The Umulliko Indigenous Higher Education Research Centre at the University of Newcastle was formed with the support of an establishment grant from the Commonwealth Government in December 1996.

Contact Details
The Wollotuka Institute
Birabahn Building
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308 Australia
T:  +61 2 4921 6863
F:  +61 2 4921 6985
E:  Wollotuka@newcastle.edu.au

Umulliko Indigenous Higher Education Research Centre
Birabahn Building
The University of Newcastle
Callaghan NSW 2308 Australia
T:  +61 2 4921 6863
F:  +61 2 4921 6985
E:  Umulliko@newcastle.edu.au

In the language of the Awabakal people, Umulliko is a word that means ‘to create, to make, to do’ and Yutilliko means ‘to guide’.

Acknowledgment of Country
The Wollotuka Institute and Umulliko Indigenous Higher Education Research Centre of the University of Newcastle are located on the lands of the Pambalong clan of the Awabakal nation.
02 Message from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and Dean of Graduate Studies
04 Introduction
05 Profile – Storytelling in Motion
06 Umulliko People
08 Yuranna Centre – A Place to Grow
09 The Yutiliko Manual
10 Birabahn
11 Umulliko Symbolism
12 Speaking the Same Language
13 Online Journal a Gathering of Knowledge
14 Research Principles
15 Research Linkages and Themes
16 Current Research Activities
18 Profile – An Ongoing Education
19 Research Scholarships and Fellowships
20 Research Training
22 FAQs for Research Students
24 Umulliko – Into the Future
Through education, our Indigenous students will share knowledge with their own communities and the broader society, creating a ripple effect that ultimately delivers benefits for all Australians. The University of Newcastle’s Wollotuka Institute and Umulliko, its Higher Education Research Centre, are at the forefront of that commitment. They have developed strong reputations, locally and nationally, for their educational and research achievements. It is clearly evident that our Indigenous students are passionate about discovering the power of education. Education linked with traditional knowledge will ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people maintain cultural practices and values, and also advance and contribute to society more widely.

Research is the process by which we discover new knowledge. It embodies the essence of the Awabakal word umulliko, which means “to create, to make, to do.” Research can be thought of as advanced and very disciplined problem solving. Research training is a prime responsibility of universities and it is an important way in which we transfer our knowledge base to others for social, economic, environmental and community benefit. Research degrees – the programs of supervised training for masters and doctoral degrees – train people in research methodology and equip them with skills that they apply in a supervised project; skills that they can later apply as they move into their own sphere of workplace and professional activity. In addition, the projects conducted by our Indigenous Research Higher Degree students address important questions and provide outcomes of the highest quality. They make an original contribution to knowledge.

The linkage strategies that Umulliko has devised – which are described in this guide – take advantage of the strong research capabilities of our faculties, our established relationships with professional bodies and Umulliko’s valued connections with local Indigenous communities. They will underpin the effectiveness of the projects that Umulliko researchers are undertaking, and will provide an effective basis for supervision panels to provide guidance and support for research students.

We want to develop and extend the reputation of Umulliko. We will do this by nurturing and supporting Indigenous students, and through the quality of their achievements. We aim to increase the number of Indigenous Australians who have completed research higher degrees so that they, in turn, can be empowered to make their own contributions to the development of Australia.

The University of Newcastle is recognised nationally for its active support of the aspirations of Indigenous people through access to higher education.
INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the achievements reported in this guide to Umulliko’s research and research training.

The framework for this publication and the ideals of Umulliko are grounded in what we refer to as ‘an Indigenous framework of being’. By this we mean that, as Indigenous people, we take more than just a linear view of the history of Umulliko to this point in time, even though highlighting its special achievements is very much an important aspect of the story. We see a deeper level of framework, in which the past, present and future are combined to form an holistic Indigenous understanding.

In 1996 the University submitted a bid for Commonwealth funding to host one of only six proposed Indigenous Research Centres of Excellence. It had the strong support of the Indigenous community. The bid was successful, Umulliko was created and became the only one of the centres to be based on the east coast of Australia. Since its inception, Umulliko has been well supported by the University and its story has been one of high achievement. Its researchers have achieved a staggering strike rate of success within national competitive grant schemes. A lot of effort has been put into supervising research students. This has brought excellent results and to date 15 Indigenous students have graduated with either research Masters or PhD degrees.

At this point in time Umulliko has 13 students enrolled for research higher degrees. They are working in Umulliko’s focus areas that encompass health, law, education, social issues, and environment and culture.

From the beginning Umulliko has been vibrant and innovative in its directions. It has a strong commitment to local, regional, national and international Indigenous issues. It is engaged with Indigenous researchers across Australia and in other countries including New Zealand, US, Canada and Finland.

