welcome

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I am immensely proud to be able to offer a welcome for the inaugural annual report of the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research (CIER).

There has been a lot of talk in the Higher Education community about the representation of Indigenous students in universities. Although Australian Catholic University (ACU) sits well above most other universities when it comes to Indigenous participation, it is important to note that we will still need to see a doubling of the proportion of our students identifying as Indigenous before we come close to equal representation. This is a vital imperative.

This fact, coupled with the even starker gap in participation at a research level, emphasises the important part that CIER must play in our community.

It is a tribute to the success of CIER that it has already taken up these challenges and the many others that have been set for it over the past year. It is also important that it has facilitated the continuation of the important work which was being undertaken by the four Indigenous Higher Education Units.

I would like to recognise the staff of the CIER, particularly the Director, Associate Professor Nereda White, for their dedication, hard work and commitment to making sure that the CIER is every bit as successful as it could be. I would also like to congratulate the Centre on its achievement of a 2010 Reconciliation Award from the Queensland Government.

The Centre should be commended for its high standard of operation and for the substantial role it plays in helping the University fulfil its mission and aims.

Professor Greg Craven  
Vice-Chancellor

I take great pleasure in providing the introduction to the inaugural annual report of the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research (CIER).

Established in 2009, the Centre signals the University’s commitment to full participation of Indigenous Australians in higher education and, more broadly, in Australian society. The Centre builds on over two decades of excellence in Indigenous education and a growing record of research into Indigenous issues, especially Indigenous leadership, literacy and numeracy.

I wish to pay particular tribute to Associate Professor Nereda White, foundation Director of CIER, for her outstanding leadership in the establishment of the Centre, the development of its staffing profile, the attraction of facilities and substantially growing its research performance.

During the period of progression to a national focus for Indigenous education and research at Australian Catholic University, the excellent work of the four Indigenous Higher Education Units – Dhara Daramoolen in Canberra, Jim-baa-yer in Melbourne and Ballarat, Weemala in Brisbane, and Yalbalinga in Sydney – now within CIER, has continued. Their support, provided to students and staff on each campus, contributes substantially to Australian Catholic University’s excellent reputation in Indigenous higher education. I congratulate the Academic Coordinators of the four Units and their staff on this achievement.

I wish the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research well as it commences its second year and I anticipate that, in five years, it will be recognised as a leading Australian Indigenous Studies centre.

Professor Gabrielle McMullen  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

The Centre’s inaugural year has been one of great achievement and reward. Increased Indigenous student and staff numbers have placed the Centre and its Indigenous Higher Education Units in good stead, with future goals documented in our Indigenous Education Statement and ACU’s Indigenisation Thematic Plan 2009–2011.

Our student successes are a testament to continued support from the Centre’s Academic Coordinators, Student Support, Residential Officers and Administration staff. We could not, however, have accomplished these achievements without the encouragement of others at ACU, in particular Faculty Deans and academic and administrative staff who have close links with CIER and our Indigenous students. It continues to be a pleasure to work with each of these groups.

I would also like to thank Professors Greg Craven and Gabrielle McMullen for their unwavering support, and for establishing ACU as a front-runner in Indigenous education, providing an excellent foundation for CIER to build upon.

Our presence on each campus has been facilitated by the respective Associate Vice-Chancellors, Campus Deans and Campus Operations staff. In particular, we thank Professor John Devereux (Associate-Vice-Chancellor) for the Office of the Director space, at the Brisbane campus (McAuley at Banyo).

Looking ahead to the important work to be completed by CIER, I am honoured to be at the helm of what is sure to be an exciting and rewarding journey. I look forward to contributing to further development in Indigenous research and scholarship programs. It is paramount for CIER and ACU to continue to work together to engage the Indigenous community and resolutely emphasise the key importance of education.

Associate Professor Nereda White  
Director, Centre for Indigenous Education and Research
establishment of the centre

Foundation of the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research (CIER)

Following a review of the University’s four Indigenous Higher Education Units and endorsement of a proposed restructure by its Core Planning Group in 2008, a re-configuration of the previously largely independent Units took place in 2009.

