Marana Dyargali

(marana—first) (dyargali—mark/etch/scratch)

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UTS acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Boorooberongal People of the Dharug Nation, the Bidiagal people and the Gamaygal people, upon whose ancestral lands our campuses stand. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands.

The design for *Marana Dyargali* was conceived over a number of workshops led by Gadigal Artist Nadeena Dixon in their art studio on Gadigal Country in Redfern. Nadeena Dixon, Kristelle De Freitas and Peter Wildman came together around a paint covered table and a number of ideas that have been integral in the materiality of the publication you hold here.

The design acknowledges the multiple realities of people and the different pathways they take to get to these interviews. Reading can be done in many ways and when faced with great words it is important to make space for other forms of understanding. The lines of Nadeena's prints have been designed by Kristelle to form drawing spaces within the writing. Drawing spaces connect the body world with the head world. Drawing spaces set up camps—places to come together within the text—to find ways to shift the narratives of research, and engage with the people you work with.

The publication is a collection of loosely held zines that are wrapped in a cover. We did not want to impose order on your thoughts. Having the interviews as separate zines gives you opportunity to reorder them, take them to different places at different times or even share them with colleagues and peers when they may need them. There is a sense of preciousness in the act of wrapping these zines. As Nadeena has said, all things sacred are wrapped.

We have designed this publication as a space of sacredness, a moment of stopping and honouring people engaging with Indigenous research ethics through their practice. The design of this publication is an act of design sovereignty and a way to shift the narrative of what research can look like and how you can engage with it.

We hope to impose no order to the way you move through this publication. Rather, here you have the opportunity to create your own pathway through the following collection of research zines; to dip in and out as you choose; to pause; to read and reflect at your own pace. Click any text to trace your path.


(marana—first) (dyargali—mark/etch/scratch)

During the writing of this book, we lost our dear colleague, Dr Dean Jarrett. Dean's research experience, his knowledge and insights are included here with his family's consent.

We miss you brother.

Acknowledgement of Country

UTS acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, the Boorooberongal people of the Dharug Nation, the Bidiagal people and the Gamaygal people, upon whose ancestral lands our university stands. We would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present, acknowledging them as the traditional custodians of knowledge for these lands.

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The Indigenous Research Committee is a forum for the development and progression of Indigenous research across UTS. The committee is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research.

The Committee emerged in 2011 when Professor McDaniel, Pro Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Education) advised UTS to institute a governance structure which sought to share the responsibility for Indigenous outcomes in the university more equitably between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. Professor McDaniel's immediate representative in relation to Indigenous research at UTS is Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt AO, Associate Dean Indigenous Research within the Office of the PVC ILE. Through the committee structure, Indigenous staff committee members guide the expenditure of supplementary federal funds for Indigenous Higher Degree Research, to be used for projects that benefit Indigenous research students. The committee is also an important place for exchanging ideas and progressing the spirit and objectives of the UTS Indigenous Education and Research Strategy.

Origins of Indigenous Research at UTS

LARISSA BEHRENDT

There is a uniqueness about UTS in relation to this space and the ability for that rests with the way Jumbunna was set up. Ken Canning and Frances Peters-Little, two of our first Indigenous students, advocated for this space. Then came the recruitment of Uncle Bob Morgan as the first Director. It was significant because it showed at its very heart that UTS was capable of responding to what Indigenous people within the institution had wanted. UTS was one of the first universities to set up this kind of centre.

What was critical about Uncle Bob's leadership was that he profoundly believed in the academy as a place that needed to make room for Indigenous people. It wasn't just about bringing Indigenous people in and educating them in a white way, but really challenging the university to find space for

Indigenous focused study. The other aspect of Uncle Bob's worldview that was critical was his incredibly strong international ties with Aotearoa/New Zealand, Canada and the United States. He saw what we were doing here as part of an intellectual global partnership.

This philosophy and environment paved the way so that when I came to Jumbunna as the new director in 2001, this mindset and expectation had already been built. We didn't have to fight those fights again.

The next step was to look more towards the research side of Jumbunna. We were in the first wave of organisations within the university sector looking to develop a research profile through those centers. We built up a small number of researchers over the next couple of years. We pulled together people who prioritised responsibility to community over everything else that they did. That was really important and over the years the staff who have the best experiences within Jumbunna are the ones who have those strong responsibilities and connections with community. A really important learning experience was seeing how the academy could prioritise and embrace the knowledges and perspectives of our community, because we had all trained separately through a particular discipline or profession. We started to see the scholarship that was coming through, the global connection was helpful in terms of us thinking big about what we could do.

At the same time, we saw the need to build capacity within disciplines. While Jumbunna was a hub, it was important to have Indigenous scholars to also be changing the academy from within the faculties with their research and practice.

We didn't start with a research framework for Jumbunna straight away but built it slowly over many years of practice. Rather than starting with a

framework, we brought principles, a cultural lens and a cultural background. We also knew we were still young and learning. We had been brought up culturally that way and we had enormous support from the older cohort who were really excited with what we were doing. We felt like we had time to think about and get it right. We worked, reflected and then articulated a framework.

Another thing we all brought with us was the idea of self-determination; this has been central to political philosophy in our community. We care more about how the community sees our work than how other academics see it. That is our test and is how we frame the work we do. It speaks to how we disseminate our results. We would not have done a research project if we didn't think it was going to have an impact on the community.

This started to speak to our methodology of who we were privileging and how we would go about what we were doing. It also put us in a process of partnership, because we were responding to community need. Those partnerships came generically. Community should come to us and we should respond to them as we had the skills and capacity to do it. That is what we were here for. It meant that those partnerships started differently and there was a different power relationship between us in our response and how we would work and meant we became Indigenous led in our practice.

Along the way, we have developed a research program, research methodologies and have had a focus on ethics. Ethics within the university is a place that speaks to the influence and presence of Indigenous academics. Being able to formalise that through an ethics process, so there is a mechanism for holding people accountable for their work, is an

important part of us being able to normalise across other disciplines some of the ideas and principles that we work with in Jumbunna.

The next focus is to continue to engage with our Indigenous knowledges, our Indigenous frameworks and our Indigenous worldviews, rather than continually thinking how the Western disciplines can continue to benefit by hiving off those things from us. That is why the continual independence of where Jumbunna sits is important. We don't have to carve our work or our Indigenous knowledges to fit in with the disciplines as they've been defined by Western education. We can honor our knowledge systems holistically, engage with them and not have to try and squeeze them into other things. At the same time, the Indigenous academic leadership within the faculties are leading work that is transforming their disciplines. It is a two-pronged approach but one that seeks to continue the vision on which Jumbunna was founded—a powerful and respected place for Indigenous knowledges as part of our institution.

Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt is a Eualeyai/Kamillaroi woman from Northwest New South Wales, who lives and works on Gadigal land. Larissa is an academic and a lawyer, a filmmaker and a writer. Larissa shares the origins of Indigenous research at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) as she describes her role as the Director of Research and Academic programs at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research.

Introduction

Welcome to our collection of University of Technology Sydney (UTS) researchers' and senior research ethics staff experience with Indigenous Research Ethics as they apply their skills and knowledge to the diverse needs of Indigenous communities.

This collection grew out of the observations and concerns raised by Indigenous members of the Vice Chancellor's (VC) Indigenous Research Committee about the many issues and dynamics that arise at the interface of Indigenous ways of knowing, protocols and the ethics processes of the academy. Applying the principles set out in the UTS Indigenous Education and Research Strategy, we considered the ways to ensure research is Indigenous led, community driven and On Country. Here at UTS, the institution has a strongly articulated commitment to its role as a public institution, with a social justice

focus. Our institutional resources include policies and guidelines to guide processes both inside and outside the institution. To meet the standard of Indigenous led work, we need to centre not only the leadership of the project but find ways to resource the ongoing relationships of accountability as living ethical frameworks of transformation. Decolonising the academy is part of a broader call for change, a call that must challenge racism, state violence and the destruction of lands and waters. The researchers in this collection demonstrate a myriad of ways of how they actively work to effect that change through their research work.

We are conscious that this work sits in the context of Indigenous Knowledge systems that govern Indigenous ways of engaging, questioning, analysing, recording and transmitting knowledge. We also acknowledge that there are well known protocols developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) that articulate best practice. The research accounts in the collection illuminate the practical ways that these protocols guide research while also providing rich examples of the multiple ethical decisions made by researchers over the lifetime of a study.

As we navigate our research journey, we acknowledge that Institutions like universities have fraught histories with Indigenous communities that simply cannot be ignored. Striking a balance between the demands of an institution or funding agency can be challenging, especially in today's political, social and environmental context. We also know that universities hold huge capacity to resource societal shifts that decolonise outdated ways of engaging with Indigenous peoples and communities.

We believe that our research community is generally inclusive, creative and collaborative, but intent and practice must align with local leadership and accord with the aspirations of First Peoples. Our languages and practices are bound to our land in deep and ancient relational ways, so there are obstacles, complexities and flaws in the ability of Western institutions to see, feel, hear and hold Indigenous experience and knowledge. The challenge requires decolonisation, transformation, and a commitment to long term change, leading to research that benefits communities.

This publication is born from a collective will to engage with the intersectional dimensions of ethics and protocols and a need to explore solutions emerging at the nexus of research, knowledge and practice. We hope this collection of thought and ways of working will provide some practical ways to support the shift and transformation as we share the knowledge of experienced researchers and managers of who have navigated this terrain.

We have produced the collection with Higher Degree Research students in mind, but we hope it brings insights for all researchers and research endeavours.

We are delighted to see this vision beautifully manifest in working with Nadeena Dixon as the lead Gadigal Indigenous designer who has woven the concept together with collaborators Peter Wildman as project manager and book designer Kristelle De Freitas. We are deeply grateful to the UTS Indigenous Research Committee for funding and supporting this project and all of the contributors who have dug deep and shared personal, powerful and challenging insights.

marana dyargali

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Leadership & Indigenous Research

MARANA DYARGALI

Larissa Behrendt

Interviewed By:

Associate Professor Jason De Santolo

Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt is a Eualeyai/Kamillaroi woman from Northwest New South Wales, who lives and works on Gadigal land. Larissa has led Indigenous research at UTS since 2001, developing strategies to support Indigenous led and community-based research. Larissa shares insights on the work required to develop trust between Indigenous communities and universities. Against a backdrop of white supremacy and white privilege, Larissa discusses how universities have had a history of poor relationships with Indigenous peoples and how much work is required to decolonise the academy as considerable harm continues to be done. Larissa shares a story of Indigenous leadership at both the university and personal level. Larissa discusses the use of Indigenous Storywork as a methodology and approach to support Indigenous voice and self-determination in her research and her work as a writer and filmmaker.

"One of the great evolutions of my own thinking about law, story, advocacy and change is through filmmaking. Feeling the power of self-determination is where you create space for somebody else to be empowered, rather than always advocating yourself. Stepping back to allow others to come to have that space that you may have filled, for them to have that story."

Larissa talks about her work to support activism and community priorities around research, and the environment of support that fosters healing and wellbeing in relation to research. Finally, Larissa shares her views on the leadership challenges ahead and the great talent and skills that Indigenous Higher Degree Researchers bring to the fabric of the academy and UTS.

About Larissa

Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt OA is the Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning and Associate Dean (Indigenous Research) at the University of Technology Sydney. Larissa has a LLB and B.Juris from UNSW and a LLM and SJD from Harvard Law School. Larissa has a legal background with a strong track record in the areas of Indigenous law, policy, creative arts, education and research. She has held numerous judicial positions and sat on various community and arts organisation boards. Larissa is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences of Australia and a Foundation Fellow of the Australian Academy of Law.