After 14 years of successful operation Umulliko is on the verge of an exciting new era. We have revitalised our research directions and established a specialist group to lead Umulliko for the next decade. This research leadership group will prioritise new pathways of research and research training that is relevant and of significant importance to our communities.

This is an exciting time to be joining Umulliko and we look forward to seeing you.

Professor John Maynard
Director Umulliko
and The Wollotuka Institute

A poet, screenwriter, director, filmmaker, storyteller and academic, Romaine Moreton is examining Indigenous media-making nationally and internationally as part of a five-year ‘Portals to Protocols’ project.

“The outcome is to determine how to use media to promote Indigenous values and perspectives,” said Moreton, a postdoctoral research fellow at the University.

I aim to develop a set of guidelines and values that will become the basis for teaching Indigenous media-making in schools.”

As part of the project Moreton undertook a three-month residency at the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra as the 2009 Indigenous Research Fellow.

That project, titled ‘Recovering Light: from visual anthropology to visual sovereignty’, enabled her to view the breadth of Indigenous ethnographic materials held in the national archives. In doing so, she found that even as far back as 1889, Indigenous people were involved in the first-ever film made in Australia by ethnographer Alfred Cort Haddon of Oxford University.

Moreton, of the Goenpul people of Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island) and the Bundjalung people of northern New South Wales, describes herself first and foremost as a writer. She has published two books of poetry, The Callused Stick of Wanting (1995) and Post Me to the Prime Minister (2005); produced two films, A Walk with Words (2000) and The Farm (2009); and written the films Cherish (1998) and Redreaming the Dark (1998).
UMULLIKO PEOPLE

The academic staff of Umulliko have their traditional origins in many different Aboriginal Nations. They have risen from humble origins to achieve their current positions and bring a broad range of academic capability and cultural experience to our Indigenous research programs.

Professor John Maynard is a Worimi man from the Port Stephens region of NSW. He is Professor of Indigenous Studies and Director of The Willkuta Institute of Aboriginal Studies at the University of Newcastle. He is Deputy Chairperson of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). He was the recipient of the Aboriginal History (ANU) Stanner Fellowship 1996, NSW Premiers’ Indigenous History Fellow 2003, ARC Postdoctoral Fellow 2004, University of Newcastle Researcher of the Year 2008 and ANU Allan Martin History Lecturer 2010. He gained his PhD in 2003 examining the rise of early Aboriginal political activism.

Amanda Kelly draws her cultural heritage from the area of land that extends along the Great Dividing Range from Newcastle to Forster. Amanda has been a staff member of The Willkuta Institute since 2003 as the Resource Coordinator, previously working at the Hueley Library University of Newcastle for three years. Amanda has a Diploma in Information and Library Practice and Diploma in Management through Forsythes Training provided by the University of Newcastle. Amanda is an active member of the Aboriginal community in the Hunter region, her current position is the Coordinator of the Yuranna Research Study Centre.

Mr Michael Donovan is from the Gumbaynggirr nation of northern NSW. He completed his Bachelor of Teaching (Primary) degree with Honours 1 at the University of Newcastle. He has worked in Aboriginal education for 15 years from schools through to University and has been actively involved with consultative groups at local and State levels including the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee of the NSW Board of Studies. His research examines the NSW Quality Teaching Framework as a teaching model for the support of educational outcomes for Aboriginal students.

Raymond Kelly is a member of the Djugun and Anawal people from the Armidale region. After moving to Newcastle with his family Ray took on leading roles with the Awabakal people and is a leading member in the Community. Ray is a published playwright and is currently enrolled in a Master of Philosophy degree in Aboriginal Studies at the University of Newcastle exploring Indigenous languages and is currently the Research Development Officer for Umulliko.

Mrs Leanne Holt is a Worimi woman with close ties to the Dawkungjung nation of the Central Coast. Leanne has worked with the University of Newcastle for 15 years and is currently one of the Directors of The Willkuta Institute.

Ms Cheryl Newton has traditional ties within Bundjalung country in northern NSW. Cheryl joined the Wollotuka School of Aboriginal Studies in 1992. She holds a Bachelor of Aboriginal Studies degree from the University of Newcastle and is currently the Executive Officer for The Willkuta Institute. Cheryl is also involved in a number of local and state Indigenous organisations.

Professor Robert Morgan is a Gumbaynggirr man from the Central Coast of NSW and is Managing Director of Marr Consulting. He has over 30 years experience as an Aboriginal educator and researcher in the field of Aboriginal knowledge and learning. He is a regular contributing speaker and facilitator to workshops and conferences on Aboriginal education, research, reconciliation and other social justice matters including Aboriginal youth suicide, community capacity strengthening and Aboriginal men’s health and well being.