The University recognised that, although the faculties contribute in a major way to Indigenous education and research activities, strategic direction and achievement of Indigenous-related objectives should be driven by a dedicated Indigenous centre.

To this end, the CIER was established in 2009 within the portfolio of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Director

The first stage in the implementation of CIER was the appointment in March 2009 of Associate Professor Nereda White as the founding Director of the centre.

Dr Nereda White, Associate Professor and Director of CIER, is a Gooreng Gooreng woman from the Bundaberg area of Queensland. She holds master’s and doctoral qualifications in the areas of educational leadership and management, and has made a significant contribution to Indigenous higher education through her teaching, scholarship and leadership.

She has supported many Indigenous people in achieving university qualifications, and has contributed to the reconciliation process by fostering a greater understanding of the challenges Indigenous people face in contemporary Australian society.

Associate Professor White has received two national teaching awards – in 2006, a Carrick Award for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning, and in 2007, the Neville Bonner Award for Indigenous higher education.

She has served on a number of ministerial committees and is currently a board member of the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation (QATSIF). Her research interests include Indigenous women’s careers and leadership, learning and spirituality, and Indigenous research methodologies. Associate Professor White has published and presented widely on Indigenous education, spirituality and leadership.

Launch of CIER

The Centre for Indigenous Education and Research (CIER) was launched at the Brisbane campus on Wednesday 28 October 2009, by Vice-Chancellor Professor Greg Craven.

Professor Mark Rose, of Deakin University, was a most interesting guest speaker. The welcome to country was given by Aunty Valda Coolwell and the blessing of the centre by Bishop Ouderman of Brisbane.

Centre’s sites

CIER encompasses:

• the Office of the Director, situated on the Brisbane campus
• the four ACU Indigenous Higher Education Units (details on page 4)
• research and other national staff of CIER located across the campuses.

CIER logo and its meaning

The CIER logo is designed to represent:

• the four Indigenous Higher Education Units linked together
• the four cornerstone areas of:
  – education
  – research
  – leadership
  – community engagement
• the links of the Catholic Church with Indigenous communities, and the support of students and staff in their spiritual and educational journey
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.
The Centre for Indigenous Education and Research at Australian Catholic University is a living embodiment of its distinctive Mission.

Aims
The Centre aims for high standards and achievements in the four cornerstone areas of education, research, leadership and community engagement.
This is to be reached by:
- collaborative research partnerships
- continuing Indigenous perspectives in academic courses
- evaluation and refinement of Indigenous support services
- strengthening the University’s links with the Catholic Church
- engagement with Indigenous communities
- contributing to leadership through representation at key forums and in educational initiatives.

Commitment
Members of CIER staff are committed to working collaboratively within the University to:
- maintain its excellent national standards in Indigenous higher education and research
- foster reconciliation
- support the aspirations of Indigenous people and their communities.

Strategic plan

Thematic plan
CIER is the central ACU entity for putting into action the University’s Indigenous Thematic Plan 2009–2011, which needs to be considered in detail with this report.
The Thematic Plan is organised in terms of six goals, which drive the direction of CIER:
- Indigenous student population
- student experience
- teaching and learning
- research outcomes
- community engagement
- staffing.

Mission statement
The University’s Mission drives the basic aims of the Centre by emphasising its need to be ‘guided by a fundamental concern for justice and equity, and for the dignity of all human beings’.

Statement reconciliation
The Indigenous Reconciliation Statement, adopted by the University Senate in 1998, explicitly commits the University and its staff and students to the following goals:
- each campus will endeavour to involve the Indigenous people of the region in the life of the University
- each year the University through its campuses will recognise Indigenous culture with activities involving the University community
- the University through its policies and practices will encourage greater participation of Indigenous people in tertiary education
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives will be integral to the curriculum of the University
- the University will join with other universities and institutions of higher education to achieve reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

CIER leadership
CIER is providing strategic direction and leadership for the University in working towards the goals of the above plans and statements.
At Australian Catholic University (ACU) there are four Indigenous Higher Education Units covering all campuses within CIER. They are staffed by Indigenous people and provide cultural, personal, spiritual and educational support for ACU’s Indigenous students. This is done in an environment which promotes positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity.