Larissa chaired the national review of Indigenous Higher Education, was the inaugural chair of National Indigenous Television (NITV), the Chair of the Bangarra Dance Theatre and founding director of Sydney Story Factory (literacy program in Redfern). She is a member of the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council. She is currently on the board of Sydney Festival, board member of Sydney Community Fund, a member of the UTS Council, and director of Jimmy Little Foundation and Chair of the Cathy Freeman Foundation. Larissa is also an award-winning author, filmmaker and host of Speaking Out on ABC Radio. In 2020 she received an Order of Australia for distinguished service to Indigenous education and research, to the law, and to the visual and performing arts. In 2009 she was awarded NAIDOC Person of the Year, and in 2011, NSW Australian of the Year.

Interview between Associate Professor Jason De Santolo & Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt

***JDS** If we are committed to self-determination, how do we ensure that the projects being done in the university have really strong, positive impacts for our communities? And what happens when things go wrong?*

LB We work in a space that has a history of white supremacy and white privilege. The universities are about elitism and there is a view within Western knowledges, a colonial mentality, that you are entitled to access anything that you want or find interesting. There is a sense of entitlement around how people have approached their academic and research work, probably without reflection that those have been elements of how these institutions work. If you go to the great institutions like Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard, you see within their treasure trove all the things that have been collected that people feel entitled to. Just like you see in museums, it is showing how great you are because you have all this other stuff. This sense of entitlement and ownership of things needs to be unpacked.

People who started their careers as academics in the 70s and 80s, when there was no involvement of Indigenous people in anything except as subjects of research, now feel insulted that they are asked to explain their ethical process. This can be the case even if they are working in what we would consider incredibly vulnerable spaces like schools, for example, doing research with Indigenous children. They are still at that level of arrogance. The bigger challenge sits with people who have a sense that they already know what they're doing and

don't need anyone to tell them, rather than being open and listening.

When we look at our work within the academy, there's an aspect of what we do that is about self-determination and the assertion of sovereignty. However there is still that work that has to be done around decolonisation. People sometimes say they don't do the decolonising work, but without that space being decolonised, considerable harm continues to be done.

There is a history of harm and one of the biggest challenges we've had as Indigenous researchers is to build trust between our community and the fact that we are at a university. That is a big part of what we have had to do. There is a reason why that's the view in Indigenous communities; PhD students going out, researching and never being seen again. That sense of knowledge being taken. The way Western intellectual property systems are structured is completely damaging and detrimental to Indigenous knowledge holders. We are up against it in lots of ways. We are the fish swimming against the stream in this context.

The university as an entity and those researchers fail to appreciate that when somebody in the institution stuffs up and causes harm, it is us who bear the brunt of that. We are the ones the community call because they know we are at this institution and they hold us accountable for it. It is the same at the ABC. If the ABC does a story that is harmful and erroneous, I get the email, because we are the public face. There is a role that we play as mediators and a price we pay when non-Indigenous people who have not taken the right steps stuff up. That causes harm to everything we are trying to build here in terms of trust.

To have a group of Indigenous people look over research ethics applications isn't a cure all. But it's a really important place to start to challenge researchers around questions of partnership, consent, intellectual property, data, voice and methodology in ways they never had to before. That's a positive and is starting to become normalised. Now you hear people talking about partnerships in relation to Indigenous research, which is not a new thing for us, but it's a very new thing for other people.

***JDS** A lot of our work is guided by social*

movements like the Indigenous climate justice space and the Black Lives Matter movement in Sydney. Would you like to comment on the importance of being aligned to big social movements?

LB One of the things that has always been distinctive about you and I as researchers was that we didn't come into universities to be academics. We didn't become lawyers to just be lawyers. We took the paths we did because we wanted to see change in our communities. One of the things that Jumbunna has allowed us to do in the space we've created is be agile about how we work and not be prescriptive about what success look like. Success wasn't lots of publications, not that we didn't do publications, but it's just not how we judged ourselves. We had a sense that the community was more important to us than the university. I really love UTS, because if it wasn't what it was, we couldn't have done what we did. I feel an enormous loyalty to the university, but my responsibility lay with the community, where I went home to and where I lived. We are answerable to the community because we live there. We don't get to go home at the end of the day and not think about it anymore, because they're more in our face when we go home then when we're at work.

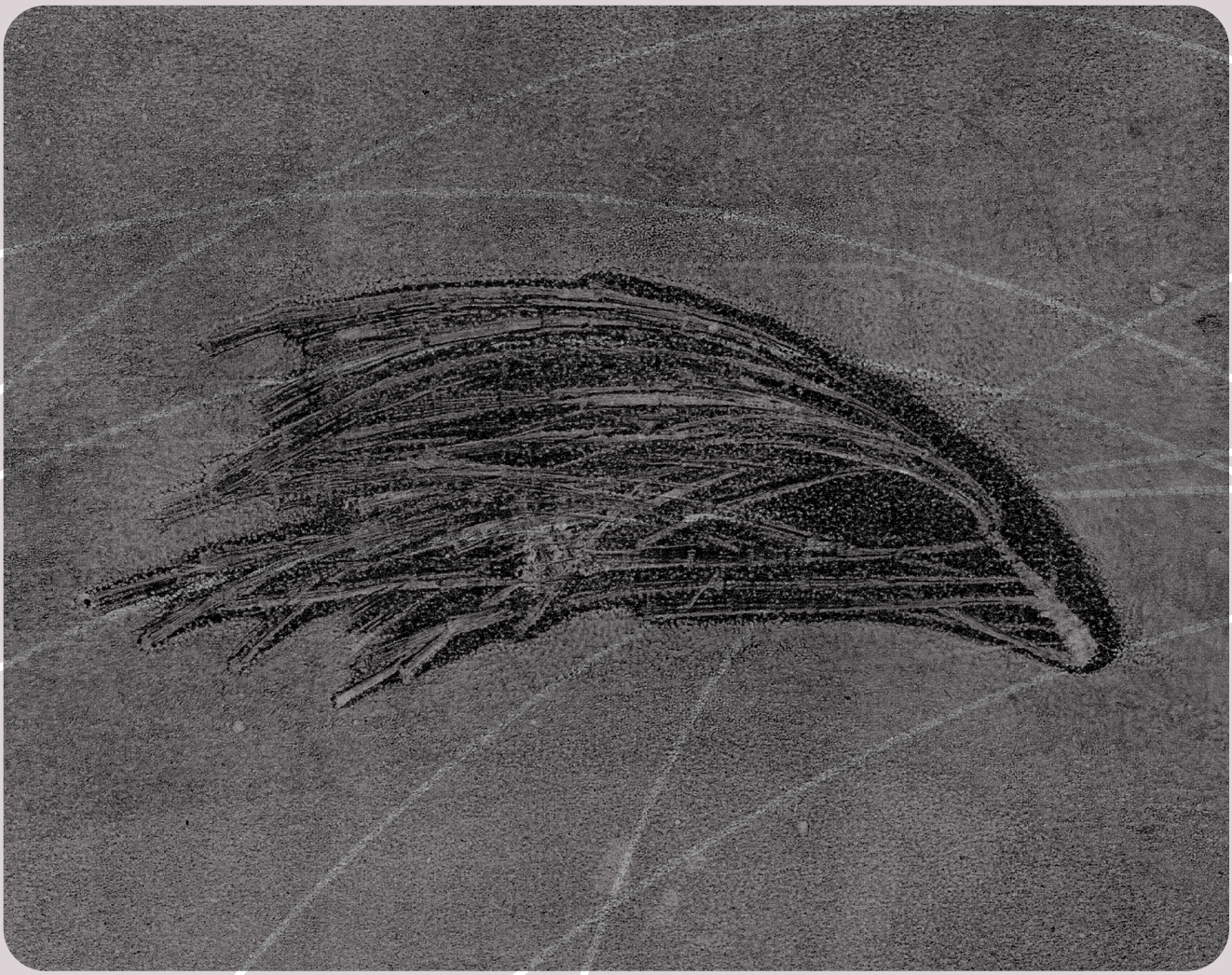
That made us incredibly active about ensuring our engagement with the issues that mattered within the community. It is not a coincidence that when these movements have come to the forefront that we're right there in them. It's not like that when Black Lives Matter movement emerged and we all thought, yeah, okay, let's do that. We've been working on coronial inquests and deaths in custody for years and years, this is just another opportunity to raise awareness of it. We're drawn into that space because it's a critical issue. Similarly, with climate justice, we all have responsibilities to our Country and our Elders who look after that Country. We have been doing this work for decades. We walked through the door with those connections. When there's now a focus on climate justice, it's not like we're saying that's a really great thing, let's get involved with that. We've been doing climate justice all along. The question is: how can we engage the momentum now that there's a stronger movement around that?

When those moments happen all our relationships are already there. With the Black Lives Matter movement, all of the Aboriginal Legal Services, the Community Controls, the SNAIC, the VACAS, everyone already had relationships to bring everyone together, because the work predates the moment. We've always been focused on advocacy and law reform. People call it activism as a way of demeaning my work. I don't mind being an activist, because that puts me in the same field as Chicka Dixon and Gary Foley. However, when people say that they're basically saying I'm not a serious academic. I do not understand how people can research silently and not advocate for what they are doing when it's important to be a voice. That is an ethical and moral abrogation of duty. We do that advocacy in the criminal justice space through taking cases to court. We do it through marching on the streets and yelling at people. We do it through parliamentary inquiries. It is not like we do one thing; we take a sophisticated approach.

Walking and marching in the streets is really important because it's part of our tradition. It shows that we're community people first and we're literally following in the footsteps of the people who've made the changes before us marching down those same streets. It is the most visual way to show our support to the community who won't read the parliamentary inquiry, who won't be sitting in the courtroom and who won't be reading whatever we've written in an academic journal. When we stand up in the streets and walk beside them on the issues that are close to them, we show a solidarity that's really important and that is a part of our academic work.

JDS There is an importance to having courage and being bold in this work that is a part of Indigenous ethics. What is it like putting bodies and careers on the line for our communities with colleagues, including non-Indigenous colleagues, from Jumbunna?

LB It's important to note that it's tough. We know that we're privileged compared to the rest of our community and it gives us a sense of duty. You can sometimes jeopardise your own



well-being and health by not acknowledging that you need to take time to nurture and heal. That's particularly true of our non-Indigenous colleagues who feel less entitled to do that. They are the ones reading the autopsy reports of murdered kids and this stuff is really hard. It is a really important part of our cultural practice to think about well-being and spirit, to give time to that so we can contribute more, rather than burn ourselves out. You need to think about the environment in which the work gets done. For example, I could not do the work that I do at Jumbunna in a faculty, because the faculty wouldn't value it for the things that should be valued. A faculty would look at my publications and think the rest is peripheral.

A faculty wouldn't be able to provide the emotional and cultural support I need either. I think of moments when we've been really brave in standing up, the Northern Territory intervention was one of those times and the Bolt case was another. We paid really high prices for that and you don't come through that unscathed. You don't come through it at all unless you've got people who you feel like have your back. That needs to come from your colleagues. Being in those fights together means you never feel alone, even when they really come after you. We can say that because you and I have been tested on that, it is not a theory. When you come through these things the community respects you, because they know you stand up. People might not agree with what we do but the fact that we stand up when others don't is noticed and respected.