Professor Morgan is particularly interested in and advocates the need for the development of culturally contextual and affirming education and research for Aboriginal students. He has been involved in a number of research projects in the past few years with Umulliko including research funded by the National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research (NCVER) “Empowering Indigenous Governance through Vocational Education and Training” completed in 2006 and research funded by the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre “Developing an accredited diploma level national leadership course for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Australians” completed in 2005.

He was appointed as a Conjoint Professor in 2008.
The Yuranna Centre at Umulliko is a home away from home for Indigenous Research Higher Degree (RHD) students. Shelves of Indigenous resources, internet access, quiet study areas and proximity to other researchers and support staff make it the ideal environment for students to gather and work. It is also home to valuable cultural collections donated to the Centre by private collectors, and local community groups. Once the busy Research Study Centre at Wollotuka (Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education), the Yuranna Centre is now a dedicated space within Birubabe for RHD students. With a focus on the acquisition of specialised materials for researchers and culturally appropriate teaching material for academic staff, the Centre is already gaining a reputation as a valuable depository for rare Indigenous collections.

As the acquisition of materials relating to the work of the RHD students at Umulliko progresses, the Centre is becoming the “minder” of important materials relating to local Indigenous languages and family history. Centre coordinator Amanda Kelly says one example of holding local history material was a series of pen-lithographs, purchased from the State Library that hangs in The Yuranna Centre, featuring Indigenous figures ‘Jemmy’ and ‘Mickie’ from the Newcastle tribe, the sketches by William Henry Fernyhough.

“Trying to unearth the significance of some of our collections has become a very interesting aspect of my work,” she says.

“We have these marvellous cultural materials given to the Yuranna Centre – it is part of my job to unearth their significance,” To help meet the needs of researchers, Kelly will make regular visits to The State Library and The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AATSISS) to search for material that will help support students in their area of study. With-RHD student numbers growing every year at Umulliko, building the Yuranna Centre’s collection of journals, manuscripts and books is a priority for Kelly. Adey enough, ‘yuranna’ is Awabakal for ‘to grow’.

“We want to build our research capacity. What do we here benefit the lives of Indigenous people, which is what Umulliko aims to do,” Kelly says.

“At the end of the day, research will improve the disadvantages suffered by Indigenous Australians.”

Kelly’s association with the Centre goes back to 1993 when she assumed the role as part-time Resource Centre coordinator. Beginning with about 80 books, Kelly built the original Resource Centre into a collection of more than 4,000 items. The Resource Centre’s main role was to support all students enrolled in our courses. This soon became a difficult task due to the growing numbers that were enrolling within The Wollotuka Institute.

“We simply outgrew the space so the decision was made to transfer our resources to the university library and today we continue to work in partnership with the library staff to build on an area within the library known as the Huxley Indigenous Collection. This allows us to move forward from the old Resource Centre and really hone in on a more specialised research collection for the Yuranna Centre.”

The Yuranna Centre provides RHD students with a comfortable place to come together with other students and discuss the progress of their studies, have a yarn and find ways to support one another. As the acquisition of materials relating to the work of the RHD students at Umulliko progresses, the Centre is becoming the “minder” of important materials relating to local Indigenous languages and family history. Centre coordinator Amanda Kelly says one example of holding local history material was a series of pen-lithographs, purchased from the State Library that hangs in The Yuranna Centre, featuring Indigenous figures ‘Jemmy’ and ‘Mickie’ from the Newcastle tribe, the sketches by William Henry Fernyhough.

“Trying to unearth the significance of some of our collections has become a very interesting aspect of my work,” she says.

“We have these marvellous cultural materials given to the Yuranna Centre – it is part of my job to unearth their significance,” To help meet the needs of researchers, Kelly will make regular visits to The State Library and The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AATSISS) to search for material that will help support students in their area of study. With-RHD student numbers growing every year at Umulliko, building the Yuranna Centre’s collection of journals, manuscripts and books is a priority for Kelly. Adey enough, ‘yuranna’ is Awabakal for ‘to grow’.

“We want to build our research capacity. What do we here benefit the lives of Indigenous people, which is what Umulliko aims to do,” Kelly says.

“At the end of the day, research will improve the disadvantages suffered by Indigenous Australians.”

Kelly’s association with the Centre goes back to 1993 when she assumed the role as part-time Resource Centre coordinator. Beginning with about 80 books, Kelly built the original Resource Centre into a collection of more than 4,000 items. The Resource Centre’s main role was to support all students enrolled in our courses. This soon became a difficult task due to the growing numbers that were enrolling within The Wollotuka Institute.

“We simply outgrew the space so the decision was made to transfer our resources to the university library and today we continue to work in partnership with the library staff to build on an area within the library known as the Huxley Indigenous Collection. This allows us to move forward from the old Resource Centre and really hone in on a more specialised research collection for the Yuranna Centre.”

