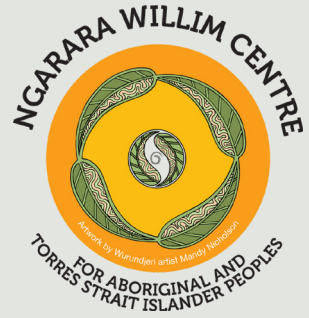


# NGARARA WILLIM NEWSLETTER





## Significant and important dates

4 - 11 July - NAIDOC Week

12 July - Official Results release day

14th July - Gama-dji Orientation Higher Education Students

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## Womin Djeka! Welcome to the July edition

Womin Djeka (Welcome)! It's Waring (Wombat) season with wombats emerging to bask and graze in the sunshine. Cool, rainy days follow misty mornings, with rainfall at it's highest and temperatures at their lowest for the year. We hope you all had a safe and restful mid-year break and are looking forward to semester 2 for 2021. In our July Newsletter for 2021 we congratulate N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs on her recent graduation at RMIT. This month, we also farewelled outgoing Vice-Chancellor Professor Martin Bean and recognised the impact he had at RMIT.

We welcome all students back and meet and welcome our new students starting mid-year at our Gama-dji Online programs. We also welcome new staff members Jordan Carter, our Indigenous Outreach Coordinator,

Evander Mitchell, our Indigenous Student Education Officer, and Annie Sevil, our new Communications and Events Coordinator. We'd also like to congratulate the Dardi Munwurro cohort on their recent graduation. Recent graduate and now Deadly Alumni Marinda Pattison reflects on her time at RMIT and discusses the importance of this years' NAIDOC theme, Heal Country in our Deadly Alumni spotlight.

Coming up, we'll be keeping you up to date on events coming up including opportunities to participate in The Journey of Mapiyal sculpture project, and RMIT Open Day coming up in August. Additionally, expressions of interest are now open for our Cert IV in Project Management Practice, [click here for the link to apply.](#)

The Ngarara Willim team look forward to seeing you all soon, following the ease of current COVID restrictions. Take care of yourselves and each other and remember to reach out to our team if you need to yarn.

## On the cover

Congratulations to both N'arweet Dr Carolyn Briggs and Professor Peter Buckskin who both participated in their Graduation Ceremony on Friday 14 May at the historic Storey Hall.

Dr Briggs became a RMIT graduate with a Doctorate in Philosophy (Media and Communications).

Professor Buckskin was presented with the Doctor of Arts Honoris Causa at RMIT's Doctoral Degrees.

Congratulations from the Ngarara Willim team! [Click here](#) for the full story about Dr Briggs' graduation featured in The Age, and [click here](#) for the full story about Professor Buckskin's achievements.





# NAIDOC Week 2021

## Heal Country



NAIDOC Week 2021 will be held from Sunday 4 July to Sunday 11 July, with large gatherings in Victoria postponed until October 2021.

The NAIDOC 2021 theme – Heal Country! – calls for all of us to continue to seek greater protections for our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and our cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration, and destruction.

Country that is more than a place and inherent to our identity. Country that we speak about like a person, sustaining our lives in every aspect - spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, and culturally.

NAIDOC 2021 invites the nation to embrace First Nations' cultural knowledge and understanding of Country as part of Australia's national heritage and equally respect the culture and values of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islanders as they do the cultures and values of all Australians.

### Victorian NAIDOC Events

NAIDOC FLAG RAISING: This will be live streamed to mark the beginning of NAIDOC week

All other Victorian NAIDOC events including The Awards, Pride Night, NAIDOC March and the NAIDOC Gala Ball have been postponed until October 2021.

For updates and details visit the [Victorian NAIDOC Website](#).

## Farewell Vice-Chancellor

## Professor Martin Bean

On Wednesday 30 June RMIT farewelled our Vice-Chancellor, Professor Martin Bean, after more than six years in the role. He stepped down in order to prioritise his health, after making an extraordinary contribution to our University, our sector, and to the wider community. Martin's wish was to end his tenure as it began, with a smoking ceremony and a deep connection to the land and to the First Nation community who have made him feel so welcome. The team at Ngarara Willim would like to thank Martin for his contributions to RMIT, particularly his efforts towards reconciliation. Professor Martin Bean will be welcomed back to RMIT part-time in 2022 with a focus on digital education.







## Deadly Alumni - Marinda Pattison

Whose your Mob?

I am a proud Yorta Yorta woman from the Barmah region along the Murray River.

What did you Study?

I have just graduated from an Bachelor of Environmental Science (Honours). I did my honours project with the Marine Mammal Foundation and we investigated for the first time, the population structure of the Burrnan dolphins in the Gippsland Lakes.

Tell us about yourself:

I grew up on Dja Dja Wurrung Country in Bendigo. When I finished high school I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do! I worked full time in a restaurant for a year and then packed up the car and tent with a friend of mine and we travelled up the east coast of Australia and worked in Carins. When I came home I still felt lost and didn't know what I should do, so I moved to Geelong and studied nursing at TAFE, at the advice of my Dad.