That is a reward. It is also a reward when someone says in the Bowraville community, "it's family only", they invite us along. That's when you know that you've walked with people. I'm sure everyone has colleagues that they're really close to but the original group of Jumbunna scholars are like siblings to me. It's a deeper thing because we've been through wars together. It is about having a cultural space where those relationships, the camaraderie and those shared values translate into the support that you need to do the work. To know that if you are going to do the right thing and stand up when it's important that you've got people there with you. When we stood up we had each other and the occasional other person, now everyone's against the intervention.

JDS Do you have any reflections on the different ways Storywork and Aboriginal law are manifesting in your work?

LB It has given us space to think about that in our processes. I wrote novels thinking about what we do in law needs to have the stories to explain the nuances of people's experience. Those novels were derived completely from my own life, they were autobiographical and biographical of my grandmother and my father. It was intuitive at first to make the link between story, law, advocacy and change that was in that hearts and minds piece. The framework of Storywork and listening to the process of storytelling for other people has made me appreciate the links a lot more.

There are a range of ways that make Storywork become important. The privileging of Indigenous voice and wisdom is one. There is a need to be flexible with how that is done. Recording someone and transcribing it is usually tidied up. Ums and ahs are taken out because you don't want anyone to look bad and have their English criticised. Not that you change what they say, but there's always a translation in that. Or, we speak to our work and use examples of other people's experience in the research we've done where we've collected those stories.

One of the great evolutions of my own thinking about law, story, advocacy and change is through filmmaking. Feeling the power of self-determination is where you create space for somebody else to be empowered,

rather than always advocating yourself. Stepping back to allow others to come to have that space that you may have filled, for them to have that story. The dual aspect of the authenticity of the story. It matters more if you hear from the woman whose child's being removed, rather than her lawyer and then there is the empowerment of that person who has not been listened to by a system, giving them a chance to feel the power of their own words and the power of being heard. Those are things I think more deeply about when we come to research design. Thinking about who's speaking and what form it takes. When we approach an issue, how are we doing that? There's been a greater integration of that as the core business.

One of the things that we grapple with, particularly with the law, is how a whole society has its own set of stories and narratives that are incredibly detrimental to us. We've been excluded from them, demeaned by them, written out of them and ridiculed in them. There is a role for law to be challenging the stories, orthodoxies, assumptions and the hierarchies that are there. Deconstructing the stories that they tell themselves is really important. That might sound esoteric, but when you think of the concept of terra nullius, it's a story. It is a made-up story that was even called a legal fiction. That we weren't here or we didn't have a system of governance. It is a story that needed to be challenged. Even now, Native Title assumes that we were settled and there is still contesting to be done around that. The Native Title structure assumes we don't have our own governance system. There's more challenging to be done in the nuances of these stories. The main thing is the assertion of sovereignty and the privileging of our voice, but I do think we have an obligation where we can and where we've got the energy to also engage in that decolonising process. Otherwise it works against us and it trains people to think against us. It is our enemy and we can't let it lie silent.

***JDS** As we're looking forward, as UTS grows into a new phase and young scholars come into this new space, what are your thoughts on their role in taking us forward into places we have not even thought about?*

LB It is sobering, but I am at the time where I have to think about the legacy and who is going to be coming in to take things to the next level, the way I did with Uncle Bob Morgan. I am not planning on leaving anytime soon, but you have to think about things in the long term. We don't make quick decisions, because these things are important and precious. We need the right people and you need to test them.

Within that we have two priorities and challenges going forward. The first is the space to nurture the next generation of our leadership. I don't say that lightly and this could be controversial, but I don't think that every young Indigenous person who comes into the university is culturally equipped for leadership. I think there's a particular mindset, the deep connection and responsibility to community, the belief in the principle of self-determination, and that grounding in culture. I understand completely that we're all on a journey with that. Even I am still continuing to understand my culture and my cultural practice. However, there is a certain type of young person who you can tell is going to be somebody who can do that, who is equipped. It is about giving them space to grow and learn all of those things. All of these amazing young kids we've got, who are absolutely fantastic at their studies, research work and intellectual work is groundbreaking and confronting. I learn from it all the time. They have this energy and they're engaged with community activity. They're out there in the streets protesting and they have their own cultural practices, they're dynamic. We are able to be a home for those kind of people, who are our stars, who will take things forward and do things that we never dreamed of.

The other responsibility we have still harkens back to our past and the legacy of universities. One of the things that has been important for me, and I want to do a lot more work on this now that we've shown it can be done, is being able to find a space that acknowledges the wisdom of our Elders. It is important that we see people like Aunty Rhonda Dixon Grovenor undertaking her graduate studies and getting acknowledgment for her knowledge and practice. Then that needs to be permeated into the academy. There is no way she is conforming with what the academy expects. The academy is bending to her in a way that makes the academy stronger. It allows us to honor that wisdom alongside other wisdoms

like we do outside the university. We need to make sure the university is doing it too. Somebody like Eddie Cubillo, a really senior, serious law man is on the way to graduating from his PhD. He will bring insights from his experience that no other student could do. It is critical work to have people like that come and have their knowledges celebrated and acknowledged. It is important to put them in a place where they're influencing the academy and the students. Continuing to challenge the university to bend to our knowledges in that way and using our Elders to do that is another part of that work. Putting the path for those who are going to go forward and acknowledging those who built the path to where we got to are the things we are focusing on.

Every time we see somebody graduate, I think, our work here is done. Here is this person or this Elder who has been newly empowered. The legacy piece is all the work we do around research, the HDR space, people we are bringing through here. The diversity of that group and the differences in their stages of knowledge. We should be proud of that.

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Futures of Community Led Collections

MARANA DYARGALI

Interviewed By:

Associate Professor Jason De Santolo

Lauren Booker

Lauren Booker is a doctoral student at the University of Technology Sydney and Research Fellow at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education & Research. Lauren's research looks at collections of hair samples that were taken from Aboriginal communities, from many different nations, during a period termed 'The Century of Race', a period informed by disciplines such as physical anthropology, eugenics and other racial comparative theories. The hair samples were procured by multiple collectors in different fields and deposited over time, in an array of institutions, both across Australia and internationally. A lot of these collections still exist in those institutions. The research addresses the problem that there isn't a clear understanding of how many collections there are and how many Ancestors hair samples exist.

> *"Informed consent for me is incredibly important process, and a process that needs to be ongoing. It needs to be continual and reinformed, not just within the lifecycle of a project, but in the, I guess what you could term the afterlife of a project or into the future, it's something that isn't a one-time thing."*

Lauren shares a conversation on research ethics relating to her doctoral studies on the topic of *Hair Samples as Anc- estral Remains and the Futures of Comm- unity Lead Collection Care.* Lauren discusses the importance of Free, Prior and Informed Consent and shares insights into the projects methodological framing.

The research participants are mostly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander researchers, artists, and GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) workers that work either with collecting institutions, in collecting institutions or around them. Lauren has invited the participants to talk about these collections of Ancestors' hair and discuss the issues that intersect with those collections and the collecting of Indigenous identities and bodies, specifically hair. The re- search extends to other conversations about how the research participants work connects with settler colonialism and collecting, around white possession of Indigenous identities, bodies, agency and knowledge. It also looks at these questions about the intersection with issues of free, prior and informed consent, ethics (and changing ethics) over time. The key question is, *what would a future of community lead collection care be like?*

About Lauren

Lauren is a descendent of the Garigal clan through her mum's family and her father's family come from Nagasaki in Japan. Lauren is a Research Fellow at Jumbunna Research at UTS, in the Indigenous Archives and Data Stewardship Hub. Lauren is also completing her PhD in the School of Communications through the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS).

Interview between Associate Professor Jason De Santolo & Lauren Booker.

JDS Tell us about how the concept of Free, Prior and Informed Consent relates to your research?

LB The concept of free, prior and informed consent, sometimes just referred to as informed consent, is key to the PhD research project that I'm undertaking. The concept of consent is really embedded in the collections. The samples of hair that make up these collections, were taken during a period that I refer to as taken under duress. They were collected during a period of history where multiple policies, including white supremacist, protectionist and assimilation policies informed the acquisition of collecting institutions materials. One collection in particular that I am looking at is the Tindale-Birdsell collection that's at the South Australian Museum. Hair samples and collections were often taken from places such as Aboriginal missions and reserves across Australia where people were forcibly moved to and held. Australia was an oppressive settler colonial regime that First Nations people were living under. This is the context under which these samples came into being. That is why I say they were collected under a state of duress, whether or not someone gave consent, and this must be taken into account now. When you look at the social and political context of this time period, it's not such a stretch of the imagination to understand that the notion of consent really wasn't anywhere close to what we talk about now. That being said though, the idea and practice of refusal in different ways was very much alive in these contexts.

These collections are being engaged with now, and consent is being sought, now, for the destructive analysis of the Tindale-Birdsell collection. But it's a grey area now, of the standard of what that means to give consent for genetic resources, be that your own or an Ancestor's.

Informed consent for me is an incredibly important process, and a process that needs to be ongoing. It needs to be continual and re-informed, not just within the lifecycle of a project, but in the, I guess what you could term the afterlife of a project or into the future, it's something that isn't a one-time thing. It's hard to determine what kind of structures and processes you can teach someone to put in place in their research that will ensure that process of ongoing consent, because it's something that you have to commit to as a researcher, that you're going to structure all of your work around this idea of continual informed consent and reiterated consent. In a Western institutional framework conceptualisations of consent minimises the importance of relationships in the process.

JDS You have mentioned the relational dimensions of your research, the very practical aspects of the methodology that you're using, what theories inform your approach in terms of relational principles and dimensions?

LB I am engaging with Indigenous Women's Standpoint Theory, through the work of scholars like Aileen Moreton-Robinson. So, being transparent with who I am, my story, my family's story, my work, my context. Everything kind of gets put there to make sure that people know that I'm coming into this research with my own set of ethics and my own reasons and perspectives on why the research that I'm doing is imperative and timely. It helps contextualise why I'm doing it, really it's my "why". I think being clear with that grounds you as a researcher in a space of transparency, hopefully it also builds trust because you're leading with honesty and integrity.

Standpoint also dovetails with Yarning methodologies, which I am engaging with at the moment. Yarning methodologies sit in a space of relationships, of you as the researcher speaking as well, you know, which can be a real pain to transcribe yourself but there is a lot of talking I think you have to do too, and that's how you work things out together with who you are talking with. When I'm speaking with the participants in my doctoral research, it comes from a space where, we know we're going to have a chat and it may go for a really long time—and that comes from a space of knowing each other, sometimes not super well and other times really well, and therefore in that way it's trying to keep

both participant and researcher informed on each other's standpoints. Coming into the research we work out things together as we talk. That doesn't mean we're always going to agree. It's imperative to make sure that it's clear, as the research goes on, and as the conversations go on, I'm not going to try to change or amend what they're saying or what their focus is, or what kind of chat we're engaging into. I'm not going to amend that to try to fit my research plans.

JDS Are there any of the specific ethical guidelines that you feel like are really helpful for our non-Indigenous colleagues who are collaborating with us? Are there any examples you can share where have you seen that done really well?