The Yuranna Centre provides RHD students with a comfortable place to come together with other students and discuss the progress of their studies, have a yarn and find ways to support one another.
The Spirit of Birabahn mural graces the floor of the meeting space in the Birabahn building. Designed by Mandy Davis of Forster, the mural depicts the spirit of Birabahn – the eagle hawk – flying high and seeing all. The four eagle heads of the mural represent the guardians watching over the Awabakal people from Sugarloaf Mountain (Keemba Keemba) in the nearby Watagan ranges.

Wollotuka and Umulliko are fortunate to occupy the iconic Birabahn building. This innovative building was designed by Peter Stutchbury with Richard Leplastrier and Sue Harper and in 2003 was selected by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects for the award of the Sir Zelman Cowan Award for Public Buildings. It provides classrooms, meeting areas, a library, computing labs, postgraduate rooms and staff offices.

The internal design reflects Indigenous heritage values. The cantilevered structural steel framework is exposed on the upper floor to symbolise a forest of outback trees. Internal walls of rammed earth provide deep ochre colours and act as heat banks in winter to retain the warmth of the open fireplace. Flow-through natural ventilation helps summer air flows through the different levels of the building. The common area opens via huge glass concertina doors to the outside courtyard to form a large and spacious meeting place. Rich terracotta colours in the courtyard are a reminder of the red earth colours of central Australia and the open space flows into native grass gardens and wetlands.

Kevin Duncan, a Kamilaroi Aboriginal artist from the NSW Central Coast, has designed the logo to incorporate elements from Aboriginal law and culture and promote the identity of Umulliko.

A pathway, which draws people from different directions, is surrounded by the Rainbow Serpent, representing Umulliko. It sits near the whale, the Central Coast and Darkinjung nation focus of the Umulliko’s logo. The whale played a significant role in traditional Awabakal life. The whale is a traveller, moving along the east coast of Australia each year on its annual migration. In past times beached whales were the reason for large feasts, with local Aboriginal nations invited to share the bounty. Its prominence in local traditional life is reflected in story, song and local rock art.

In a reflection of the past, the whale continues to touch many Aboriginal groups on the coastal regions of this country. It is significant in the present day as Newcastle is the home to many different Indigenous peoples from many regions of Australia. As in the past, the whale does not belong to one particular group; it embraces them all, and this is reflected in Umulliko’s philosophy.

Finally the logo has a depiction of the sun, which is the Giver of Life and accompanies the whale on its journey.
The University of Newcastle’s Wollotuka Institute and the Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Cooperative have been working with regional Indigenous communities to bring Aboriginal languages back to life. One significant outcome of the partnership has been the formation of the NSW Aboriginal Languages and Culture Council, created with the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG).

Community leader, playwright and University of Newcastle Indigenous language PhD candidate Raymond Kelly is a member of the Council and was instrumental in the establishment of a series of Regional Aboriginal language forums held across NSW. He also facilitated the formation of the Regional Aboriginal Languages and Culture Council by the NSW AECG, was about networking with others who were involved in Indigenous language studies to develop a deeper understanding of revival and reclamation projects.

“Providing key Aboriginal language workers with an opportunity to communicate face to face about concerns and shortfalls in working conditions and resource allocations was another primary focus of the Forum.”

“The regional forums were held to increase the capacity of communities to share their experiences and resources to strengthen and revitalise language.”

“The State meeting took this a step further by bringing everyone together to hear from language leaders and Elders along with community and government agencies shaping language policies and programs across NSW.”

He says the NSW AECG valued advice from respected council members such as Kelly.

“Ray (Kelly) was nominated to the NSW Aboriginal Languages and Culture Council by the community because of his knowledge and involvement in the reclamation of Aboriginal languages as a major priority. But every community is at a different teaching level,” Ingrey says.

“The meeting was about sharing – sharing knowledge, technology and the challenges we face in order to reclaim and revive our language,” he says.

“The State meeting took this a step further by bringing everyone together to hear from language leaders and Elders along with community and government agencies shaping language policies and programs across NSW.”

He says the NSW AECG valued advice from respected council members such as Kelly.

“Ray (Kelly) was nominated to the NSW Aboriginal Languages and Culture Council by the community because of his knowledge and involvement in the reclamation of Aboriginal languages as a major priority.”

NSW AECG Executive Officer Raymond Ingrey says Aboriginal communities he worked with had identified the reclamation of Aboriginal languages as a major priority.

“Providing key Aboriginal language workers with an opportunity to communicate face to face about concerns and shortfalls in working conditions and resource allocations was another primary focus of the Forum.”

“Framing our issues and concerns together was the first step in ensuring sound financial support for language maintenance and revitalisation programs across the state and nationally.”

