student

Marlene Thompson (Longbottom) was also involved in these conference presentations although she was not in attendance –

- Invited speaker presentation – Changing research practice and protocol: Research with Aboriginal women in Australia, 20 October 2014, RAS, School of Public Health, University of Texas, United States of America.

- International Conference on Distance Education & Learning, Kowloon, Hong Kong, 8-10 November 2014 – Gill Tillman presented a paper at this conference “Facilitating the creation of knowledge sharing within an e-learning framework to develop critical thinking skills”. This paper explores a self-study of an online first year undergraduate degree course within a cultural framework and how students developed critical thinking skills using personal reflection as an assessment tool. This enable students to develop their own sense of writing identity and sense of achievement as they became the creators of knowledge.

- Scottish Educational Research Association (SERA) & World Educational Research Association (WERA) Conferences, University of Edinburgh, Edinburgh, Scotland, 19-21 November 2014 – Michael Donovan attended these conference presenting papers that relate to aspects of his research and methodological examination of research in Aboriginal education from an Aboriginal standpoint

- International Journal of Arts & Sciences conference for academic disciplines, Freiberg, Germany, 2-5 December 2014 – James Charles presented two papers at this conference:
  - “The Design, Development, And Reliability Testing Of A New Innovative Device To Measure Ankle Joint Dorsiflexion” – In a clinical and research setting, there is a need to reliable measure ankle joint dorsiflexion. Dorsiflexion is often measured by goniometry, but intra-rater and inter-rater reliability of goniometry have been reported as poor. Many other devices to measure dorsiflexion have been developed for use in clinic and research. An evaluation of twelve current tools showed that none met all desirable criteria. The purpose of this study is to design and develop a device that rates highly in all criteria, and can be proven to be highly reliable.
  - “Bringing Field Studies and Research to the Virtual Online Classroom at The University Of Newcastle” – Wollotuka in conjunction with the University of Newcastle is now bringing field studies and research to the virtual classroom. There have been some very exciting discoveries in Aboriginal foot health in Australia, including skeletal remains and foot prints over 20,000 years old. Unfortunately in the past this would mean extremely expensive and time consuming field trips to remote and very remote parts of Australia. Now with new technology and the development of the online virtual classroom, university students are able to gain experience and knowledge without leaving their home or office.

- The Engagement Australia Conference held in July in Wagga Wagga, involved several staff members who presented two papers in quite different formats. The first was an academic paper presented by Gabrielle Fletcher and Maree Gruppetta titled “The floating CORE: Indigenous Community as Pedagogical Practice”.

The second was a narrative style paper, performed by a group of Wollotuka staff and was titled ‘Speaking from our CORE: Reviving Indigenous Community as Pedagogical Practice. Although the actual participants in the performance presentation were Gabrielle Fletcher, Dr Stephanie Gilbert, Dawn Conlan, Joe Griffin and Associate Professor Maree Gruppetta, it must be acknowledged that Aunty Bronwyn Chambers and Dr Raymond Kelly were also involved in the project and contributed to the presentation even though they were unable to attend the actual conference.

The CORE project involved taking the notion of what community means, how it is practiced, and the ways it mobilises differences in cultural knowledges, and re-imagining our community from within the context of where we work – disrupting the lines of Academic and Professional staff. We devised a floating tool we have named CORE: Culturally Open Respectful Exchange. Each member of staff is CORE, and engages in CORE work depending upon experience and cultural Knowledge. As part of this project we investigate the effectiveness of having a cultural panel (academics and professional staff) develop a cultural literacy rubric to culturally assess the major group presentation in one of our courses. Although the grade was only worth 5% the students were engaged within the importance of meeting the cultural expectations of the panel and excelled themselves in their achievements for this assessment. Therefore both these papers discussed facets of this projects and invited ways to improve engagement. The Performance paper in particular was very well received and retweeted by the University and other academic staff.
Research Training
Indigenous Research Higher Degree student enrolments have shown a marked increase with 33 enrolled in 2014 compared to 26 in 2013. 18 of these students enrolled with Ummiliko Indigenous Higher Education Centre, the research arm of Wollotuka.