Queensland
Weemala (Distant View)
Brisbane campus (McAuley at Banyo) Academic Coordinator and Associate Director of CIER: Dean Duncan

New South Wales
Yalbalinda (Place of Learning)
Strathfield and North Sydney campuses (Mount St Mary and MacKillop) Academic Coordinator and Associate Director of CIER: Ken Ralph

ACT
Dhara Daramoolen (Earth, Spirit)
Canberra campus (Signadou) Academic Coordinator: Kath Wallace

Victoria
Jim-baa-yr (To Learn)
Melbourne and Ballarat campuses (St Patrick’s and Aquinas) Academic Coordinator: Naomi Wolfe

Twenty years on
Weemala, the Indigenous Higher Education Unit in Queensland, celebrated its 20th birthday on 28 October 2009, the day of CIER launch. In 1989 the first Indigenous students at ACU were enrolled at Brisbane Campus and the first Indigenous-specific course (Associate Diploma in Education) offered in 1994. ACU now offers an Associate Degree in Education and Bachelor degrees in Education and in Early Childhood Education, as well as an Associate Degree in Business Administration, with an Indigenous perspective.

Yalbalinda had begun in North Sydney in the same year, under Director Dr Nerida Blair, who recently returned to the University and is Associate Professor of Indigenous Education in the Faculty of Education.

Academic coordination
The Academic Coordinators of each Unit liaise closely with heads of schools, course coordinators and faculty staff about curriculum, research and Indigenous support.

A firm foundation
CIER is able to coordinate and provide support to promote and build on the success of Indigenous students through initiatives of the campus Higher Education Units, such as:

- **Tutors** Students apply to the Indigenous Higher Education Units for tutors, who are funded by Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS).

- **Individualised support scheme** This is designed to help Indigenous students enrolled in ACU undergraduate courses such as Nursing, Social Science, Arts and Business. The scheme involves a specially designed program of study and specialised support, where needed.

- **Away-from-Base programs** These are mixed mode programs, well suited to Indigenous students from remote areas and those who are working or looking after families. Students from many regional areas, from Townsville to Alice Springs, from Moree to Shepparton, participate.

- **Residential stays** Away-from-base students come to ACU campuses for four residential weeks each year, with all travel and accommodation financed by the Federal Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). Following the social contacts of the residential’s, student placements are organised for away-from-base students, in Education or Midwifery, comparable to those from on-campus.

- **Blackboard** A new and dedicated website has been designed for Indigenous students. (see page 6)

- **Computer partnerships** There are partnerships with the Smith Family and other capital city enterprises to provide laptop computers to Indigenous students, which ‘makes a huge difference, not just to the students but to their families as well’, according to Associate Professor Nasir Butrous of the School of Business.
Organisation chart 2009
our first year – 2009

Statements and plans

• Professor Gabrielle McMullen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and CIER Director, Associate Professor Nereda White, produced the 2009 Indigenous Statement for DEEWR.

• Ken Ralph submitted the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) report to DEEWR and the Away-from-Base estimates for 2009.

• Senior staff of CIER worked with Professor Gabrielle McMullen and staff of the Office of Planning and Strategic Management on the Indigenisation Thematic Plan 2009–2011.

Attracting enrolments

CIER, with the four Indigenous Higher Education Units, has in its first year shown that it can play a critical role in attracting Indigenous students to ACU, preparing them for higher education, and supporting them academically, culturally and pastorally during their studies.

CIER has introduced measures to increase the number of applications for scholarships – for example:

• celebration of students’ scholarships

• holding formal award presentations within the residential programs

• assisting students with completion of applications

• targeting students to encourage them to apply

• contacting and interviewing Indigenous applicants for ACU scholarships and courses.