NSW AECG Executive Officer Raymond Ingrey says Aboriginal communities he worked with had identified the reclamation of Aboriginal languages as a major priority.

“Ray (Kelly) was nominated to the NSW Aboriginal Languages and Culture Council by the community because of his knowledge and involvement in the reclamation of Aboriginal languages.”

“In its early stages, Kulumun will be an annual online journal, with the aim of increasing publication to four times a year. It will have an active role in Indigenous communities.”

“The reclamation of a common language is vital to connecting regional Indigenous communities to each other, as well as to culture and identity. Of more than 250 Aboriginal languages spoken when Europeans arrived in Australia, only around 25 still exist – a loss fraying the rich cultural fabric of Aboriginal history.
Umulliko’s research philosophy is grounded in a framework of Indigenous-centred ideals. Many individuals and Communities have played a part in establishing this holistic research approach.

Umulliko advocates a shared ownership and partnership in research and fosters a development opportunity with Indigenous Communities. This research philosophy conceptualises and utilises a decolonising framework – one that privileges Indigenous peoples, countries and experiences. This remains as the core driving force and direction of Umulliko’s research philosophy.

The values that drive the research agenda are deeply interwoven with the objective of improving the serious disadvantage (measured on any socioeconomic criteria) suffered on a daily basis by Australian Indigenous communities. It is the passion that drives the Centre and its research staff in their endeavours, and it is a powerful motivational force. The research working ethic requires that at all times we act in a culturally appropriate and sensitive manner. Umulliko also respects and acknowledges the great diversity of our Indigenous Communities and seeks guidance from them in framing its research programs.

In more formal terms, all research in the University is subject to the principles set out in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, which is available at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm

This Code is the foundation for more specific research policy and procedures that are indexed through the University’s Research Services website available at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/research.html

In addition, research involving Indigenous Australians should pay regard to the principles and very useful information in the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies available at http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/2290/ethics_guidelines.pdf

Advice about planning research involving Indigenous people or their records can be obtained from the Director of Umulliko.

RESEARCH LINKAGES AND THEMES

Umulliko must by necessity be able to engage effectively in a broad range of research activities. Its objectives are to be as responsive as possible to the needs of Indigenous Communities, to be alert to national research priorities and where possible to cater to the specific interests of Indigenous research students.

The Umulliko linkages strategy is designed to meet these objectives. There are three parts to the strategy:

International – Umulliko has established international research linkages with Indigenous research centres in other countries so that it is in touch with the emerging research agendas of other Indigenous people such as the Maori of New Zealand, First Nation people of Canada and Native America. There is much to learn from the solutions they are finding to their problems and this brings valuable inspiration for comparative research programs. Umulliko plans to have at least one International Fellow for an extended research visit each year.

Community – Researchers at Umulliko have strong links with members of their Indigenous Community, particularly from the Hunter and Central Coast regions of eastern Australia. These links help to inform Umulliko of the views of Elders on problems where research could be important, but they are also important to the very conduct of research, as the foreknowledge and consent of the Community is a prerequisite to the doing of any research affecting Indigenous people.

Awareness of Indigenous issues is promoted by Umulliko’s role in hosting events. Community links are maintained by regular briefings on research projects and their outcomes, by the ‘Breakfast with the Community’ program, by the involvement of Elders on the Research Advisory Committee and the University’s Board of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Training (BATSIET) and by the involvement of University staff on Community organisations.
As the debate over Aboriginal history and the Stolen Generation continues to resurface in the national media, finding a fresh approach to improving understanding and resolving cultural, historical and religious differences in Australia has never been more important.

A new project by one of Umulliko’s leading researchers aims to inspire a greater understanding of Australia’s racial and social relationships through an international approach to Indigenous issues. Professor John Maynard has been awarded a three-year, $367,000 Australian Research Council Indigenous Research Development grant for his research project Land, children and politics: Native America and Aboriginal Australia 1900-1930. The research is an exploration of the comparable experiences of oppression for Indigenous Australians and North Americans during the early decades of the twentieth century. Maynard will analyse the political and social experience of the two groups to gain in-depth historical insights into the rise of organised political activism and the fight for self-determination by those on the margins.

He has the backing of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC, where he will have a US base for his research.

RESEARCH KEY TO SOCIAL JUSTICE
It is widely acknowledged that increasing Indigenous Research Higher Degree (HDR) candidature is critical to the achievement of Indigenous social justice and an inclusive tertiary sector.

Exploring the Indigenous RHD experience is key to a new project for Umulliko researcher Dr Kathleen Butler, who is the recipient of a three-year $153,000 Australian Research Council Indigenous Research Development grant. Her research will take an innovative approach by encouraging Indigenous candidates to ‘speak back’ to the academy from a culturally safe and empowering position. This project will help to create a vital evidence-base that will help improve educational equality, cohesion and successful participation for Indigenous students undertaking tertiary education. The groundbreaking qualitative analysis will link candidate perceptions of the RHD experience, thesis content and institutional context and policy.