LB The new AIATSIS guidelines, a lot of work has been put into that, and it seems really solid, I definitely recommend colleagues look at all of the ethical guidelines support that has been written. I still find it really interesting that these concepts of reciprocal relationships, standpoint and transparent conversation are new to some students and researchers, or are ways of doing, being and knowing that we have to fight for. Of course though, as it's really hammered into us through our research education, these strict games we must play, you know, with research participants, to make sure the research flows, or whether that's a character the researcher plays; playing a character until the tape goes off and then we go grab a coffee, and relax the character. I think it still comes from that idea that there is this objective truth, that there is neutrality, bias can be acted away and as long as you state all of that in your ethics then it's all going to be fine. I'm interested in why research is still uncomfortable to show who the researcher is, transparently, during the research process.

I think that that ICIP, and ICIP rights and guidelines that Terry Janke and Company, and also Robynne Quiggin developed, are a really great place for people to start. For colleagues of ours that perhaps need further insight into the 'why' not so much the 'how' we can open up those pathways to help support people to do things differently. We can have conversations with people about the importance and the significance of ethical guidelines, policies and protocols around ICIP rights. I think that those guidelines can be really informative, rather than just sending people to the NHMRC, even though that's fine too.

JDS Do you have any advice or reflections on the UTS strategy research themes that support Indigenous led, community driven, on Country research?

LB When everyone wants their research to be Indigenous led, I think questions should be raised around labour. Questions on equity, transparency, support. Universities need to consider how people are going to be supported in doing Indigenous led work; the timeframes, the expectations, and the respectful reciprocity in the relationships that Indigenous led, community driven, on Country research must be based on. I think the relational aspect of my research is an extremely important element to the research. Relationships build a responsibility to my research participants, my research and myself that is a core backbone to why and how I do research. This has to feed back into the way universities operate, not just researchers. University processes need to recognise the time and transparency needed for reciprocal relationships to grow and be sustained, and let relationships and collaborative work be free of KPIs and intended outcomes.

Also, I think institutions supporting transdisciplinary research in their strategy can provide more flexibility for researchers and research participants to work more holistically and collaboratively, I know this has been of great assistance to me in the way I'm able to explore my own transdisciplinary research.

***JDS** Your comments speak to the question of how we can counter the extractive nature of research, in the context of this year being not only about the impacts of Covid, but also priorities around the Climate Crisis and Black Lives Matter. Do you have any other reflections on navigating research in this background?*

LB Yeah, I think it's important to go slow when you need to. To go slow when someone needs to, because you don't do research solo.

That's something that has been really reiterated to me, something that is really hammered into people who undergo tertiary education or enter into academia. We research in a neoliberal, settler colonial state, it's very much this notion that you're the lone person traversing the research. It's incredibly problematic because it is really extractive if that's how you're conducting your research. Whether you mean to or not, if you think that you're on your own, you're going to be taking from people, so I think it's really important to be really reflexive, and be vigilant in your practice regarding who you consider when you research. Who is this research for? Who does it benefit? That's something that I constantly ask myself and consider as I'm moving through an academic space.

A lot of the time research takes time and resources from First Nations people, and that needs to stop. Of course this is an issue that needs to be addressed at a structural level; research is taught as an extractive tool. But we also have agency to look at ourselves, look at the nature of research and find ways to refuse and resist harmful theory and practice, and build new ways of doing research.

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Speaking the Truth about Indigenous Workforce Experiences

MARANA DYARGALI

Nareen Young

Interviewed By:

Professor
Robynne Quiggin

Industry Professor Nareen Young, Jumbunna Research at the University of Technology Sydney, is a leading expert on Indigenous people's experiences in the workforce. Nareen has recently led the *Gari Yala* research project (pronounced gar-ree ya-la), which means *Speaking Truth* in the Wiradjuri language.

"We thought Gari Yala was perfect, because what we wanted people to do was speak truth about workplace experiences"

Nareen has a long and esteemed career working with people in workplaces and issues around workplace diversity, pay equity and working people's rights. We talked to Nareen about the ethical approaches taken in the design and direction for the *Gari Yala* project. Nareen shares her insights on the importance of community led research design and engagement. The Indigenous led process enabled open dialogue in the research process, fostering trust and respect about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's lived experiences of employment. Nareen also discusses the support and safety needs of Indigenous participants in cases where they may recall traumatic experiences relating to their work or with the challenging histories that Indigenous people have had with the research process. That this trauma is ongoing, and that the research and survey results show some of the challenging experiences people have at work. The results of the *Gari Yala* research are expected to guide employers

with information they need about Indigenous people's experiences at work and guide what they need to do now.

"The most important thing that employers can do is unearth the information in terms of what's going on in their own workplaces now. That is a start."`

About Nareen

Nareen Young is an Industry Professor at Jumbunna Research, within the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at UTS. Nareen is an Eora descendant and has lived and worked all her life on Gadigal land and Dharawal land and raised a family on Gadigal land in Sydney.

Interview between Professor Robynne Quiggin & Professor Nareen Young

RQ Can you tell us about the Yari Gali project?

NY We set up the Indigenous People and Work Research and Practice Hub last year within Jumbunna Research. The *Gari Yala* project, *Speaking Truth* in the Wiradjuri language, is centering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's workplace experiences. When we set up the Hub we quickly discovered was that there wasn't a rigorous national project asking Indigenous people about workplace experiences. So that's what this project is. We did the survey work this year and we had 1033 responses. It's very exciting that we've got that kind of response.

RQ Can you tell us a little bit more about that relationship building, how did you begin those relationships in the research process?

NY A whole lot of factors. I've worked as an employment diversity practitioner for a long time; I've headed up two employment diversity peaks. I've been reading research about diversity groups, and been involved in lots of discussions about the diversity groups and what needs to happen, and for diverse groups to flourish at work, and what struck me a long time ago was that there didn't seem to be any work asking Indigenous people about their views about work. Having Aboriginal background myself, I thought it was important to talk about the experiences in informing employers about what they need to do to make workplaces places where Indigenous people could truly thrive.

RQ Who were the initial stakeholders or partners in the project?

NY Fundamentally, the stakeholders are Indigenous people. We partnered with Diversity Council Australia (DCA), which has 600 employer members. Strategically the DCA helped us in terms of getting to employers. They have a really proud reputation among diversity practitioners and among diversity stakeholders for the work they do. I wanted a survey, because increasingly, Indigenous employment is in the diversity basket in workplaces, and I wanted there to be a survey grounded in the diversity discipline.

RQ How was the project developed?

NY We set up an expert panel of over fifteen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to oversee the project. It was important for the research that the expert panel be established because there are a narrative and national discourse around Indigenous employment that really is about election cycles and politicians, and used as election fodder, really, in terms of how it's used. It doesn't go to ever having asked Indigenous people about experiences. It goes to non-Indigenous people's views about what needs to happen to get Indigenous people jobs.

Because I've been involved in diversity practice for such a long time, and in Indigenous employment, I was able to handpick the expert panel. I involved people like Kara Keys, who worked at the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) for a long time, Professor Megan Williams, who I had worked with on a workforce development project with the New South Wales Department of Health; Matthew Walsh, who had been at Jumbunna Research; Lani Blanco-Francis, a Senior Aboriginal Human Resources consultant, Ktisty Masella, the CEO of the Aboriginal Employment Strategy (AES). A whole lot of people who know what they're talking about.

I also invited a young academic from the University of Newcastle, Olivia Evans, who works at the intersection of race and class. Now, Member of Legislative Council (MLC), Sheena Walsh, who was working at the Australian Football League (ALF) job ready. The other person on it was Professor Deen Sanders, a consultant at Deloitte, who gave an enormous contribution to the survey design. The group was influential in the way that the survey ended up looking. When we started the research, it was DCA and us, and Kirsten Gray was working with Jumbunna Research, it really was about inclusion and exclusion, but with the advice of the expert panel, it went to racism and experiences of racism and discrimination.

RQ What were some of the principles that guided your process of consultation and negotiation?

NY So we would do work, and then we would distribute it to them, and then we would have a meeting of that group. That happened three times throughout the survey development. Those meetings were very open, and people gave their expert opinions, which were taken very seriously. It was a combination of knowledge, the knowledge of the research and the survey design, and the panel all brought lived experiences of working. It was really interesting, because they'd bring these amazing professional skills and knowledge of the employment arena, but they also bought their lived experience as Aboriginal people to that group.

RQ In developing the survey and bringing together, did you follow a particular protocol?

NY In terms of putting together the survey, I think it was a combination of Blackfella way and DCA way and how they have developed how they do this stuff over the years, which is exactly the process I outlined. That accorded with Blackfella way because it was incredibly consultative, it was incredibly respectful, it was incredibly mindful of that, and they are good allies. They gave us every bit of respect to understand that we knew what we were talking about more than they did, and that really worked. Everyone's contribution was respected, we really knew what we were talking about, and the group went away and did the work.

RQ Did you involve Elders or Senior Knowledge Holders in the development of the project? Was the development and design influenced by language and cultural dimensions?

NY The expert panel were the Senior Knowledge Holders, Aboriginal Senior Knowledge Holders, about Aboriginal employment around the country. We followed cultural ways in terms of how we treated each other and how we listened to each other and the respect we held each other's opinions in, and there wasn't any competition or big-noting. I think those people on the committee appreciated that it wasn't gammon, it wasn't, they weren't just there to tick boxes, or they were

there to give their stamp of approval to work that was done, it was very genuine, that we wanted their input, and that was followed through.

RQ Did you give any thought to Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property, specifically?

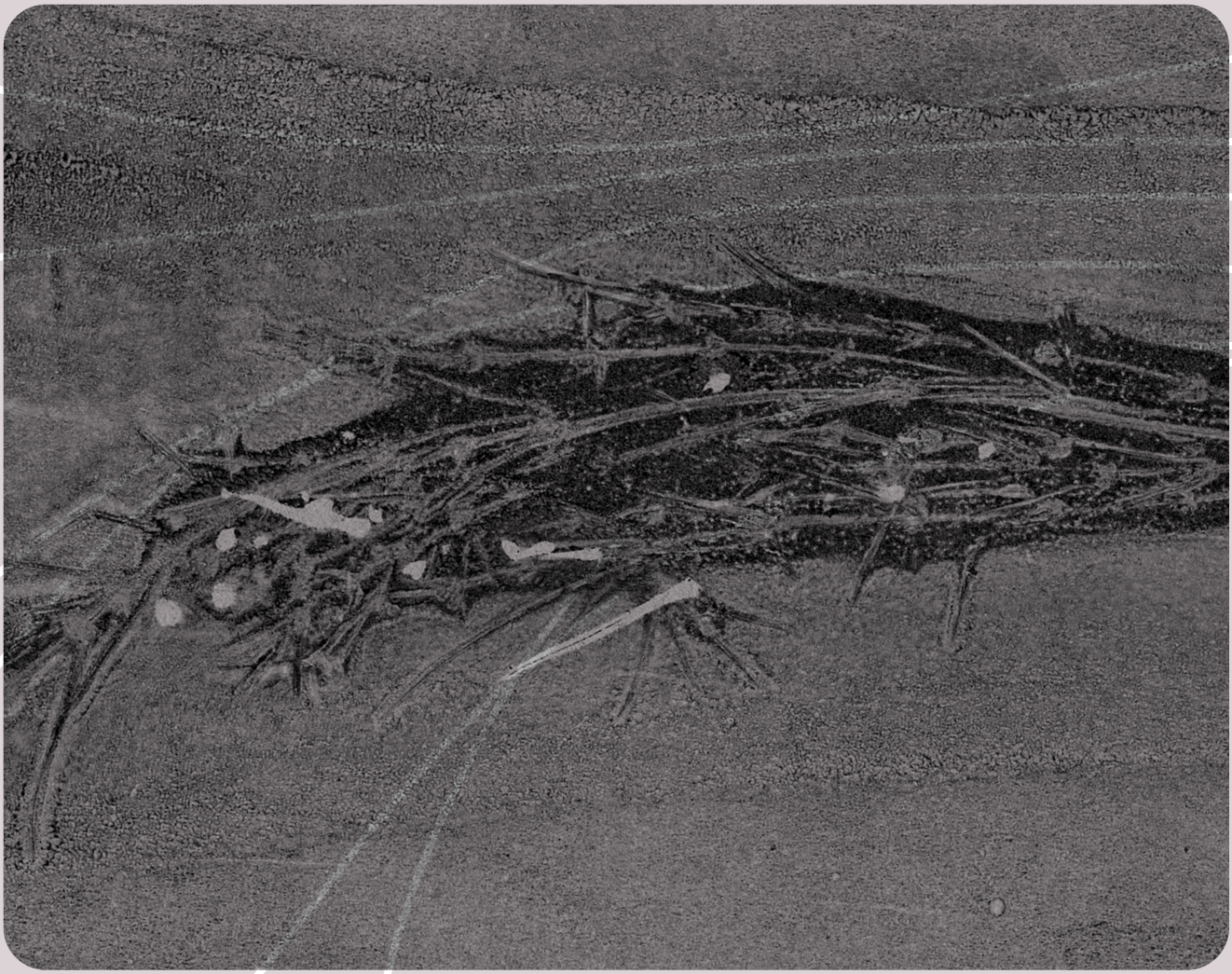
NY Yes, Jumbunna owns the survey data. That was something that I negotiated with DCA at the beginning, so we jointly own the copyright of the survey itself. We've got an agreement, and we've reached an agreement around how that will be used. But in terms of the survey data, Jumbunna owns that, ensuring Indigenous ownership of Indigenous data, and DCA will need to seek our permission to use it if they ever want to.