Supporting students

1 CIER worked closely with faculty staff to give appropriate academic, cultural and peer support in the specifically-designed courses, available only to Indigenous students:

• Associate Degree in Indigenous Education (Brisbane and Sydney)

• Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education (Brisbane and Sydney)

• Bachelor of Education (Primary) (Indigenous Studies) (Brisbane and Sydney)

• Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) (Brisbane and Sydney)

• Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Arts (Indigenous Studies) (Sydney)

• Associate Degree in Business Administration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) (Brisbane).

2 The specific programs offered to Indigenous students incorporate units of Indigenous culture, spirituality and wider Indigenous perspectives.

3 CIER provides a supportive and culturally sensitive environment on campus, with involvement of academic and professional staff to ensure that Indigenous students are familiarised with the culture of the institution.

4 CIER staff work closely with staff in Academic Skills, the library, and in the Education, Business and Midwifery away-from-base programs, to ensure that study skills and library sessions are incorporated in residential programs.

5 CIER administers the ITAS program. There are continuing difficulties in finding ITAS tutors for students in remote areas. Students enrolled in the Associate Degree in Business Administration have been supplied with headphones by the School of Business to help them use SKYPE technology to work with metropolitan-based tutors.

6 The use of Blackboard has become very effective in linking students with lecturers, each other and CIER staff, particularly the Residential Officers. This initiative was developed as a result of a Teaching Development Grant awarded to Dr Anne Drabble (Coordinator, Indigenous Education Programs for the School of Education in Queensland) and Associate Professor Nereda White (Director, CIER). Blackboard workshops have been held to familiarise students with the technology.

7 Financial support, from external partners as well as government agencies, is provided to students to enable them to attend their graduation ceremony.

8 The Smith Family/ACU technology project provided subsidised laptops and internet access to ACU Indigenous students in Queensland in 2009, particularly for those from rural and remote areas.
At the Melbourne Campus, the following initiatives were implemented during the year:

- Koorie Study Nights for existing students and senior high school students
- Strong Sistahs (women’s program)
- Deadly Brothers (men’s program)
- Elders in residence
- Koorie Study Skills Days.

The Away-from-Base program was expanded to other regions, including Palm Island.

Staffing aims
See also pages 9 and 12
CIER supported during the year the University’s strategies to increase Indigenous staff numbers such as:

- development of the Indigenous Staff Scholarship Scheme
- development of the database of potential Indigenous academic and professional staff through expressions of interest
- development of Indigenous email networks for employment opportunities, including at other universities and agencies
- engagement with Indigenous communities to promote ACU as an employer of choice for Indigenous people
- the appointment during the year of Associate Professor in Indigenous Studies Education in the Faculty of Education responsible for Indigenous Studies courses curriculum development and research.

Events
During 2009 CIER supported, and staff attended, the following:

- Harmony Day, Close the Gap campaign, Reconciliation Week, National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week, Indigenous Peoples’ Week, National Sorry Day, the anniversary of the Apology and White Ribbon Day, which all involved local Indigenous community members with the ACU community
- Indigenous Symposium on Social Justice in Melbourne
- Social Justice Forums for high school students
- ACU Cultural Diversity Week
- 5th National Indigenous Education Conference in Hobart
- Parliament of World Religions in Melbourne
- Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated State Conference in Melbourne
- Higher Education Network Aboriginal Corporation meeting at the University of Technology Sydney
- International Conference for Indigenous Peoples of Pacific Nations in Hawaii
- partnerships events with NSW Independent Schools Association
- community activities, including with Dubbo, regional NSW and Earnshaw College groups
- Victorian State Aboriginal Catholic Conference
- partnership activities with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Queensland departments of Justice and the Attorney-General
- Kurung Yui Youth Development workshop, Engagement Blackfella
- Journey of Healing Dinner at the University of Queensland, attended by staff of Weemala and the faculties of Education and Business.