STRONGER, SMARTER COMMUNITIES
Umulliko researcher Michael Donovan has been selected to participate in a unique $16.4 million National Landmark Project that aims to build education capacity and strengthen leadership within Indigenous communities.

Donovan was awarded a 12-month, $170,000 grant with the University of Newcastle’s Dr Wendy Elsworth to participate in the Stronger Smarter Learning Communities (SSLC) Regional Partner Research Team Project, which falls under the National Landmark Project. National Landmark projects take a relational approach to Indigenous education by networking Indigenous communities in targeted schools and community sites.

Funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, it aims to transform the networked schools by building leadership capacity and increasing the sustainability of improved student outcomes. During his research, Donovan will support, develop and challenge local schools and link closely with other SSLC partners.
After leaving school at 15, a decision that was readily accepted both by the education system of the day and her family, Williams, a descendant of the Biripi people, was not expected to achieve much beyond walking down the aisle, which she did at 17.

Today, sitting at the dining table in her Lake Macquarie home with a painting of her beloved childhood stomping ground on the wall behind her, Williams describes her “second life”, after the end of her 20-year marriage.

“No-one encouraged me to stay on and continue my education,” says Williams, who emphasises that the 1950s didn’t offer women many options apart from low-level jobs, marriage and childrearing. “After getting involved with the NSW Aboriginal Education Committee, I was surrounded by people who wanted to make a difference for Aboriginal people.”

Williams graduated from the Aboriginal Rural Education program at the University of Western Sydney as a primary school teacher in 1988 and has since worked in three tiers of education – schools, TAFE and Higher Education. She has completed a Master of Education through the University of Wollongong and is now in the third year of a PhD at the University of Newcastle. Her current research focuses on the impact of Aboriginal community on education provision in NSW and the life member of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group is busy completing field data collection and analysis. In her spare time, she is also writing a book detailing her 35-year career in education.

“Hopefully my research will help people realise why we have such a big educational gap and how we can make improvements. I have to pull myself up at times and acknowledge that inroads have been made with education, particularly at the University of Newcastle. But we can always do more.”

Laurel Williams was the University of Newcastle’s first head of the Department of Aboriginal Studies and was appointed acting director of Wollotuka in 1997 before becoming director in 1998 for two years. 

AN ONGOING EDUCATION

There is significant funding available to provide for scholarships and fellowships to meet living costs for the research training of suitably qualified Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people through Umulliko.

This includes:

University Research Scholarships, which provide stipends of $20,000 pa (tax free, 2008 rates) for two years for research Masters and three and a half years for PhD candidates. Depending on circumstances, the stipend may be supplemented. Applicants should have or expect to obtain by the end of the year a Bachelor degree with Honours Class 1 or Class 2A, or have an equivalent combination of qualifications and experience.

University research scholarships are available for research studies in any discipline.

ARC Indigenous Research Fellowships, which provide salaries to support researchers at the postdoctoral level to undertake research of national and international significance, and to broaden their research experience. The University has to bid to the ARC for these Fellowships, which can provide support for two years, commencing at academic level B1 (approximately $61,500 pa). Applicants should be within four years of completing their PhD or equivalent degree.

Further information

Indigenous people who wish to undertake research or research training at Umulliko are encouraged to contact Professor John Maynard, Umulliko, to discuss opportunities, the resources that could be made available, and the assistance that the University can provide.
Some are supervised wholly by the Umulliko research centre, but most have an expert supervisor from one of the other Schools of the University as well as a co-supervisor from Umulliko to provide the cultural context for the research and personal support for the student.

One of the important roles for Umulliko is research training. Research students are currently registered for research Masters or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degrees and one Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) candidate pursuing topics in the Umulliko focus areas of:

- Humanities, Social Science, Law, Business
- Health
- Environment and culture

Shane Allen Cook – Master of Philosophy, Sociology and Anthropology
Shane is a descendant of the Eora people of the Sydney region. He completed his Bachelor of Social Science degree at the University of Newcastle in 2005. His research topic is on Aboriginality and its cultural impact in contemporary Australia. He is interested in the issues faced by young Aboriginal males in today’s society.

Reedmorn (a suburb of inner Sydney) has been chosen as the study area as it is an Aboriginal community in close proximity to the general public.

Michael Donovan – PhD, Education
Michael has worked within Aboriginal education for the last 15 years; having completed a Bachelor of Teaching with Honours 1 at the University of Western Sydney. He is an elected member of the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group and represents the Aboriginal Community at various forums including the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee of the NSW Board of Studies and some Board curriculum committees in Science and Mathematics. He is enrolled in a PhD in the School of Education in research that examines best practice in the use of the NSW Quality Teaching framework and its comparison to what Aboriginal pedagogical theorists suggest as best practice for improvements of educational outcomes of Aboriginal students.