Successes of our research higher degree students are always commended with Nicole Chaffey, Master of Philosophy (Aboriginal Studies) claiming one of two student prizes in the Friends of the University Acquisitive Art Prize, and $2,500 for her work ‘Fractured Shore’.

Three research higher degree students graduated in 2014 ceremonies:

Dr. Joe Perry, Worimi man and Lecturer at Wollotuka graduated at the April 2014 ceremony with his Doctor of Philosophy (Aboriginal Studies). His thesis titled “Mission Impossible: Aboriginal survival before, during and after the Aboriginal Protection Era” focuses on the history of the small Aboriginal mission at Karuah where he was raised. He undertook this important study for his family, local Worimi Community and wider community.

Dr. Laurel Williams, Biripai Woman and Wollotuka Nguraki graduated at the October 2014 ceremony with her Doctor of Philosophy (Education). Laurel’s thesis titled “People Places and Pathways in NSW Aboriginal Education” focuses on the impact of Aboriginal Community on education provision in NSW.

Dr James George also graduated at the October 2014 ceremony with his Doctor of Philosophy (Aboriginal Studies). James’ thesis titled “Cuzzies: The Interface Between Aboriginal People and Maori/Pacific Islander Migrants to Australia”

Research Projects/Grants
An evaluation of the effectiveness of the ARC research grant system for Indigenous Australians – $10,000

This evaluation conducted by Associate Professor Kathy Butler and Associate Professor Michelle Trudgett from Macquarie University seeks to:
1. Examine the performance of the Discovery Indigenous Scheme. In doing so, it will determine whether or not the funding rules are suitable in terms of developing the pool of Indigenous scholars.
2. Identify key international grant schemes and examine how they might support the scholarship of their First Nations People.
3. Propose additional options or schemes that the ARC could implement in order to provide Indigenous scholars with important research opportunities.

Aboriginal and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth, Health and Wellbeing Project Stage One – WA Study – 2014 ARC NIRAKN $10,000
Bessarab, D., Collard, L., Dudgeon, P., Fredericks, B., Adams, M., Clapham, K., Andersen, C., Duthie, D., Thompson, M., Bainbridge, R., Ball, R.

Aboriginal and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth, Health and Wellbeing Project Stage Two – WA Study – 2014 ARC NIRAKN $10,000
Bessarab, D., Collard, L., Dudgeon, P., Fredericks, B., Adams, M., Clapham, K., Andersen, C., Duthie, D., Thompson, M., Bainbridge, R., Ball, R.

Identification of funding to explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth, Health and Wellbeing – 2014 ARC NIRAKN $5000
Understanding how to best engage Indigenous researchers from a diverse range of Indigenous backgrounds, geographic localities and organisations in a collaborative health and wellbeing project – 2014 ARC NIRAKN $5000


Exploring the similarities of returning Aboriginal and Native American WWI servicemen in political activism is another subject of Professor Maynard’s research interest. Funded by a national Australian Research Council grant, Professor Maynard leads a project, Serving Our Country, that explores the role of Aboriginal people with the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. His findings are expected to shift the Australian historical perspective of Aboriginal involvement in conflict before the ANZAC Centenary Commemorations from 2014 to 2018.

*Serving Our Country will look at the complete history of Indigenous involvement with the military from the Boer War right through to Afghanistan and Iraq,* Professor Maynard said.

*During World War I, Aboriginal and Native Americans felt they weren’t just fighting for their so-called country, they were fighting for social and political change back home,* he said.

“They were under what I would call the misguided belief that that would be recognised and that government in both countries would make changes to improve Indigenous living and outcomes. *However, a lot of those returned servicemen became quickly disillusioned and some, highly politicised. Critically, at the same time, they were fighting for self-determination and that was front-page news in both American and Australian press.*”

The Aspire to Inspire Initiative

Leanne Holt and Project Manager, Deirdre Heitmeyer delivered this initiative which provides the opportunity for students to realise their potential and become culturally resilient with confidence and connectivity through cultural affirmation, community connection, past journeys and academic forums.

The program was able to work consistently with 48 students from Year 11 and a further 17 from year 12 across 8 schools who have shown some interest in considering teaching as a career. Wollotuka will continue to track and engage with the Year 11 students through our School to University (S2U) schools program, to encourage continued engagement with the resources and networks introduced during this program.