Communications
In 2009 CIER began regular news bulletins with updated news from CIER and the four Indigenous Higher Education Units.
- Work has begun on the CIER section of the ACU website.
- The Brisbane campus publication Weemala the Spirit Within now has a sequel in development, The Spirit Continues, which highlights many Indigenous graduates’ lives.
- An Appropriateness of Language document has been drafted to help staff and students with culturally appropriate terminology for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies, research and interaction.
Cultural competency

CIER is the main resource within ACU in providing its students and staff, with an understanding of, and respect for, Indigenous traditional and contemporary cultures, as outlined in the Indigenisation Thematic Plan.

There are numerous programs to increase cultural understanding and competency. These include:

- a compulsory unit in undergraduate teacher education courses on Indigenous cultural issues and perspectives, and elective units on Indigenous issues available in most undergraduate courses
- a course review resulting in changes to the Bachelor of Midwifery to ensure that unit content on Indigenous health was included
- under the Inclusive Curriculum Policy all courses being reviewed to ensure that Indigenous perspectives and culture are incorporated into learning experiences for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
- Indigenous staff being employed in teaching, course development, course review and curriculum advice
- ACU library expanding its collection of Indigenous publications
- CIER staff and the Indigenous Employment Coordinator conducting cultural awareness training for ACU staff
- CIER involving Indigenous Elders and respected community persons in functions and activities to strengthen working relationships
- Indigenous Higher Education Units offering assistance to all students with assignments on Indigenous topics
- guest lectures and staff advice from CIER for delivering units on Indigenous topics
- ACU policy of flying Indigenous flags on campus and having an Acknowledgement of Country and an Indigenous welcome at official functions, including Graduation ceremonies and Orientation programs
- Indigenous awareness programs available to all campus staff as part of the overall strategy of sensitising staff to cultural issues.

In general terms, CIER provides a spearhead for ensuring that Indigenous perspectives are incorporated wherever appropriate.

Indigenous staffing

Some of the first targets for CIER included:

- increasing the numbers of Indigenous academic and professional staff
- promoting the participation of Indigenous staff in decision-making roles

In CIER

During 2009, there was vigorous recruitment for the Centre and its four Indigenous Higher Education Units, which resulted in the majority of the positions being filled by continuing Indigenous staff.

Key roles in CIER

Indigenous staff occupy key roles such as Academic Coordinators, Student Support Officers and Residential Officers (who provide support for away-from-base programs).

In University in general

ACU has Indigenous staff in both academic and professional positions. See Table 1.

Indigenous Employment Strategy (IES)

In 2009 a new Indigenous Employment Officer, Ms Shani Gallegan, was appointed. She works collaboratively with CIER and Human Resources to improve Indigenous staff numbers.

Indigenous staff in decision-making roles

In 2009, CIER was part of the university-wide promotion of the participation of Indigenous peoples in educational decision-making.

In addition to the key Indigenous-specific committees, Indigenous staff and community members now have membership of the following committees:

- Executive Planning Group
- Academic Board (2 Indigenous members)
- University Research Committee
- Community Engagement Committee (new committee)
- University Human Research Ethics Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 – Indigenous staff at ACU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous Academic Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Planning committees for Orientation and Open Day
• Faculty of Arts and Sciences Board
• Faculty of Business Board
• Faculty of Education Board
• Faculty of Health Sciences Board
• Faculty of Theology and Philosophy Board
• Campus Management Advisory Committees
• New South Wales Chapter.

**Indigenous Students**

Table 2 below presents details of Indigenous and all student enrolments for the period 2007 to 2009. The number of Indigenous students has remained almost constant while the University overall has grown by over 16 percent during this period. Table 3 provides greater detail by presenting a picture of ACU Indigenous student enrolments by campus, from 2004 to 2009. Mount St Mary (Strathfield) and McAuley at Banyo (Brisbane) have comparatively large numbers of Indigenous students because these campuses offer the away-from-base programs.

**Result of support**

CIER has strengthened the support for ACU Indigenous programs with the following outstanding results:

- The University was one of nine Australia-wide to receive five stars for Indigenous participation in the 2009 Good Universities Guide.
- There were 343 Indigenous students, with 56 graduating, during the year.
- From the graduation survey of those who were available for full-time work 100% were in full-time employment (see Table 4 below).