RQ Were there any other ethical guidelines in relation to research and data collection that you had to consider?

NY We were very mindful that if there were situations that had been difficult or traumatic that participants had to put their minds back to, and we gave advice about seeking support from counsellors. We were very, very mindful that some of the questions that we're asked might have raised traumatic experiences or brought back some trauma, so that was a concern, and anonymity was really important because, you know, there were things there that Aboriginal people and Indigenous people talk about work, that they don't necessarily want to be public and want to keep confidential. So the anonymity aspect was really important.

RQ Can you tell us how the study was carried out and how participants were identified, recruited and what research methods did you use to collect the data?

NY It was an online survey. We put it out on social media, and we put it out via the expert



panel. We also sent it out to people we knew. For example, DCA sent it to their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander reference committee, and we sent it to the ACTU. We were amazed at the response. What it said to us is that Indigenous people do want to talk about work. It was word of mouth, word of social media, or the black grapevine really, that thought it out and with really great results.

RQ How did you engage sponsors in the project?

NY We were fortunate to have the National Australia Bank (NAB) and Coles to sponsor us. Both sponsors have been great. Both were represented in all of the dealings we've had with them by Indigenous people. Topaz McAuliffe, who's a Torres Strait Island woman, from Coles and Evan Liddle, from NAB. The whole process has just been this fantastic, collaborative effort between Indigenous people because they have represented those sponsors, and it's been great.

RQ That's quite an amazing representation of the principles of the UTS Indigenous research strategy being put into action, being Indigenous led and community driven.

NY Yes, and communities from across the country and very diverse backgrounds and very diverse kind of knowledge, and it worked really well. It just has to be community driven. We can't have this situation where we have employment programs and employment policies continuing to be driven by non-Indigenous people. The lived experience of working and the lived experience of all the trauma around the history of research for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this country is so fraught. It still resonates for people today. The trauma is ongoing, and the survey results will show that about what people's experiences at work are. These things have to be community led, and the report ends with a call to action, what workplaces can do, and that will be the first time that has come from Indigenous people.

RQ Can you talk to us about your plans for publication and dissemination of the research? What do you hope will come out of the research?

NY The strategic intent behind working with DCA was that the research would go to employers. I think employers are really interested, certainly, NAB and Coles are interested enough to give funding to support the research to find out what Indigenous people say about work. Employers have said for years that they don't know what to do, that they don't know what the thing is that they need to do. This report provides employers with a guide with the information they need about

Indigenous people's experiences at work and a guide to what they now need to do. The most important thing that employers can do is unearth the information in terms of what's going on in their own workplaces now. That is a start.

RQ Did participants in the survey receive any feedback from you about their responses? Will they receive a copy of the survey? Who will benefit from the research?

NY No, they didn't because they were anonymous, so we won't be able to go back to them. Hopefully, they'll see it in their workplaces or the media.

I think people will be able to use it in their workplaces, particularly if they're members of DCA because they work in diversity committed organisations. What's more valuable is having a report out there in the public domain, which is information from the community.

RQ Were there any practical constraints or challenges and/or successes of the study?

NY We were surprised at how many responses we got. We thought maybe 400 is what we'd get. So 1033, it was just so lovely and so gratifying. But it really said to me what I've thought for a long time, that people do want to talk and want an opportunity to be heard around this stuff.

RQ What are some of the lessons that you learned from doing the project?

NY I would very much use that collaborative model again. That's been such a lesson for me out of that. Trust your instinct around using word of mouth to get it out. I've been saying for a long time Facebook is such a used platform for Indigenous communities. The one I think we'd like to do down the track is some good qualitative stuff around the same questions, and I think that will be different again. So let's see what I say in a couple years' time.

RQ Would you have any advice for researchers thinking about doing this kind of survey work with Aboriginal people? Anything that is a takeaway from your own experience from this project?

NY I think it has to be community led, and I consider my own ethical obligations really important in this regard. I'm white-passing, I didn't grow up in community, I like to be led by community myself because I know my limitations in that context. I think there's an ethical obligation for me to be very much guided by people who have more lived experience and kind of different identity to mine. I think if non-Indigenous researchers take that attitude, kind of Indigenous ways of being, and adopt them to their approaches to Indigenous research and Indigenous people, then that will be really useful.

RQ Can you tell us when the outcomes of the research will be made available?

NY As we speak, doing the last proofing, and then we'll launch it with DCA on the 17th November 2020. It's exciting.

Acknowledgements

With thanks and acknowledgement to Lachlan McDaniel for facilitating the use of the Wiradjuri language phrase Gari Yala, and the Wiradjuri Elders who provided the permissions for its use.

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Shielding Our Futures

MARANA DYARGALI

Gawaian Bodkins-Andrews

Interviewed By:

Professor Susan Page

Professor Gawaian Bodkins-Andrews is a Professor in the Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) at the University of Technology Sydney. In this chapter Gawaian discusses his current Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Indigenous project *Shielding Our Futures Storytelling with Ancestral and Narinya Knowledges*. In the D'harawal language, Garuwanga-Waduguda-Narinya'o'Birad means 'Storytelling with Ancestral and Narinya Knowledges,' and Ngabai Yillimung'o'ngun means 'Shielding our Futures'.

> *"Too often we think of consent as a tick-a-box process."*
>
> *"If you are not working on a large generalisable project and truly want consent for an Indigenous research project, you need to have the process of consent from the word go. Even the idea of the project has to be run by the Elders and preferably it should be coming from the Elders in and of itself."*

The project reciprocally engages with the oral histories of D'harawal Elders that engage with Garuwanga Waduguda (Ancestral Laws) and Narinya Wadugua (Living Laws) to emancipate representations of D'harawal Knowledges from dominant colonial-storytelling narratives that largely speak of assimilation, cultural loss, and our very extinction. In doing so this research will assist in revitalization and respect of Aboriginal identities and knowledges within urban communities.

The aims of the project are to see how Ancestral Knowledge and the wisdom of our Elders today can interact with and guide contemporary narratives, whether they be political, academic, or even scientific.

In sharing the research design, methodologies and approaches to the project, Gawaian encourages researchers to think about their ongoing obligations around consent processes. Dialogue and exchange around consent are not a mere 'tick the box' approach, but are methods that need to continue throughout the life of a research project and beyond. Gawaian also shares insights on respectful approaches to managing Indigenous peoples Intellectual Property rights through publishing in Open Access journals and sources to ensure that communities can protect and care for the knowledges for future generations.

About Gawaian

Professor Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, of the D'harawal nation, is a researcher and lecturer whose outputs are increasingly encapsulating and promoting Aboriginal Australian standpoints and perspectives across a diversity of disciplines (most notably education and psychology). Gawaian has managed and led numerous research grants investigating a diversity of topics including, mental health, mentoring, identity, traditional knowledges, education, racism, and bullying. His projects have led to the development of a strong foundation in developing robust and diverse research designs, with an increasing dedication to Indigenous Research Methodologies. From this framework, Gawaian is continually developing his experience in applying quantitative and qualitative methods within his scholarly work.

Interview between Professor Susan Page & Professor Gawaian Bodkins-Andrews

SP Tell us about working with the group of Elders on your project and how you built the relationships?

GBA This is what you'd call an insider research project. Most of, or if not all, the co-researchers, the Elders and Knowledge Holders, have known each other and worked together for most of their lives. Even Professor Bronwyn Carlson and my Mum have worked for a long time with the Elders' Circle. In a traditional sense, I'm a member of the D'harawal Traditional Descendants and Knowledge Holders Circle. But I'm also semi removed from it because I'm a Western trained academic, where sometimes what I read and learn within academia has some tension (e.g., contradicts, erases) what I learn from the Circle and its Elders. I always defer to the Circle though.

The relationship is life long, however this particular project came about from the first time the Circle and myself worked together in academia. The Circle were my guides and mentors on my PhD. I probably would not have finished my PhD without the support of the Circle. That being said, my PhD had nothing to do with Circle activity. My PhD was a statistical thesis in quantitative methods, looking into the experiences of Indigenous High School Students. The Circle kept me ground in my culture though, and since then I've always been there to help the Circle when it's required, as you naturally do if you've got an Elders group or Kinship group, and they are all kin, whether it be by blood or not.

Following my PhD I worked more closely with the Elders Circle with a project focusing on lived experiences of racism. Although, it didn't have anything to do with our Traditional Knowledges, our Ancestral Stories. I, did, and still do a lot of community work for Circle members as part of the partnership

I have with them. This particular project arose out of a time when I was working with one of the Elders, Uncle Ross Evans, in partnership with Macquarie Fields Police, where we were doing storytelling within schools (it was all volunteer). There was conflict with the local Aboriginal Land Council at the time, which tried to sabotage the project (none of them were D'harawal), which for me was very stressful. I saw the Elders just shrugging, thinking this is what we're used to.

Uncle Ross, my Mum and Dad, who are senior members of the Circle, and I wrote a chapter together from that experience. That was the first chapter I've ever written where I attempted to actually incorporate our Ancestral and our Traditional Knowledges into an Western academic narrative. That was a process of healing for myself and Uncle Ross. The unintended consequence from that little bit of action was to see how valuable our Stories are, not only for the work we're doing in our schools, but for ourselves. We came to realise that academia wasn't necessarily separate from this. That was where the idea for the grant started. The rest is history in progress, I guess you can call it.

SP Can you tell us about the research design, thinking about ICIP and ethical guidelines when you work with traditional and contemporary Indigenous knowledges?