The program linked participating students to the university, professional bodies, Aboriginal organisations, education agencies, Nguraki and current students to provide a holistic viewpoint. Most of the students struggled with who they were as Aboriginal students and the cultural standards provided a wonderful framework to base the information and determine the format of the workshops. These standards could also be translated into their goals. Wollotuka’s S2U program currently runs ‘ibelieve’, cultural affirmation workshops with students in Years 7 and 8, however this program only commenced in 2013 therefore the participants of this program would not have been involved in ibelieve. This component of the program is crucial for prospective teachers as will value add to their knowledge and practice within the classroom as an Aboriginal teacher.

**Book Launch: True Light and Shade – An Aboriginal Perspective of Joseph Lycett’s Art**

This book by Professor John Maynard was launched by Professor Mick Dodson at the National Library in Canberra on 14 November and is filled with beautiful paintings that powerfully capture the life of Aboriginal people within the vicinity of Newcastle and Sydney between 1816 – 1822. John writes an engaging short biography of Lycett and his life in Australia and follows this with a detailed commentary on each of the 20 paintings, reproduced from a sketchbook by the convict. **A must for everyone’s coffee table!**
Purai Global Diaspora Indigenous and Diaspora Research Studies Centre – Symposiums

Domestic Workers, Social Security and Gender Politics in India

On Monday 27 October 2014, Purai in association with the UoN Politics Discipline hosted a seminar with Professor Rajeshwari Deshpande on two key and overlapping themes of contemporary Indian politics and their implications for politics-policy interface: social security and women’s empowerment. Through the case study of domestic workers in two Indian states, Professor Deshpande explored the sudden visibility assigned to the marginal sections of the urban informal sector workers in the policy discourse of the Indian state and its implications for the collective political action of the poor in India.

Rajeshwari Deshpande is professor of politics at the University of Pune and currently is a visiting professor, Rajiv Gandhi chair in contemporary Indian studies at the University of Technology, Sydney. Her research interests are in areas such as politics of the urban poor, urban caste-class realities, women’s politics, comparative state politics and intellectual traditions of Maharashtra, Rajeshwari is a member of the editorial management team of the newly launched Lokniti/Sage journal ‘Studies in Indian Politics.’

Silence, Violence, and Myths of Social Inclusion

A public talk for the ReOccupying the Political workshop was hosted by Purai on Friday 26 September, at University House, Auckland Street, Newcastle, with the generous support of the Australian Political Studies Association, and the Faculty of Business and Law. Speakers Dr Gary Foley (Senior Lecturer, Victoria University), Dr Sara Motta (Senior Lecturer, University of Newcastle), and Professor Chris Mullard (Visiting Professor at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, UK) discussed the subject of “Silence, Violence and Myths of Social Inclusion.” There was a good attendance here also, and an invigorating conversation followed.

Symposium: Unlocking the Chains of Oppression – Is education the key?

Purai along with The Yurakhi History, Politics and Culture Node of the National Indigenous Research and Knowledge’s Network (NIRAKN) in conjunction with the Wollotuka Institute proudly presented a day with legends of the political struggle, featuring Aboriginal political activists Gary Williams, Gary Foley and Gordon Briscoe joined by eminent British scholar and activist Professor Chris Mullard. These four men first met in 1974 when Charles Perkins invited Chris Mullard to Australia to investigate the shocking living conditions and inequality of Aboriginal life. Chris subsequently produced the study Aborigines in Australia today that had been commissioned by the National Aboriginal Forum.

120 University staff, students and community were in attendance listening to their stories of the long political fight for justice and gaining an understanding of why they chose their academic paths.

Publications


Donovan, M. (2014) SSTAR Postgraduate Research Presentation, School of Education, University of Newcastle “Are we listening to the most disempowered voices, working with Aboriginal students?”


STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND EXPERIENCE

“The University is the preferred study destination for Indigenous students in NSW and ACT topping the state in Indigenous student preferences from UAC. In 2014, the University received 343 first preferences from Indigenous students more than double the number of the next ranked University of 166. At 1,390 total preferences the University received 74% more preferences from Indigenous students than the next ranked institution (801) (Source: Universities Admission Centre)”

We are moving closer to 1,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments with 2014 enrolments standing at 951, a marked increase on the 2013 total of 878. This 2.8% of total University students is significantly higher than the national average of 1.1%. This outstanding statistic maintains the University’s national leadership role in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education.
The collaborative efforts of Wollotuka, in particular the Student Engagement and Experience Team, and the University have ensured that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student experience is positive contributing not only to our students being strong in their own cultural knowledge, heritage and identity but also to the University’s national leadership status in this area.

Our Engagement Officers work with students from entry to University through to their graduation. This one on one contact with students creates an awareness of cultural and academic opportunities Wollotuka has on offer and is also a contributing factor to the increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student success (the proportion of all load that is passed in a given academic year) 2013 – 80.2% : 2014 – 82.3% (Source: University Management Information System, February 2015).

Highlighted below are key programs we offer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Entry Program
This program provides opportunity for students to gain entry to University in conjunction with the Universities Admission Centre (UAC). Once an applicant has indicated their Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status on UAC admission they are contacted by Wollotuka and invited to participate in this program whereby they are interviewed to ascertain if their educational experiences coupled with individual future aspirations may meet the criteria for entry in addition to their tertiary ranking index.

Miroma Bunbilla Indigenous Pre-entry to Medicine Program
A separate entry program is established for medicine due to the rigorous entry procedures. If an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander applicant does not attend the five day Program they will not qualify for special entry and will be required to meet all mainstream selection criteria including the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Test.

This week long program is designed to give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medicine applicants hands on experience of the University’s Joint Medical Program (JMP).

The program consists of:
• Participation in Multiple Skills Assessment (MSA): The MSA (previously MMI) involves a candidate rotating through a circuit of stations discussing various scenarios with an interviewer and/or undertaking various activities.
• Completion of Personal Qualities Assessment (PQA): Candidates will also be required to complete an online assessment of personal qualities known at the PQA on the same day as their allocated MSA session. The PQA is an online instrument designed to assess a range of personal qualities considered to be important for the study and practice of medicine.
• Confirmation of Aboriginality Interview: During the week of Miroma Bunbilla prospective students will be required to attend an Aboriginality interview with the Elder in Residence and an Aboriginal community member.
• Participation in a series of other activities: During the week of Miroma Bunbilla prospective students will participate in a series of pre-admission activities including participation in small group problem based learning tutorials, anatomy sessions and basic science resource sessions. Candidates will also prepare for a short verbal presentation based on their problem based learning. As part of the pre-entry program, prospective students will be given the opportunity to meet staff from the Indigenous Health Unit and the chance to talk to students about what studying medicine through the JMP involves. In 2014 15 students were offered a place into medicine through this program bringing the total of students in medicine to 55.

In the language of the Awabakal meaning “permit... take care of”
Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS)

ITAS continues to be one of the key programs to enhance learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students studying at the University. In 2014 224 students received tutoring for various degrees across Callaghan, Ourimbah and Port Macquarie with 80% success rates. 153 tutors were employed to assist with these tutoring needs.

This program is also flagged to ‘at risk’ students and students with adverse circumstances. Engagement officers also provide a high level of monitoring to these students.

Pital Tarkin11 Mentor Program

This program is managed by the Indigenous Health Unit and continues to provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander medical students with opportunity to meet experienced and accomplished health professionals to build professional networks through relationship building and mentor/mentee relationships. Four events were held in 2014 and were well attended and received by students and mentors alike.

Men’s Business / Women’s Business

Yaama Binghi (meaning ‘welcome brothers’)

Men’s group – This group meets on a fortnightly basis and is made up of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, staff and community providing the opportunity to engage and share cultural and kinship relations.

This year a group of men attended a regional men’s health forum at Port Macquarie where a large number of men from surrounding regions shared ideas to improve health, education, employment and cultural outcomes for Aboriginal men.

Associate Professor Peter O’Mara provided an inspirational health presentation during the forum. A stall was also set up promoting information on entry to University.

Wollotuka Women’s group – This group also meets on a fortnightly basis to provide a forum to share information and coordinate activities to develop the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women enrolled at the University as well as increase self-esteem, health and well-being and leadership capacity for our women.