Although I loved learning about the body I realised at the end of my course nursing was not for me. I saved my money and I travelled overseas, to south east Asia, Nepal where I did some volunteer nursing, China, UK and Europe, Jordan and Egypt. Two and a half years later I arrived back on home soil and I knew I wanted to help save our earth. Along with all the spectacular sights I had seen, I had also witnessed a lot of pollution and environmental degradation and destruction. Being back in Australia I felt like it was my duty as a citizen of the world, but also as an Indigenous person, to protect Country. I enrolled at RMIT to do a bachelor of Environmental Science and I never looked back.

What/Who inspired you to study at RMIT?

I went to university as a mature aged student I didn't know much about the universities so I organised to attend the open days at some which had courses I was interested in. I had been out of school for years and I was planning on studying something I had no idea about.

Not only that, but I was going to be moving to Melbourne from Bendigo and leaving my support network. I had travelled the world but this seemed much scarier! At the open day at RMIT I met the mob from Ngarara Willim Centre and they were so nice and welcoming. They made sure I knew if I came to RMIT I would be supported and I knew then that RMIT was the right choice for me.

What does NAIDOC week mean to you?

To me, NAIDOC is a celebration of Indigenous history and culture. Normally it's a time for me to get back on Country and see my family and join in cultural activities. It's also a time to raise awareness of issues affecting our communities and to try to educate the wider Australian community of the amazing history (and future) of our first nations peoples.

What does this year's NAIDOC theme, Heal Country mean to you?

This theme holds a special place in my heart. Indigenous Australians are the first custodians of this land and have been looking after Country for as long as Country has looked after us and provided us with life. That's some pretty special. Unfortunately with colonialization and industrialisation of our beautiful land it's this has been disrupted and Country is not healthy. Recognising this and the need for change and healing is so vital. Heal Country an especially important theme because it emphasises the importance of having traditional owners at the table when it comes to land management and environmental practices. More and more, modern science is backing up what dreaming stories have passed down through generations. Healing Country means it's time to listen experts on Country.

What was it like transitioning to university?

Transitioning to university and moving to Melbourne was quite difficult for me. Sadly my Dad passed away in my second week and so I had to travel home a lot a misses most of the first few weeks. I feel really behind and considered dropping out. My Dad had been very supportive of me studying environmental science though and I know he wanted me to continue and succeed. The Ngarara Willim mob helped me organise a councillor and tutoring and got me back on track and I somehow pulled through that first horrible semester. I definitely could not have done it without them!

What did you enjoy most about engaging with Ngarara Willim?

For me the Ngarara Willim centre was my home away from home, and the staff were my family. I loved the casual catch ups and lunches and long chats in the centre (usually when I should have been studying).

What's your proudest moment/achievement while studying at RMIT?

I was awarded the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's Tullamareena Prize for obtaining results in the top 2% of students at RMIT in 2019.

What is your message to community members considering studying at RMIT?

Having support can make or break you at university. RMIT is lucky enough to have such an amazing and Indigenous supportive network. I would recommend the university based on the community I found in Ngarara Willim. They provided me with such amazing opportunities and will do so for anyone willing to get involved.



# On Country

# Global Experiences



## Intake 2

On Country Global Experiences expressions of interest are now open for a second intake round. On Country Global Experiences gives students the opportunity to build awareness of their place, role and ongoing responsibility toward the advancement of reconciliation.

## The Program

Through a combination of in-person and online experiences, RMIT students learn and experience the living history and culture of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples, and the Indigenous peoples of the world. The remaining On Country Global Experiences program for 2021 includes:

**Kulin Country:** Meet in person for a group introduction including a Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung cultural heritage talk and Walkin' Birrarung with Dean Stewart. Date is to be determined and will be dependent on COVID restrictions.

**On Country Gunditjmarra:** Camp on country for four nights from 30 August – 3 September during semester break. Meet with local Traditional Owners and visit significant sights.

**Global Indigenous Youth Forum:** Gather online on 19 November for an online forum with the opportunity to meet and discuss Truth Telling: Racism and Reconciliation with Indigenous students from the Americas, Indo Pacific and Vietnam.

## How to Apply

Participation in the program requires attendance at all three experiences. To apply for On Country Global Experiences email [Carlie.Groves@rmit.edu.au](mailto:Carlie.Groves@rmit.edu.au) with details of your name and dietary requirements.

# Southern Shield Netball



Ngarara Willim's mixed netball team played in the Southern Shield Netball Tournament at Latrobe Sports Centre on Sunday 4th July. Ngarara Willim would like to thank the RMIT Redbacks netball team, who filled in for us as we were short players. The day started on a high with a first game win, followed by two losses. The team had a fun day overall and enjoyed the opportunity to bring everyone together. If you're interested in future Ngarara Willim sporting events, contact Jordan Carter at [Jordan.Carter@rmit.edu.au](mailto:Jordan.Carter@rmit.edu.au).