GBA We make a disclaimer in our writing saying the Circle works from a particular storyline, which the Elders feel is strongly attached to the river system within the Sydney region, in particular, the Georges River. This is contested grounds as to whose nation it is, and we don't want to get into those particular debates. What we have is our Oral Histories, the Circle's Oral Histories, the Elders' Oral Histories.

The key issue for me is that the knowledge produced in this project is not released unless there is full consensus from the circle. We run on the full consensus model, not a Western democratic model where it's 50% plus one. Every Elder and Knowledge Holder must agree to the methodologies, methods and outcome of the project. We also have a very strong condition saying that what we produce cannot be used as a weapon against any of our other mobs. We always put in this disclaimer that we are aware there are other stories and

other connections to the land. We are in no way negating this. We are in no way saying that these other stories are wrong. Regardless, these are stories we are brought up with and this is the strength we get from these stories.

SP My right to my knowledge might actually infringe someone in their right to their knowledge. That is really interesting. I think you have spoken about this, but do you want to say anything more about consent?

GBA One thing that's critically important is, too often we think of consent as a tick-a-box process. A researcher has gotten an idea and then all they have to do is convince people to take part in the project, through whatever means. Then that's the end of consent so to speak. I need to stress, this coming in with a piece of paper within Indigenous research methodologies is not the start of the journey for the people in it. If you are not working on a large generalisable project and truly want consent for an Indigenous research project, you need to have the process of consent from the word go. Even the idea of the project has to be run by the Elders and preferably it should be coming from the Elders in and of itself.

The eventual stage where you get to this bit of paper where they sign it, there must be in absolute complete transparency and awareness of what the project itself is about. And I would argue that this awareness does not happen from a little piece of paper that's approved by an ethics committee. It's a growing process of a relationships with those you are researching with. That's my argument about consent. You would get away with a last-minute consent process within ethics committees, but it's not something I'm a big fan of, particularly when you are dealing with Indigenous Knowledges.

SP This gives some life to what we might mean by iterative consent, for example, consent that is ongoing and continuing in negotiations.

GBA Although the consent form has been signed, in our project, there is an agreement that is stated clearly within the consent form that no actions will be taken within the research

project, unless a full consensus is reached by the circle. This is not recorded in a tick-a-box, it is an ongoing consent that will last for the life of the project and beyond.

SP Would you like to tell us something about your data collection?

GBA If you want to look at it from a Western perspective, it is like a focus group interview or something like that, but it is most certainly not that. The data collection is monthly meetings with the Elder's Circle, where we get together usually around 11am and finish up around 4pm. It is cleared in the grant, so we might have a takeaway lunch from a lovely Italian restaurant nearby that makes good pizza and pasta, something that the Elders love. Our meeting is audio recorded that whole time. I understand that some Elders and particularly Aboriginal representatives don't like the idea of recordings, but this was part of the process. None of the Elders had issues here, in fact, they actually wanted it to ensure that their wisdom and their words are kept, as opposed to being lost in interpretation at a later date.

It's usually about three to four hours of recordings for each meeting. We've had nine meetings so far. There's an awful lot of data there, if you can call it as such. And it's a very fluid process, in terms of what the Elders want to talk about or feel they need to talk about; it is genuinely up to the Elders. Usually it is centered around a particular story, whether it's a story of an Elder's lived experience (Narinya), or an Ancestral Story (Garuwanga). And the Circle relates these stories back to their own lives and their own lived experiences. It's quite phenomenal. I would argue the data is owned by the Circle, although there's probably some legal issues. Within a month they receive the transcripts, recordings and my thematic analysis.

Then there's a meeting for validation of my interpretation of the themes, and this creates further discussion (data), what's missing, what's something that's emerged in the meantime and so forth.

SP How are participants identified and deidentified within the research?

GBA There's a bit of a gray area here and this is a systemic

issue with some universities. Elders will have their names on everything that's produced from the ARC grant. At the moment there are between seven to 11 members who come in out of the Yarning sessions and we have an agreement that everyone is authoring the output. But if we are quoting particular Elders, in the research output, pseudonyms are used. For example, some Elders may use a language name for their Spiritual Being (e.g., personal totem), or their favorite character within an Ancestral Story. This happens to protect their identities if they feel uncomfortable being directly named.

It's quite funny. We had a guest at the last meeting who wanted to work with the Circle on another project, and this guest was reporting back on some interviews that were conducted. The pseudonyms were used and she was being really good and very careful not to identify the Elders that were talking, using gender neutral pronouns and so forth. There was no risk of identification, but the Elders were chuckling and saying, "Yeah, I know that's you." That's because of the insider knowledges. But, when it's a stranger reading it the Elders are more protected. The reasons why I think it's important is multiple. It's a bit of a gray area and it does allow possible identification for people who know them. But that being said, nothing is produced without the approval of the Circle members. Risk of identification is something the Elders and the Knowledge Holders accept and are not particularly worried about.

The other issue I have is with the Circle members being named as co-authors, from an academic perspective. Some universities actually divide the credit of the authorship. The publication will not count fully as a paper to me if it there is shared authorship. Personally I don't care for this sole-authored prestige nonsense, it's all about individualism and greed and violates our ways. I think this is a systemic issue some universities need to sort out. And so if we are to publish with community members, Elders or co researchers, I think the universities need to be more aware of this issue.

Having Elders or Aboriginal Representatives on a

publication as co-researchers and co-authors of everything you produce gives them ownership of the publication. Also, we've come to realise that if we publish within a journal the copyright transfers to the journal, which is problematic. If we can purchase Open Access Rights, the copyright stays with the authors of the paper. So I would argue this is another thing universities really need to consider very carefully. Is it possible to create or identify journals that are more likely to be open access, or to provide funding to allow very specific journals with Indigenous Knowledges to be open access, to ensure the Knowledge Holders, Elders, Traditional Custodians, or whoever is named as author on that paper, retain the copyright and the ownership of the knowledges in that paper?

SP What have you learned from conducting your research?

GBA The most important thing as an academic researcher is, firstly, humility. We don't know everything. We can't expect those who we work with and the community members we work with, to know everything as well. Sometimes research can be a process of discovery for not only the participants per se, but the researchers. When I talk about discovery, I'm talking about one's own value systems, being aware of thinking, so already 'knowing the answer' (or even method) is really problematic in an Indigenous research context. So always be humble and defer to your Elders, your Knowledge Holders, your community representatives and so forth. They may say things that will be quite controversial that if said in public could create considerable conflict. It's not your position to judge that, because they are speaking of their own lived experiences and what they've gone through themselves.

The need to be humble and flexible is critically important. It is not just a data gathering process. This is a kind of

evolving data agreement process, where the data is of those who are sharing it, and although they may have shared something with you, that's vitally important to them, this is not your data to do whatever you want with. Too often the case with Indigenous researchers, whether they're non-Indigenous or even Indigenous themselves, is the researcher picking up a particular issue, or finding a little bit of evidence, and then it getting blown out of proportion and becoming used as a tool, or a weapon against mob. You have to be very careful and be aware of the consequences that come with sharing research data. And the first way to do that is to get full and complete agreement from those who have shared their knowledges with you. That's the most important thing for me.

SP What challenges have you experienced?

GBA COVID, massively. We have Elders who are supposedly retired (many do a hell of a lot of volunteer work), yet it's very difficult to negotiate times to come together despite their enthusiasm about the research. When COVID hit the fan, so to speak, they didn't want to stop the project, but I had to stop the project for at least six months. There were a lot of times I got requests to start the meetings up again. The meetings were for their own mental health, because this project, and being able to sit around in the Circle is a healing process. It helps them deal with the stressors coming out of community and colonial discourses. The challenge is to ensure that the research you are doing, both in the short and long term, is for the betterment, wellbeing, and cultural strength of those you are working with.

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Partnership Research with Indigenous Businesses in Australia and the United States

MARANA DYARGALI

Dean Jarrett

Interviewed By:

Professor
Robynne Quiggin

Dr Dean Jarrett received his PhD through the University of Technology Sydney Business School in 2019. Dean's PhD research, *Managing Commercial Relationships between Indigenous Businesses and Large Purchasing Organisations: Changing the Play and the Rules of the Game*, investigated the factors that underpin commercial relationships between Indigenous businesses, and their corporate and government buyers. Specifically, Dean looked at this phenomenon through the lens of new institutional economics, and transaction costs economic theory underpinned by Indigenous standpoint theory. The research conducted interviews in Australia, with businesses across different industries, as well as looking at First Nations businesses in the same industries in the United States.

Dean is a recipient of the Fulbright scholarship, which allowed him to study at the University of Arizona within the American Indian Studies Department. With the support of a number of Native American academics, Dean also had connections with the Native Nations Institute and the Law Faculty.

"So, the way in which you introduce yourself is an important part of building relationships in research. When you introduce yourself, you tell people your story of where you're from, who your family are and how you are connected. In terms of Indigenous cultural values, this allows the building of a rapport and even trust in the relationship. Letting people know who you are, as opposed to what you do, can allow people, in their own time, to determine how we can relate to each other."

Dean shares his insights on how he worked with the protocols and principles of research with Indigenous people through the use of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Studies (AIATSIS) research guidelines. Dean also discusses how he worked with the University ethics requirements for engagement with human subjects, as well as the extra requirements for ethics of working with Indigenous respondents. Dean's doctoral research utilised Yarning and deep listening as a methods and approaches when he conducted twenty-eight in depth interviews in both Australia and the United States. We hear about the use of Indigenous Standpoint Theory and its use as a tool by Indigenous researchers as well as other ethical research considerations, such as factoring in time for relationship building, and the importance of deep listening and reflexivity.

About Dean

Dean's family are Koori and Murri from New South Wales (NSW) and Queensland (Qld). Dean's Father is of the Gumbayngirr people located on the mid-north coast of NSW and grew up on the Bellwood reserve at Nambucca Heads NSW. Dean's Mother, was born on the Woorabinda Aboriginal reserve in Central Qld. Both her parents were forcibly removed from their homelands to Woorabinda. Dean's maternal Grandmother is a Gooreng Gooreng woman from the Burnett district of Central Qld in an area north west of Bundaberg at the headwaters of and along the Burnett River. His maternal Grandfather is of the Kungaditchi and Punthamara people from the Channel Country of South West Qld.

Dr Jarrett has presented & lectured at numerous universities and conferences on a range of business, management, and other Indigenous topics. He also has around fifteen years' experience working within third sector organisations in middle and senior management roles and governance positions across areas such as Indigenous health, employment, and Aboriginal land councils. As a business owner Dr Jarrett is a Director with boutique consulting firm Wurindaga Management and Procurement Services. He has a strong interest in Indigenous public policy and legislation, particularly those concerning Indigenous social enterprise and economic development. He believes that inclusive procurement is about Indigenous socio-economic independence and empowerment and tapping into diverse ideas that could bring transformational cultural change within large purchasing organisations for the better. Dean is currently a Board member of Supply Nation, UTS Indigenous Research Committee, UTS Business School Indigenous Pathways Working Group and St. Brendans College, Yeppoon.

Interview between Professor Robynne Quiggin & Dean Jarrett

RQ Can you tell us about Indigenous Standpoint Theory and how you built your relationships in the research?

DJ There was a difference between the relationships I built in Australia and those built in the United States, despite working with Indigenous groups in both of those places. I was fortunate enough to know a lot of Indigenous business people in Australia because of the business relationships I've had prior to doing my PhD, but I also provided information about the research to various other businesses. The research focused on the construction, professional services, technology, and education and training industries. I had prior knowledge of Indigenous businesses in those industries so methods I used included purposive sampling while combining personal knowledge with industry and academic reports. I also used the snowballing technique, where one business points you to another business and so on.