### Table 2 – ACU Indigenous Student Headcount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Commencing</th>
<th>Continuing</th>
<th>ACU Indigenous Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3 – Student Headcount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Signadou</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>MacKillop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mount St Mary</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>McAuley at Banyo</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>Aquinas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St Patrick’s</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Virtual</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>282</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4 – ACU Indigenous graduates in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In FT study</td>
<td>16.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In FT employment, not available for FT employment</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for FT employment</td>
<td>61.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available for employment or study</td>
<td>9.68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of those available for FT employment

100% FT = full-time

100% PT = part-time
Projects completed

Indigenous staff continue to participate in research and community projects that have significant impact on Indigenous education and leadership. The following research projects were completed in 2009:

- Setting them up for strong futures: Education as a key to social and human capacity building for Indigenous people – a research report for the Department of Education, Queensland through the EIDOS Institute with authors Associate Professor Nereda White and Dr Fiona Woods (UNE)
- Bridging the Numeracy Gap for Students in Low SES and Indigenous Communities with team leader Dr Ann Gervasoni (ACU) and Naomi Wolfe (CIER) as a member of the project team
- Indigenous Women and Educational Leadership, Australian Learning and Teaching Council-supported research by Associate Professor Nereda White and Associate Professor Tracey Bunda (Flinders University), the first coordinator of Weemala
- Linking Worlds: Strengthening the leadership capacity of Indigenous educational leaders in remote education settings, report on ARC Linkage grant with ACU’s Emeritus Professor Tony d’Arbon FMS as Chief Investigator, with Dr Jack Frawley (CIER) and Associate Professor Lyn Fasoli of the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
- Spirit of Religion project, Fondazione Abor Suisse-funded research by Rev Associate Professor Gerard Hall SM and Aunty Joan Hendriks, collaborators in research into Indigenous spiritual traditions

Publications

Indigenous staff continue to contribute to publications and conference presentations which add to the body of knowledge about Indigenous higher education and other community issues, particularly institutional leadership.

Publications released in 2009, and from CIER’s work undertaken in 2009 and due for release in 2010, include:

- a special edition of the Ngoonjook journal on the Institutional Leadership Project with Associate Professor Nereda White (as co-editor) and contributions by Ken Ralph (Academic Coordinator, Yalbalinga), Associate Professor White and Naomi Wolfe (Academic Coordinator, Jim-baa-yer); N White and J Frawley “Open and enduring leadership in institutional transformation”, 72-87
- in March 2009, a collection of papers from the 2006 ACU Indigenous Education Symposium, entitled Indigenous Issues in Australian Universities, published by Charles Darwin Press, 1 - 127 and co-edited by Associate Professor Nereda White, Dr Maggie Nolan (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) and Dr Jack Frawley (Centre for Creative and Authentic Leadership) with contributing authors including Associate Nereda White and Naomi Wolfe (CIER). N White “University-educated Indigenous women: their struggles and triumphs in their leadership journeys”, 95-105, J Frawley and N Wolfe, “Walking the talk: a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research ”, 85-94
- White, N (2009), “University-educated Indigenous women: Their struggles and triumphs in their leadership journeys” in M Nolan, J Frawley, & N White (eds), Indigenous Issues in Universities, Charles Darwin University Press, 95-105
Conference presentations

In 2009 significant presentations by Indigenous staff, including invited addresses, occurred at a number of conferences, including:

• ALTC Leadership Program meeting, 18–19 February, Hobart, presentation on the Tiddas Leadership Project with Associate Professor Nereda White as an invited speaker

• National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education Roundtable: Challenging Higher Education, presentation on Indigenous students and equity in higher education: The ACU experience, 26 February, Adelaide – Associate Professor Nereda White as an invited speaker

• Parliament of the World Religions, presentation on the Centrality of Spirituality in Australian Indigenous Education – Associate Professor Nereda White with Aunty Joan Hendriks (Indigenous Elder)