Scholars Breakfast

Wollotuka’s annual scholars breakfast was held on 15 September as a celebration and recognition event for all of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander scholars with 30 students attending who had not previously been awarded their certificates.

Donors presented students for scholarships such as Indigenous Commonwealth Scholarships, Friends of the University Scholarship, Hunter New England Health Indigenous Medical Scholarship, Hunter New England Health Indigenous Allied Health Scholarship and Koiki Eddie Mabo Scholarship.

11 In the language of the Awabaakal meaning “happy/friendly face”
Success and Leadership Program

This program supports continuing students, particularly final-year students, to attend leadership and professional development activities such as conferences, leadership workshops and international student exchange programs. These opportunities provide students with valuable cross cultural experiences not only learning from other world Indigenous cultures but strengthening their own cultural knowledge base. Whilst students are in their final-year they are encouraged to develop graduate attributes that will enhance employment opportunities after graduation and are also introduced to postgraduate study options.

- **National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games, Perth, September 2014.** These annual games continue to promote and celebrate culture, unity, health, fitness and well-being for our students. During the week-long event we supported a team of 15 students to attend and compete in the games which were hosted by the University of Western Australia. 26 universities participated with our students making the quarter-finals for volleyball, netball and basketball. It is usual for the overall winners to host the following year’s competition but with next year being the 20 anniversary of the games and, as Wollotuka hosted the inaugural games it was announced that University of Newcastle will host for 2015 – another important event for UoN 50 celebrations.

- **Congress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses (CATSIN) Conference, Perth, 23-25 September, 2014 –** was attended by two staff, Vicki Holliday and Jenelle Hammond, who accompanied four of our 1st year nursing students, Amy Thompson, Lisa Leslie, Joshua Paulson and Imelete Tavete. These students jointly presented a paper titled “Using Talking Circles to develop identity and resilience with first year university students” which was well received by the audience. The students were also the 2014 trivia winners. Well done!

- **Australian Indigenous Doctors Association 2014 Conference, Melbourne, 1-4 October 2014.** The theme was ‘Science and Traditional Knowledge: Foundations for a Strong’ with the eight medical students who attended expressing that they had an engaging, empowering and practical experience. Shereen Enderby also did a fantastic job presenting at the conference on “Our kids’ kidneys – A ticking time bomb?”

- **National Indigenous Women’s Conference, Cairns, 13-15 October 2014.** Rhonda Smith, Bachelor of Developmental Studies student, attended this conference which provided a platform for Indigenous Women to celebrate their achievements in their home, family, community and workplace.

- **Shohoku College Study Tour in Japan, December 2014.** Belinda Prestwich, Bachelor of Nursing student, was selected and participated as part of the University’s study abroad team on this tour.

- **2104 Aurora Indigenous Scholars International Study Tour to Berkeley, Stanford, Columbia, New York University, Harvard, Oxford and Cambridge.** Ren Allan (see Ren’s story on p.25) and Karen Daniels both embarked on this prestigious tour. Both found the tour very positive in terms of inspiring students to study overseas and providing them with the tools to do so. Karen, who is currently undertaking Honours after recently completing her Bachelor of Social Science (with distinction), majoring in Community Welfare and Human Services, stated “The opportunity to meet with other Indigenous scholars resonated that dreams can, in fact, become a reality... I have now dismissed the notion that I would not be worthy to apply to, let alone attend, a world class institution.”
Graduation Program

Graduation is the most important event in our yearly calendar. It is a chance to showcase the great achievements by our students. This is also a time for staff at Wollotuka to feel a great sense of achievement for their work with graduation numbers steadily increasing from 155 in 2013 to 158 in 2014. A formal dinner/cocktail function is held at the Birabahn building on our Callaghan campus where the majority of our students graduate and is attended by students, staff, families and community.