John Doolah – Master of Philosophy, Aboriginal Studies
John is a proud member of the Murray Island people of the Torres Strait. He graduated from the University of Newcastle with Bachelor degrees in Aboriginal Studies and Applied Science (Consumer Science) in 2004. The student has become the teacher as he is now a lecturer in The Wololuka Institute. He is now undertaking a research master’s degree on diabetes in Aboriginal Communities.

Sharlene Dyer – PhD, Management
Sharlene is a Wiradjuri woman, who has lived at Lake Macquarie since 1985. During her career she has worked in diverse fields from home care and shop assistant to administrative, financial and human resource positions. She has strong interests in employment relations, human resource management and managing diversity. In 2001, Sharlene was placed on the Dean’s Merit List for academic excellence and in 2003 gave the response as graduate speaker at her graduation ceremony.

Currently Sharlene is on several company boards, she is an Indigenous business and employment relations consultant, a casual academic and a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Business and Law. Her thesis topic is on the policies and strategies that private sector organisations have adopted to redress labour market disadvantage for Indigenous Australians and how successful are these strategies. Sharlene has a real passion for breaking welfare dependency and fostering Indigenous economic independence.

Reece George – Master of Philosophy, Aboriginal Studies
Reece is a Yanyama man from the north-west of Western Australia with over 10 years experience in web site marketing and development. He has a Bachelor of Computing from James Cook University in computer science and management. Reece began his career in 1995, making him one of Australia’s internet marketing pioneers and in 1998 started his own web site development business. He is currently a Master’s candidate in Aboriginal Studies on a topic on the use and potential development of The Wololuka Institute website.

Leanne Holt – Doctor of Business Administration
Leanne Holt is a Wonnarua woman from north of Newcastle with a background in leadership and management roles in higher education. She has a Diploma in Human Resources from TAFE NSW and a Master of Management from the University of Newcastle. She has been working at the University of Newcastle since 1995 and since 2003 has been the Indigenous Support Co-ordinator at Wololuka. She is currently working with the NSW/WA/TACT Higher Education Network Aboriginal Corporation (HENAAC). She is currently completing a Doctor of Business Administration focusing on Indigenous governance in higher education.

Raymond Kelly – PhD, Aboriginal Studies
Ray Kelly is a member of the Djugun and Anawalin people from the Aridmla region. He moved to Newcastle in 1981 and has taken a leading role with the Awabakal people. He is a published playwright and is currently enrolled in a Master of Philosophy degree in Aboriginal Studies at the University. Ray’s topic is ‘Dreaming the Keepers’. NSW has an Indigenous cultural perspective 1900-2000 which explores Indigenous language as a driving spirit of his study.

John Lester – PhD, Education
John Lester is a Worimi man from the Singleton area of NSW, with extensive experience in operational and managerial leadership in Indigenous education. He has a Diploma of Teaching from Armidale CAE, a Bachelor of Arts from Macquarie University and a Master of Education Administration from the University of Newcastle. In 1997 he was appointed as the first Indigenous Professor in the University of Newcastle and as Director of Umulliko and Head of the School of Aboriginal Studies. In 2000 he joined the NSW Department of Education and Training as Director of Aboriginal Education and Training. He is currently a PhD candidate in Humanities on the topic of that examines the maintenance of cultural integrity of Aboriginal People through literature. As a result of her research, Annie has spoken at United Nations and international conferences on Indigenous governance and ‘business ready’ skills programs and worked as Coordinator at Stanford University’s Centre on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development in Washington DC.

Annie Vanderwyk – PhD, Humanities
Annie is a Ngarindjeri woman from South Australia. She has a Bachelor of Arts with honours 1 (Sociology/English Literature/Anthropology/Law) from the University of Newcastle, lectures Sociology in the Open Foundation program for the University of Newcastle and teaches in the Diploma of Aboriginal Studies course at the Hunter Institute of TAFE. She is currently a PhD candidate in Humanities on the topic of that examines the maintenance of cultural integrity of Aboriginal People through literature. As a result of her research, Annie has spoken at United Nations and international conferences on Indigenous governance and ‘business ready’ skills programs and worked as Coordinator at Stanford University’s Centre on Ecotourism and Sustainable Development in Washington DC.

Louai Abdulhamid – PhD, Aboriginal Studies

Beverley Ship – Master of Philosophy, Aboriginal Studies

Lee Townsend – Master of Philosophy, Aboriginal Studies

Raymond Williams – Master of Philosophy, Aboriginal Studies

Donna Odegaard – PhD, Aboriginal Studies
Donna (Odegaard) Robbins is a member of the Larrakia language group in Darwin. Donna completed a Master of Philosophy in Law in 2002 at the University of Newcastle. She has an extensive background in Indigenous heritage, education, land rights and native title and is currently enrolled for a PhD in Aboriginal Studies.