The principles and objectives of my research was based on a collaborative partnership arrangement which I developed with each of the businesses I interviewed. It was not an approach of just come in, get the data and go, but it was a more organic or collectivist type of process. My research is qualitative, so it was to do with the story and the yarn. There was a need to be sensitive and do some really deep listening to understand what people were saying, but also what people were not saying. Body language and gestures were very important in that sometimes they gave context to what was being said. A method of Dadirri was used, this is a deep listening process that is more than just listening. It is actually an information exchange that goes deeper in a cultural sense. It can connect you to the yarn, the land and an inner reverence that keeps you present.

While I knew the people in Australia, explaining the research was a big part of the initial stages of my interviews. We had to build the relationships in a different way, because

the relationship had changed from me being a business person who regularly connected with them, to one of being a research partner.

In the US, I was fortunate enough to have Native American academics and friends who counselled and advised me and then later introduced me to various organisations and individuals. Some were friends and others were business owners with which they already had a relationship. It was these introductions that I saw similarities in the cultural protocols of many Indigenous Australians and Native American peoples. Particularly at some of the functions I attended, sometimes Native American folks would mention parents and grandparents and their tribe, and someone would know someone, which is similar to many Indigenous Australian people.

As I mentioned, I met many Native American people. We took time to get to know each other and many became research partners and many became friends. I factored the time it took to get know each other *into my research process* in the US and this actually extended my plans by three months, which I see as a critical investment because I believe we are now friends for life and this holds special significance for me, as I hope it does for them. Our relationship, I believe, is a close bond, not only in a research sense, but in life as well.

So, the way in which you introduce yourself is an important part of building relationships in research. When you introduce yourself, you tell people your story of where you're from, who your family are and how you are connected. In terms of Indigenous cultural values, this allows the building of a rapport and even trust in the relationship. Letting people know who you are, as opposed to what you do, can allow people, in their own time, to determine how we can relate to each other. This initial engagement can help to build a rapport, respect and hopefully, a research partnership that has mutual benefit. In terms of Indigenous Standpoint Theory, it can help frame this deeper connection. Each gets a sense of each-others cultural values from discussing who we are and where we are from as opposed to where they work, for example, and what they do. For my research, this initial process lasted from five minutes to upwards of an hour before we even started discussing the questions about my project.

It takes time, so you have got to be understanding in terms of peoples' availability. In my research, people were running a business, they have a family, they have other commitments and obligations in community and so on. So, I had to be understanding in terms of their time constraints and expectations. It is really important to be reflexive in the approach to timelines, because people have very busy schedules. Giving people plenty of notice and time needs to be factored in rather than being constrained by it.

For example, I had an experience when I went to Melbourne to interview some people and something happened, which meant I had to fly back to Sydney and make arrangement to come back another time. It was very important to have that understanding that sometimes, unexpected priorities happen and schedules need to change, particularly in Indigenous communities.

All of the people that contributed to the research, are running a business and have other commitments, and obligations in their lives. This may be different to non-Indigenous people. With obligations to their families, communities, business, committees and volunteerism the number of available people to carry out these roles may be very limited so it falls on the same few. Hence, there is possibly a complete difference in the understanding of how time, as a resource, is articulated and encompassed in Indigenous research.

RQ Is that time you take to get to know people a part of reciprocity or is there some other way you would describe that?

DJ It's partly reciprocity in the way that I provide a yarn about me, and although I won't ask, you may provide a yarn about you too. But you may choose not too as well, and that's okay. I also think there's also an obligation to introduce ourselves in this way because it helps to close the divide in our understanding of each other and it may also show respect for our families, community and who I am as a person. The yarn might go right back, it's something intrinsic to us, in our ways of introducing ourselves.

RQ You mention there are things you won't ask, can you speak about that?

DJ I suppose it is about respect that goes right back to the old people in my family, my upbringing. My father never spoke directly with my Nana and Pa on Mum's side, there was an avoidance type relationship there. This avoidance relationship goes right back in the family. They never had a direct conversation, but they go around it, by talking on the side or side talking. Dad would say something loud enough so the old people would hear it, but he would do this by talking to Mum and this happened vice versa. I remember when we were growing up, Dad and Pa would be fixing a car, being backyard mechanics together, and they would be yelling out to us kids to come over and get the different tools. Dad wouldn't ask Pa, and Pa wouldn't ask Dad, because of the avoidance relationship there.

For some people, it's disrespectful to ask them questions. Even today, I have a very low communication level with my in-laws. It is an intrinsic thing that I grew up with, it's imprinted in me, I was socialised that way. This is one way I engage with other people now. Sometimes you ask old people a question, and I when I say old people I mean Aboriginal Elders, and they'll just walk away from you, they won't even answer you. But that's your answer. So, if you don't learn from that, you're missing something. There is a skill to the way you ask questions. I sometimes watch Stan Grant and the way he asks a backhanded sort of question, without directly asking it, is brilliant. It is respectful and a real skill. In interviews you can say, "I noticed you talked about 'such and such', is it possible to get a better understanding of that?" You can delve without being rude and disrespectful. There could end up being no real cut and dry answers but the communication process can hold more importance than the answer itself.

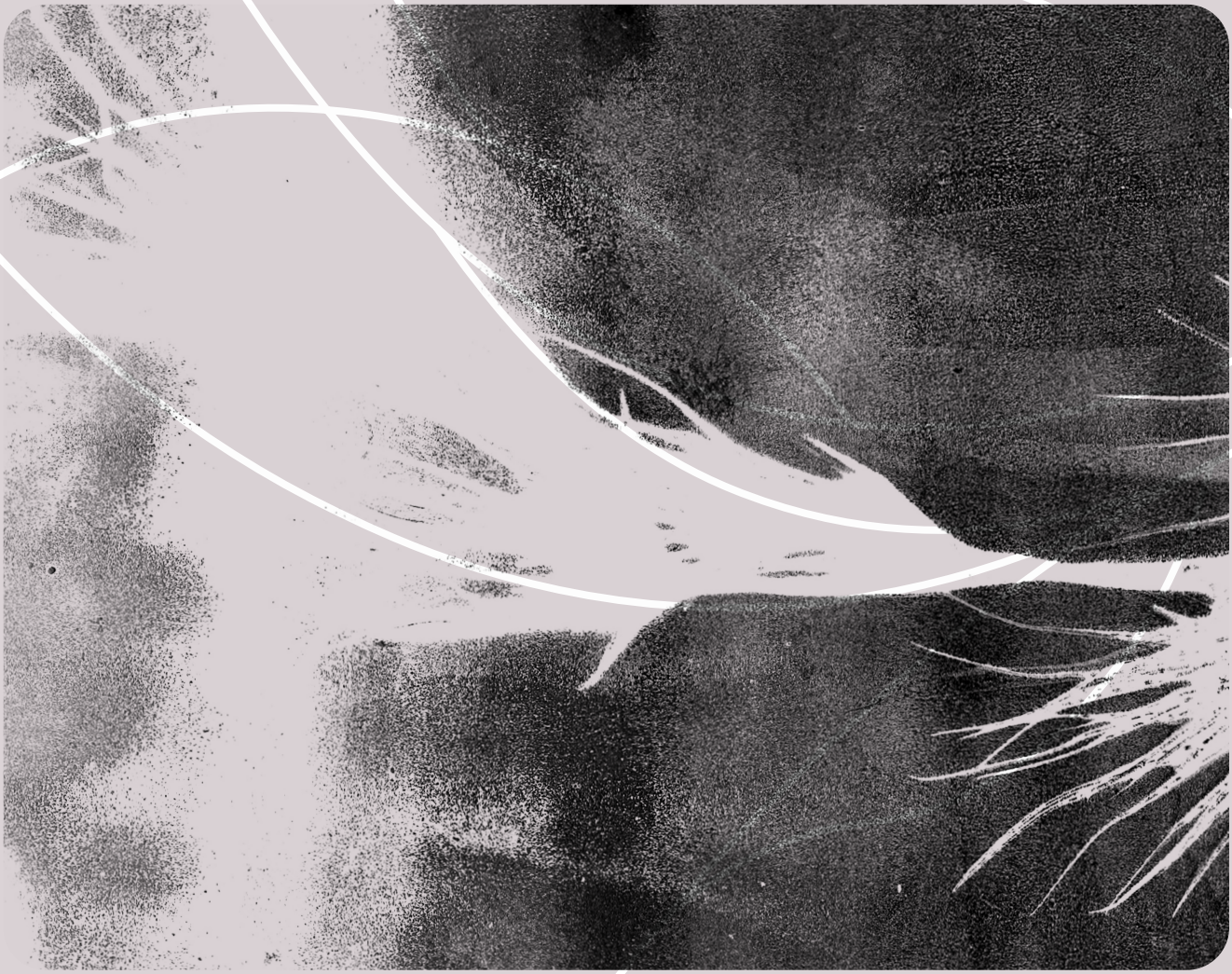
I talk about and cite other work on this in my research, the 'high and low context' ways of communicating. Indigenous people largely communicate in high context, you'll get the whole backstory first before you start to discuss things. You might have to go round and round and round a few times, before you get to the actual question you were looking for a response about. Low context communication is a direct

and straight in approach. For example, you want to engage with Indigenous people? Where's the script for this? This approach is like running through a checklist. Sometimes, high context doesn't work. We can be more spontaneous, coming to a point in a conversation where we can search back into the responses to find something else out. High context for many Indigenous people and low context for many non-Indigenous people is certainly a part of understanding ways of communicating.

The avoidance type relationship, underpinned by cultural values, still happens in business today. People won't go into certain shops in northern parts of Australia, because in laws are working on the counter. Another example of that was when I was teaching and a couple of students from Africa were presenting. We had 15 minutes for the presentation and it took about 45 minutes to present their topic. I didn't mark them down, because I understood the high context way of communicating. Many relationship and cultural values that Indigenous people intrinsically have, in terms of reciprocity, obligation and avoidance relationships, are very important to factor into a research process.

RQ What do you think works when framing questions for research with our people?

DJ It depends on your research design methodology, what methods you are going to use, and the subject matter. The way I approached it was with open ended questions. In one interview, I asked the opening question of a Native American person and they spoke for half an hour and without interrupting I kept track of what they responded to as they spoke. That is, as the person was speaking I was writing my reflections against upcoming questions. The analysis process and the way you treat



the data becomes very important in these circumstances. The kinds of questions you ask really comes down to how well you've built your relationship with the individual research partner. You can ask more questions if you feel more comfortable, but it is very situational and depends on relational circumstances.

RQ Can you speak about some of the comparisons between your research in Australia and the United States?

DJ The ethics processes in Australia and the United States are different. Some of the tribal governments in the US have their own approval process to undertake research on the Reservations. For example, the Navajo Nation have an ethics process you need to go through if you want to go on to Navajo Country to conduct research. You need to have the university's research ethics approval process as well as the Navajo ethics process. Another difference was knowing when you were on a Reservation or not, because some Reservations are inundated with Western businesses, like Mc Donald's and strip malls. I took part in the Native Nations Institute's Nation Building course whilst I was there and also attended some workshops on legal and ethical matters. These courses helped me become well informed about various research processes and some of the aspects of Native American Reservations.