• ACU Faculty of Education Conference, presentation on Indigenous Higher Education, 18 November, Melbourne – Associate Professor Nereda White as an invited speaker and panel member

• Indigenous Leadership in Education Stronger Smarter Summit, 28–29 September, Brisbane – Associate Professor Nereda White as a participant

• Council of Australian Catholic Women’s Conference, presentation on Indigenous women’s leadership, 26–27 August, Canberra – Associate Professor Nereda White as an invited speaker

• Panel presentation: Teaching Indigenous studies to a compulsory audience, Learning, Teaching and Social Justice in Higher Education, Australian Catholic University, 18 November, Melbourne – Naomi Wolfe as a presenter

• Aboriginal Cross Cultural Immersion Weekend for ACU Staff and Students, 23–25 October, Yarra Junction – Naomi Wolfe as program facilitator and workshop presenter

• Jharmbi Indigenous Students Day, Aboriginal Maths Workshop, 16 June, Geelong – Naomi Wolfe as presenter.

Invited lectures

• Caffery, J. (2010). ‘Australian languages from an Indigenous perspective’. Language and Society, School of Language Studies, Australian National University, Canberra


Research protocols

The ACU Indigenous Research Committee, formerly known as the Indigenous Research Advisory Group (IRAG), was established in 2003, as an action under the University’s Indigenous Education Strategy 2003–2005.

It developed a procedure to ensure ethical research in Indigenous studies, which conforms to the guidelines published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies (AIATSIS).

what next?

2010 planned events
Plans include:

• Hosting, with Charles Darwin University, the 6th International Conference for Indigenous People – Pacific Rim, 18-21 December, Cairns
• Holding the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Catholic Council (NATSICC) Youth Leadership Gathering, with speakers from Queensland Health, Catholic Earthcare and Brisbane Justice and Peace Commission, 13-15 May
• CIER and ACU’s School of Theology’s hosting of a 3-day Indigenous theology symposium called Dreaming a New Earth: Indigenous Spiritualities and the Vision of Raimon Panikkar, seeking to encourage intercultural and inter-religious dialogue with a particular focus on Indigenous traditions within Australia and across the Asia-Pacific region, 20-23 June
• CIER’s ongoing invitations from all faculty boards to provide cross-cultural awareness and appreciation sessions to staff at faculty retreats.

Increasing Indigenous enrolments
Plans to increase Indigenous enrolments include:

• an away-from-base Bachelor of Midwifery program for the Brisbane campus in 2010
• an Associate Degree in Indigenous Health
• a mid-year intake into the existing away-from-base degrees.

Indigenous staff expansion
CIER will have a continued focus on increasing numbers of Indigenous staff at ACU and their spread across the University’s campuses. Currently, there are 18 staff members who identify as Indigenous.

It is anticipated that initiatives such as the new positions in CIER and the new Indigenous Staff Scholarship Scheme, to finance and support early career researchers, will increase this number by a minimum of six new level A/B academic appointments by early 2011.

New associates of CIER
The honorary title of Associate of the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research (CIER) will be recommended in 2010, to be accorded to those with expertise relevant to the work of the Centre, who are acknowledged by the Centre to make, or to have the potential to make, a substantial and strategic contribution to the Centre’s learning and teaching, research and scholarship, community engagement and/or service activities.

Such people may be:

• staff of the University
• Indigenous community members
• other persons external to the University.

After its successful first year, the Centre for Indigenous Education and Research at ACU will be looking forward to honouring outstanding associates in this way and they, with us, will look forward to many more productive years in this important area of our University’s activities.

Planned partnership
CIER plans to enter into strategic partnerships with the Centre for Authentic Leadership and the RoleM Indigenous Numeracy Project, for the shared appointments of Dr Jack Frawley and Ms Thelma Parker at Academic Level C. These appointments will enhance CIER’s research capabilities, as well as its relationship with the Faculty of Education.

New website
Work is being done to create a specific CIER website for 2010, which will enable students and staff to access links to Indigenous resources.

Continued bulletins
CIER news bulletins will continue to inform all supporters of the Centre’s activities.
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