Lawrence Joseph Perry – PhD, Aboriginal Studies
Joe Perry is a Worimi man from Kurnia, north of Newcastle and has been employed as a Lecturer at The Wololuka Institute since 1996. In 1995 Joe completed a Bachelor of Education (Adult Education) at the University of Technology, Sydney. Joe is recording the oral histories of the people of the Kurnia Reserve and his research topic is Mission Impossible: Surviving Before and After Segregation.
FAQs FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS

What can Indigenous people expect if they decide to undertake a research degree at Newcastle? Here are some answers to frequently asked questions.

Q: Should I enrol full-time or part-time?
A: We can arrange enrolment full time or part time, by attendance on campus or working from a distance. It depends on your circumstances.

Q: Is there a preference?
A: There are advantages in being full time, because the program can be completed over a shorter period of time. There are a range of tax free research scholarships and fellowships to help meet living costs of full time study. Talk to the staff in the Umulliko Office about what is available.

Q: What areas can be supervised?
A: Supervision is available in a really diverse range of studies across the humanities, language, social sciences, law, the environment, culture and health – see the Linkages information.

Q: How will supervision be provided?
A: Supervision will be by a panel that includes both experts in the discipline and an Indigenous supervisor, chosen for their knowledge but also for their ability to provide cultural and personal support.

Q: What about facilities on campus?
A: In addition to quite fantastic libraries, IT services, sports facilities and so on, our research students have access to the Indigenous archives collection and post grad rooms in the Birabahn building: these are well equipped to meet user needs.

Q: What if there are specific skills that I haven’t got?
A: The University has a really extensive personal development program of half day/full day courses to develop skills for its staff. Research students can take a lot of those courses usually at no charge.

Q: What assistance is there in meeting personal costs?
A: Direct funding support of about $1,500 each year will be available to meet personal costs such as a powerful notebook computer (which you get to retain after completing the degree), relevant software licences and travel expenses.

Q: What about the costs of doing the research project?
A: Other research expenses and resources will be met by the University and will be discussed to ensure that they are adequate for the research topic. Of course funds are not unlimited and there may be some limits on the scope of the project to ensure that it can be undertaken.

Q: I have heard that getting ethical clearance can be difficult. Is this so?
A: The University has spent a lot of time reviewing how it does this. The standards are high but with help to get the proposal right, it is not so difficult. Assistance and guidance will be provided in negotiating ethical clearance if the research involves human subjects or their records, or if it involves access to Indigenous cultural information.

Q: How will I know if I am on the right track with my research?
A: At the end of the first year full time, there will be a confirmation of candidature process to review, change if necessary and endorse the way ahead and ensure that the project is achievable in the time and with the resources that are available.

Q: And what after then?
A: As a research student you will be expected to keep in regular contact with your supervisors and make written reports on progress. You will also be expected to contribute to small seminar presentations so you can get feedback on how others think you are progressing. And you will be expected to give feedback to other research students on their presentations.
The Umulliko Research Advisory Council (URAC) is leading the way into a new era of Indigenous research.

Consisting of academic staff, researchers and administrative staff, the specialist group was established to define and steer Umulliko into critical areas of research.

Umulliko Director Professor John Maynard says the nine-strong committee is responsible for ensuring research undertaken at Umulliko remains true to its research philosophy.

“The passion driving Umulliko and its staff is a powerful motivational force,” Maynard says.

“URAC will harness that passion, lay a clear path into the future and nurture outcome-driven research for Indigenous communities.”

In addition to serving as an overarching body, URAC will establish researcher networks and workshops, apply for grants, create partnerships and connections with other Indigenous research bodies and remain mindful of the needs of Indigenous communities in the academic context.

**URAC is:**
- John Maynard (Director, Umulliko and The Wollotuka Institute of Aboriginal Studies)
- Leanne Holt (Director, The Wollotuka Institute of Aboriginal Studies)
- Peter O’Mara (Director, The Wollotuka Institute of Aboriginal Studies – School of Medicine and Public Health)
- Bob Morgan – (Conjoint Professor – The Wollotuka Institute of Aboriginal Studies)
- Michael Donovan (Research coordinator, Umulliko)
- Romaine Moreton (Research Fellow, Umulliko)
- Raymond Kelly (Research Support Coordinator, Umulliko)
- Cheryl Newton (Executive Officer, Umulliko and The Wollotuka Institute of Aboriginal Studies)
- Amanda Kelly (Yuranna Coordinator, Umulliko)