*Just want to say thanks for the work you all do to promote and support indigenous

students. I am the mother of Erin Lay, nursing student who graduated from the Port Campus... it is very pleasing to me to see Aboriginal students getting through university. Just want to say how proud I am of all of you and the great job you are doing to support your students.* Thanks again, Gail Lay

Social Events such as

- Welcome to 2014 event at Bar on the Hill
- Weekly BBQ luncheons at Birabahn and Ourimbah campus
- Parade of Nations at the University
- Octoberfest
- RUok day
- End of Year ‘Hawaiian Night’ at Bar on Hill

Journey of a lifetime for Indigenous University of Newcastle student

Ren Allan embarked on the 2104 Aurora Indigenous Scholars International Study Tour. Along with 17 other high achieving Indigenous students from around Australia, Ren experienced what postgraduate study would be like at a prestigious overseas institution.

“Having such a great opportunity to go overseas and see some of these institutions is so exciting. I never ever thought I would get to go to Harvard, it just seems so out of reach but it’s not” said Ren.

The Study Tour will enable Ren to meet personally with academics at each institution to discuss courses and current research happening in her area of interest.

Ren Allan is a Kamilaroi woman of Tamworth and is in her final semester of a Bachelor of Social Science, majoring in Aboriginal Studies, Community Welfare and Human Services.

*There are lots of initiatives overseas for Indigenous people that I think we can learn from so I’m looking forward to seeing what programs and policies these universities have in terms of equity and what successes they’ve had. I’m also excited to meet the other Indigenous students and find out what kind of experiences they’ve had growing up,” said Ren.

When recipients return home they have the opportunity to apply for postgraduate study at the institution of their preference and apply for a range of supporting scholarships offered by the Aurora Project.

“There’s still so much that needs to change and it’s important we have Aboriginal people working on Aboriginal programs because cultural competence and awareness is still lacking in so many areas,” she added.

Dreamtime Stories inform Flood Research

Four years ago Alex Devlin applied for a new scholarship for Indigenous students funded by resource company Coal & Allied. Alex, who was studying civil engineering, was awarded the scholarship and undertook industry placements with Coal & Allied throughout his degree.

On top of his scholarship he was also awarded the prestigious Ron Yates Award in October 2014. The award recognises leadership skills as part of the University’s Industry Scholarship Program.

As part of his studies Alex learned that flood records are important to engineers but that records in the Hunter only date back to 1820. “When I became aware of this fact I thought Aboriginal people have been here well before 1820, why can’t their knowledge be recognised and included”, Alex mused.

This question became the focus of his recently completed research thesis as part of his final year project. Alex’s research in using Aboriginal knowledge opens the door to future application for engineers all over Australia.

Ren Allen

Alex Devlin receiving his Ron Yates Award
Staff, students and community work together to ensure that future generations feel pride in their culture in an ever changing and adapting contemporary world environment.

Community engagement staff work with schools and local community to ensure that our school-based programs are presented to ensure that future generations feel pride in who they are as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people enabling strong characters to enter university study. Current university students are also employed as Portfolio representatives and assist staff to present these programs. This also provides Portfolio representatives with strong leadership abilities. School based programs along with other community programs are highlighted.

School to University (S2U) Program

S2U is a strength based program to engage with and provide further understanding of opportunities and pathways available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students transitioning from secondary study to tertiary education, as well as contributing to the development of key attributes that are valuable at a tertiary level, including cultural, emotional, social and academic.

A high proportion of our current first and second year students have participated in the S2U program prior to entry into tertiary study and our outcomes and transition rates are evidence of the success of our programs.

Outcomes

- Since the programs beginnings in 2007 school engagement and participation with S2U has increased from 43 schools in 2008 to 89 schools in 2014 which is a 106.9% increase over 6 years. On average the S2U program has 600 student participants throughout each calendar year and this number is expected to increase further through increased rural and remote engagement.

- From June 2007 to June 2014 the S2U program engaged with an average of 1000 students throughout the school year primarily through the Year 10 Insight Day component and the Year 11 and 12 UAC Talks therefore we have engaged with in excess of 7000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 10-12 since the inception of the S2U program.

- For the 12 month period between June 2013 and June 2014 iBelieve has been delivered in 76 of the 89 schools Wollotuka currently engages with. In the past 12 months 1320 Year 7 and Year 8 secondary students across the footprint areas of Newcastle, Central Coast and Port Macquarie have successfully completed iBelieve.