# Vaccinations at VAHS

## VAHS now offering Pfizer and Astra Zeneca vaccine!



VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE  
*Caring for the Community*

WHO CAN BE VACCINATED AT VAHS?	HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT	MORE INFORMATION
<p>If you are an Aboriginal person aged 16 years and over, you can book a Covid vaccination appointment at VAHS.</p> <p>VAHS is required to follow national guidelines that recommend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pfizer for people aged 16 – 59 years</li> <li>• Astra Zeneca for people aged 60 years and over, and for people who have already had a first dose of Astra Zeneca</li> </ul> <p>Non-Aboriginal people can be vaccinated at VAHS if they are: members of Aboriginal families, carers of Aboriginal people, or staff of Aboriginal community organisations and their families.</p>	<p>If you are aged 16 – 59 years, book a Pfizer appointment at Fitzroy by phoning Medical Reception on 9419 3000 (option 1).</p> <p>Pfizer clinics are being held during usual clinic hours + Tuesday and Thursday evenings + Saturdays.</p> <p>If you are aged 60 years and over, book an Astra Zeneca appointment at Fitzroy on 9419 3000 (option 1) OR contact Epping clinic on 8593 3920 to express interest in their next vaccination day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please cancel your appointment if you can't attend.</li> <li>• Wear clothing that will make it easy to access your upper arm.</li> <li>• You will have an assessment before your vaccination and will need to stay 15 mins afterwards for observation.</li> <li>• You can make an appointment for your second dose when you attend for your first.</li> <li>• Your appointment is only for a Covid vaccination; you will need another appointment for any other care.</li> <li>• Please don't attend VAHS if you have Covid symptoms or have visited an exposure site.</li> </ul>



## New Staff at Ngarara Willim

### Jordan Carter

Jordan joins the Ngarara Willim team as our Coordinator, Indigenous Outreach. He is a proud Ngarrindjeri and Wemba Wemba man, born and raised in Melbourne. He has a Bachelors degree of chemical engineering from Monash University. Jordan has worked in the student outreach space during the majority of his university study and following his graduation he worked in the construction industry as a project manager. Jordan has a passion for connecting Indigenous community with further education and helping people reach their full potential.



### Evander Mitchell

Evander joins the Ngarara Willim team as our Officer, Indigenous Student Education. He is a Gunditjmara and Wemba Wemba man, born and raised in Melbourne. Evander will be working closely with our Vocational education students. He has previously worked at Higher Education institutions such as Swinburne University and Latrobe University, and in community organisations such as Victorian Aboriginal Health Service and Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency. Evander follows NRL, AFL and NBA regularly and stay active through basketball and exercise. he also enjoys listening to loads of music, mainly Hip-hop & RnB. He is excited to work in the Indigenous Education and Engagement team and looks forward to meeting everyone.



### Annie Sevil

Annie joins the Ngarara Willim team as our Coordinator, Communications and Events. She coordinates the communications and events for the Ngarara Willim Centre at RMIT. Annie is a Gomeroi woman born in Narrabri, New South Wales and has lived in Melbourne for 8 years. Annie is passionate about working with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through communications, events and fundraising work.



We hope you can all welcome our new staff and we look forward to connecting you with them face to face in the near future.

## Dardi Munwurro Graduation

The Ngarara Willim Team would like to congratulate the 18 Indigenous students who recently graduated with their Diploma in Community Services through the Dardi Munwurro and RMIT program.

The program was delivered on site at Dardi Munwurro and online in 2020 once COVID restrictions were in place. These students now have a nationally recognised qualification for work in the community services industry and a unique qualification in healing and family violence work with Aboriginal community members.

Congratulations to the students who completed the program, sticking with it through lockdown in Victoria. You now have a nationally recognised qualification that has a healing approach to working with Aboriginal community members, with the ability to provide culturally based solutions for individual and families.







# Meet our Staff



**Nicole**

Arabana  
Manager  
Indigenous Student Education



**Evander**

Gunditjmara, Wemba Wemba  
Senior Manager  
Indigenous Education



**Cathy D.**

Irukandji  
Senior Advisor  
Indigenous Access and  
Engagement



**Jordan**

Ngarrindjeri, Wemba Wemba  
Coordinator  
Indigenous Outreach



**Carlie**

Coordinator  
Indigenous Student Education



**Cathy L.**

Arrernte, Luritja  
Officer  
Indigenous Student Education



**Shannon**

Officer  
Academic Programs



**Annie**

Gomeroi  
Coordinator  
Communications & Events  
Indigenous Student Education



## Connect with us

[ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au)  
(03)9925 4885



[Join our Mailing List](#)

[ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au)

### Our Artists

Leaves of Change - Louisa Bloomer  
Leaves (watermark) — Alanna Sandy  
Ngarara Willim logo — Mandy Nicholson

City Campus  
Building 5, Level 1, Room 5  
Bowen Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3001

Bundoora Campus  
Building 202, Level 3, Room 21  
225- 245 Plenty Road, Bundoora, VIC, 3083

Brunswick Campus  
Building 514, Level 1, Room 3  
25 Dawson Street, Brunswick, VIC, 3056