- In 2013 across the Wollotuka footprint areas S2U staff engaged with 220 Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled. At the end of 2013 UAC data indicated that 164 school leaver entrant's applied to study through Wollotuka in 2014 which is 74.5% of the participants who engaged in Wollotuka’s UAC workshops.

As a direct result of our continual engagement with Year 11 and Year 12 secondary students through S2U, this age group continues to have the highest entrance program enrolments (see table A) with overall commencing student enrolments continuing to rise.

12The Wollotuka Institute Cultural Standards 2013, p.13
Bro Speak
Dominic Dates, Wollotuka’s Prospective Student Advisor, participated as a mentor for Gorokan High School’s Bro Speak program for Terms 1 and 2. Participation in this program not only provided valuable mentoring to young Aboriginal students at the high school but also facilitates another networking opportunity to promote the value of participating in the S2U program.

Careers Day Workshops
Participation in these workshops held at Muswellbrook High School targeted students in Year 9-12, parents, teachers and support staff. Small group information sessions were delivered throughout the day with a total of 48 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prospective students making enquiries and seeking further information about tertiary study options.

Reconciliation Scholarship Ball
The Wollotuka Institute Reconciliation Week 2014 celebrations culminated with the Annual Reconciliation Scholarship Ball held on 14 June at Newcastle Panthers. The Ball brought 210 guests together which is a glowing testament to the community and corporate support for the work The Wollotuka Institute is doing in the higher education sector.

The University and Wollotuka target of $1 million for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Scholarship (ATSI Scholarship) fund saw the 2014 event raise $8,000 on the night.

NAIDOC
This is an eventful week for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia including ourselves. We held promotional stalls at a number of Community events in Newcastle, Central Coast and Lake Macquarie.

A number of events were also held at the University including a flag raising at Wollotuka, a cultural day at the Bar on the Hill and screen showing of “The Sapphires”

Table A

<table>
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<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>2012</th>
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<td>25-29</td>
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<td>30-39</td>
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<td>40 and over</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Table A Commencing Program enrolments by age (Source: University’s Management Information System, February 2015)
**Immersion – a Cultural Celebration**

On the evening of 21 August this collaborative event between Wollotuka and the School of Creative Arts saw 250 people converge on the grounds around the Birabahn Building immersing themselves in song, dance, drum and stories whilst yarning with friends, enjoying good food and warming themselves by the fires. The University Choir, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance groups, a yidaki and drum group and singers entertained the crowd with Wollotuka staff and students providing significant spoken word around our Aboriginal stories.

The celebration also informed teaching and assessment within a creative arts module.

**The 2014 Koori Knockout**

This annual event took place at Raymond Terrace over the October long weekend and again Wollotuka were bronze sponsors of the event. Staff representatives from the Community Engagement team at Wollotuka were in attendance for the entire weekend holding an information stall designed to raise awareness of Wollotuka and the University to the wider community and possible prospective students. Staff engaged with a large number of community members and received 250 enquiries.

**Acknowledging Country signage – Ourimbah Campus**

Historically the land on which the Ourimbah Campus is situated has always been a meeting place and place of learning and teaching for Aboriginal people of the Central Coast and neighbouring communities. On 8 August 2014 the University formally recognised the rich culture of the land and its traditional custodians the Darkinung people by the unveiling of an acknowledgement sign.

The sign is an initiative of the Central Coast Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Focus Group (CCATSIFG) which includes representatives from Wollotuka, the University, Hunter TAFE and Central Coast Community College.

The sign was unveiled by Aunty Bronwyn Chambers, Darkinung woman and Elder in Residence and the University Chancellor, Mr Paul Jeans. Also in attendance were local business and community partners, Wollotuka staff and members of the University Council.
Culture on the Coast
On 16 October UoN Services held a community engagement cultural festival on the Ourimbah campus called 'Culture on the Coast'. Wollotuka was invited to participate and design a culturally engaging experience for students, community and staff attending the event. Wollotuka’s Elder in Residence facilitated educationally enriching cultural walks highlighting the native plants and bush foods on campus along with history of the local area. Across the course of the day we had 50 participants take part in the walks. We also held a cooking demonstration using Aboriginal bush foods which was really well received and complimented this with an information stall with Aboriginal artefacts, plants, fruits, berries and local herbs and spices. Aboriginal students from Kanwal Public School also performed on the day and entertained the crowds with the Yidaki. Local Aboriginal artist Brett Parker also participated in the day creating a mural to represent the day to be hung on campus.

Native Bee Workshop
In collaboration with the Tom Farrell Institute at the University Wollotuka hosted two native bee workshops at Birabahn on 9 October 2014. Both workshop were attended by 40 people where they learned about the Australian native stingless bee’s (tetragonula carbonaria or in the language of the local Aboriginal people Gapayn) habits and habitats. Participants were shown how to split hives and extract honey as well as using the bees to pollinate their garden. Wollotuka also shared knowledge of traditional use of native bees. Wollotuka has purchased a hive with the aim to introduce more native bees into the surrounding environment. The value being more for conservation and pollination rather than honey production.

Caring for our Country Cultural Event
In collaboration with Wetlands Care Australia Wollotuka held a cultural event on 6 November 2014 as part of a Caring for our Country grant to revitalize bushland areas surrounding the Callaghan campus of the University. Wollotuka plays a key role in the Indigenous capacity component of this grant. The day was attended by 60 people which included University staff, students, local community and students from nearby Waratah West public school. Participants enjoyed taking part in campfire stories, dance workshops as well as a bush tucker walk and talk around the grounds of the Birabahn building concluding with a delicious and social luncheon.
UON Indigenous Employment Benchmarking

The University of Newcastle has been chosen as a benchmarking candidate owing to its great reputation for being a leader in the sector, as such we are being approached to provide advice and input into employment strategies. Current involvement in this area with:

- James Cook University – review of their Indigenous Employment Strategy
- University of Adelaide – hosted a benchmarking visit on 24–25 November 2014 with Kelly Maxwell, Senior Project Officer
- Presentation at Central Queensland University ‘Indigenous Employment in Universities Seminar’ – Rockhampton

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment statistics as follows:

Source: Discoverer Report EEO.ATSI_Staff_Listing as at 06 Nov 2014
Source: Discoverer Report Staff Profile Planning Quality Reporting as at 06 Nov 2014

- Total University Headcount (Fixed-term and Ongoing staff)
  - ATSI Fixed Ongoing Headcount as at 06 Nov 2014 80
  - Total University Fixed Ongoing Headcount as at 06 Nov 2014 3166

| Percentage of Staff = ATSI Headcount/ Total Headcount | 2.53% |

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<tr>
<td>Faculty of Health and Medicine</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research and Innovation Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
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Indigenous Staff engagement activities

- University Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Staff ‘wine and cheese’ evening at University Gallery – Held on 3 December 2014 this activity provided an opportunity for Indigenous staff across the University to connect in an information setting. It also provided Professor Peter Radoll opportunity to meet other Indigenous staff employed outside of Wollotuka. It was a good start to a new era of Aboriginal staff engagement. Comments from staff included:
  - Provided an opportunity/forum for young Indigenous researchers to get to know each other
  - Isolated staff suggested further informal ‘coffee connects’
  - Mark Smith, Client Service Officer from IT Services, opted to organise an event for us to engage with staff in his area in early 2015 which will lead to a duplication of this process across other areas

The focus of these activities being the development of a staff ‘Cultural Wellbeing Program’ to include, language, lifestyle and cultural practices.

Indigenous Employment Committee Progress

Sharon Champness, Director, People & Workforce Strategy, is currently convening the committee that will support Indigenous employment outcomes and has tabled a draft Terms of Reference. Of importance at this initial stage is to ensure the governance is clear to inform the Vice Chancellor on the progress of Indigenous employment. The committee’s key role is to move forward on the Senior Executives’ KPI’s and linking those to the strategies and targets of the Maligagu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy:

- Increase Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff from 2.52% to 3.9% of total University staff by 2015 (minimum Headcount FTE 120)
- Increase number of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff employed at levels above an Academic Level B and HEW 6 (3 new positions each year for 3 years)
- ‘Maligagu Cadetship Program’ 2014, target of 40 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cadets 2014 and 2016 across the UON
MOVING FORWARD...
2015

The Wollotuka Community will challenge standard practice moving across The University landscape giving life and meaning to our unique cultures to benefit all society.
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