A reflection I had was, imagine if we had a Gumbaynggirr Nation ethics process that you had to go through before you came onto Gumbaynggirr Country to undertake research. Wouldn't that be brilliant in Australia? It would allow Indigenous Australians to lead, control, manage and drive research issues that we think we need, not others. But I don't think it happens anywhere in Australia. It seems like researchers just come and go as they like. I've over simplified it, of course, it is still difficult to get ethics approvals, but it's not as contained in Australia, as it is in the United States on the Indian Country.

The process of making ethics applications on Reservations led me to change tact. I had to meet in towns and build rapport within Native American business communities in the southwest corner. As I mentioned earlier, this took much longer than what I expected and my

assumptions about the time it it would take were certainly mislaid. I attended many Chamber of Commerce functions. I went to the National Minority Supplier Development Council in the Southwest. People from the Native Nations Institute introduced me to these folks. Joan Timeche, the CEO of the Native Nations Institute was the main person to look after me. At that time, they were also on the Board of Directors at the Center for American Indian Economic Development. I already knew an Alaskan Native, who was also a Board Member of NANA Corporation up in Alaska. So, I had a couple of connections already who introduced me to different folks. But it all still took time, which is different to what happened in Australia. Here I knew most of the research partners for a long time prior to having our research yarn.

I presented some research in the United States and when people presented they introduce themselves in similar ways to here in Australia. They introduce who their grandfather is and who their grandmother is, so Native American people and others get to know each other's Mob. As mentioned, we are very similar in that way. One of my research partners was a younger guy who was presenting a bid for a contract to the procurement people of the Tribal government. He was sort of taken aback a little bit because he had to introduce his family, which had never happened to him in the western way of doing business. He initially jumped straight into the presentation until the members of the tribal council involved in the process pulled him up and said, that's great, but who's your family here? Where's your family from and so on? So, he had to backtrack and introduce himself that way and then continue into his bid. So very similar.

RQ Some people might say that is a long process of getting to know people as part your research, I imagine you learnt a lot through that process?

DJ It was definitely a learning experience. The Native American ethics process at tribal government level is something that we in Australia should really look towards. I might add that not all Tribal governments have an ethics process. However, Indigenous people in Australia need to come together to get to that point, but that could be a

difficult task. If you asked me how many Gumbaynggirr people there are, I'd say well, I don't know. I think there might be 10,000. But if you ask a Navajo they know the number. I think about how powerful that could be, feeling the impact of a Gumbaynggirr Nation. Knowing the statistics makes for a powerful argument and the statistics are there through our Native Title process. A lot of the genealogical work has already been done, not all of it of course, but we know many of the links and who is connected.

The extra time it took to build those relationships in the United States was also a learning process. Other than trying to stay in contact with the research partners, I'm still connected with some of the Native American folks who weren't part of the research, such as the academics and business people. Research partnerships can be more than just a researcher-respondent relationship. Partnership are like 'we are in this together and I really want to make a difference for Indigenous people and their businesses and by extension, our communities.' Prior to the interviews I would explain, 'this work is our work, it's not just mine.' I would say that I am a conduit for your voice, to go out to the broader business community. Together we'll answer how we can reduce transaction costs for us as a collective of Indigenous business people in both the US and Australia. That is how I understand the approach of Indigenous Standpoint Theory, that works for me. While I did the ethics application, undertook the research and did the analysis, it is actually a contribution to academia on behalf of the Indigenous business community, in both Australia and the US. It is the voices of the Indigenous business sectors in both Australia and the US, that I wanted to amplify.

RQ Can you tell us about your approach to sharing the information and translating the results into action?

DJ I think this may be an important question about intellectual property, but as I mentioned, I want to amplify the Indigenous business voice, and use the research process as a platform to make positive change for our people and communities. So, I have no problem with doing presentations, seminars, workshops and being involved in publications etc.

As for translating the results of the research into actions, I'll have to revisit my thesis. Firstly, my overall research question was, what are the factors that shape the relationships between Indigenous businesses and their large purchasing organisation buyers? Then there were sub-questions largely about, elements of these commercial relationships that constrain and or enable inclusive procurement and self-determination for our mob.

At my stage one presentation, one of the academics asked me 'what theoretical question are you trying to answer here Dean.' I grappled with this for a while and after many days, possibly weeks of research and reflection my response was framed by new institutional economics, which is an interdisciplinary concept that combines the study of economics with organisational structure—transaction costs economics theory is a product of NIE. I used these lenses, from an Indigenous standpoint. That is, my theoretical question became how does new institutional economics and transaction cost economic theory explain Indigenous business relationships? This helped me frame my thesis about the factors that shape the commercial relationships of Indigenous businesses. So, as an Indigenous researcher, exploring Indigenous business issues, with Indigenous business people, that can provide Indigenous lead business solutions, I wanted to Indigenise new institutional economics and transaction costs economic theory in a way that hasn't been done before.

Part of the economic theories I used lay the concepts of governing institutions (which relate to market relationships) and institutional environments (which concerns policies and politics). In the Australian context, I found that our relationships need a lot of work but our policies aren't too bad. In the United States it was the other way around.

Now in terms of actioning these results, potentially this means decolonising institutional environments and shifting the governance of institutions from transactional to relational.

One way to do this, I believe, is through a rights-based approach which led me into the piece of work I did with Global Compact Australia and KPMG called The Australian Business Guide to Implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As a direct result of my study we identified six foundational actions for engaging with Indigenous peoples which we believe can transform corporate and government departments commercial relationships with Indigenous businesses. The right-based approach means making change within your company to address the rights of Indigenous businesses. This could mean thorough assessment of your policies and processes and shifting commercial arrangements from being totally transactional to being more relational which is in-line with Indigenous cultural values. In Australia, the relationships aren't good, because Indigenous people have a different cultural value set to a corporate or government departments. So, we hoped we addressed this in the Guide.

RQ Do you have any reflections on the data collection in relation to your respondents?

DJ I went through a process of free, prior and informed consent with each of the respondents and many of them actually wanted their business name to be identified in the research because they thought the research was critical. I chose not to identify the business names, because some businesses chose not to be identified. It was either all in, or none at all. I offered to call them when doing a presentation to see if they'd like the identify of their business in the presentation. There was a bit of communication back and forth with the transcripts as well which helped. I changed from full time study to part time because of the additional time it took to engage with Native American businesses and also the time it took to do the analysis of the data. There is an obligation there to communicate this way because as I said, it was a research partnership and the work was done to support the Indigenous business sector.

RQ Can you talk more about that obligation?

DJ It came up in part of my research and is actually one of the themes. It is an obligation to self-determination. One of the key themes of my research is about Indigenous businesses contributing to their own communities. It was an obligation to be a role model, to show your communities that you get off the reservation, or get off the mission in Australia's case. Not one of the businesses I spoke with about why they started their business said it was about making money. They all talked about other things, like being good examples and being role models, or setting up and contributing to sporting teams. These are the obligations for the businesses that I interviewed. It was highly important for them to give back to their communities, to contribute to the community's well-being. And I think this type of obligation is something that extends beyond business because of the kinships structures, as cultural values, that underpin Indigenous community life both here in Australia and the US.

RQ Is there anything else you wanted to say or comment on?

DJ This notion of time is critical in the research process and really needs consideration. Of course, there are deadlines, but there is also this need to constantly produce, get research out, get it done, make sure you finish. We need to get you through things as quick as we can. Get your stage presentations done. I don't know if that's an appropriate approach for Indigenous researchers because that approach puts pressure on the research process and by extension the relationships that one may have established with Indigenous people and or communities. So, when there's a choice between the relationship between the Indigenous researcher and his or her people, and their relationship with academia, potentially, that could make it harder to choose academia. There's got to be a balance between the benefits of my research to the University, the pressure and the benefits to people who I'm doing the research for. There needs to be more consideration around that.

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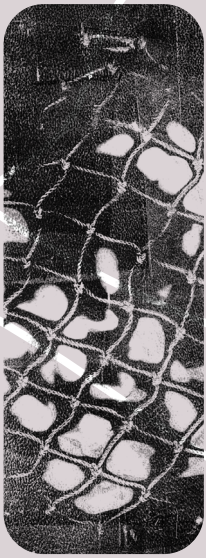
Access to Justice

MARANA DYARGALI



Christopher Cuneen

Interviewed By:

Professor Robynne Quiggin

Chris Cunneen is Professor of Criminology at the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at the University of Technology Sydney. Chris has held previous roles at James Cook University in Queensland, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) and the Sydney Law School. Chris has been working with Aboriginal organisations engaging in socio legal, and criminological research for the last 35 years.

Chris first started doing work around justice issues and policing issues in Northwest NSW around Bourke, Brewarrina, Walgett and Dubbo. Since the mid 1980's Chris has been researching criminal justice issues, working for significant inquiries such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, the National Inquiry into Racist Violence, the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, the NSW Aboriginal Child Sexual Assault Taskforce, and on a range of other research and inquiries for the Australian Human Rights Commission and with ATSIC before it was abolished. He is currently involved in supporting justice reinvestment projects in Aboriginal communities across the country through the Justice Reinvestment Network Australia, and is also working with the National Justice Project to establish a web-based Indigenous Hate Crime Register to enable Aboriginal people to report incidents of racism and racist violence.

"The work we have been doing has been generally defined and generated by Aboriginal organisations, so it answers many of the questions you get in ethics

applications straightaway. Principles of reciprocity, benefit and informed consent also need to be thought about and put into practice when developing

Chris shares insights into the research that he has been involved with over past decades, around civil and family law issues for Aboriginal people, including legal issues from housing to racial discrimination and child protection. Chris speaks about the importance of building relationships with communities and working with Aboriginal organisations and knowledge holders to design research questions that have relevance and impact for the community. The research in Chris's view, provides practical solutions to people that have real world problems that needed to be investigated.

About Chris

Professor Cunneen has a national and international reputation as a leading criminologist specialising in Indigenous people and the law, juvenile justice, restorative justice, policing, prison issues and human rights. Chris has participated with a number of Australian Royal Commissions and Inquiries (including the Stolen Generations Inquiry, the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and the National Inquiry into Racist Violence), and with the federal Australian Human Rights Commission. He taught criminology at Sydney Law School (1990–2005) where he was appointed as Professor in 2004. He was also the Director of the Institute of Criminology (1999–2005) at the University of Sydney.

Professor Robynne Quiggin & Professor Christopher Cunneen

RQ Could you talk to us about the early days of your research?

CC I started working with Aboriginal communities in the mid 1980's when I was working for the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. They had me work on a project based in north west NSW, in particular, because I already had some established relationships with people in Bourke, Brewarrina and Dubbo. I have always been interested in working with Aboriginal organisations, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and that's still as true today as it was 35 years ago. I have maintained those relationships to the Legal Services, other Aboriginal organisations and people around the country.

A key part of that relationship building has come from working for various inquiries and with various Indigenous and non-Indigenous NGOs. I was involved early on as an activist for police and prison reform including with the community-based Campaign for Criminal Justice and the Committee to Defend Black Rights in the events leading up to the establishment of the Royal Commission in 1987. I did some research work for the Royal Commission and also for Aboriginal organisations' submissions to the Royal Commission, including with the (then) National Aboriginal and Islander Legal Services Secretariat. And so I've always seen my work as being not purely academic, but also having political and policy impacts. Certainly the work we're doing now, around access to justice is directly connected to improving the outcomes for Aboriginal organisations, communities and people.

RQ UTS Indigenous educational research strategy talks about being community driven. Can you talk about how your projects have been community driven?

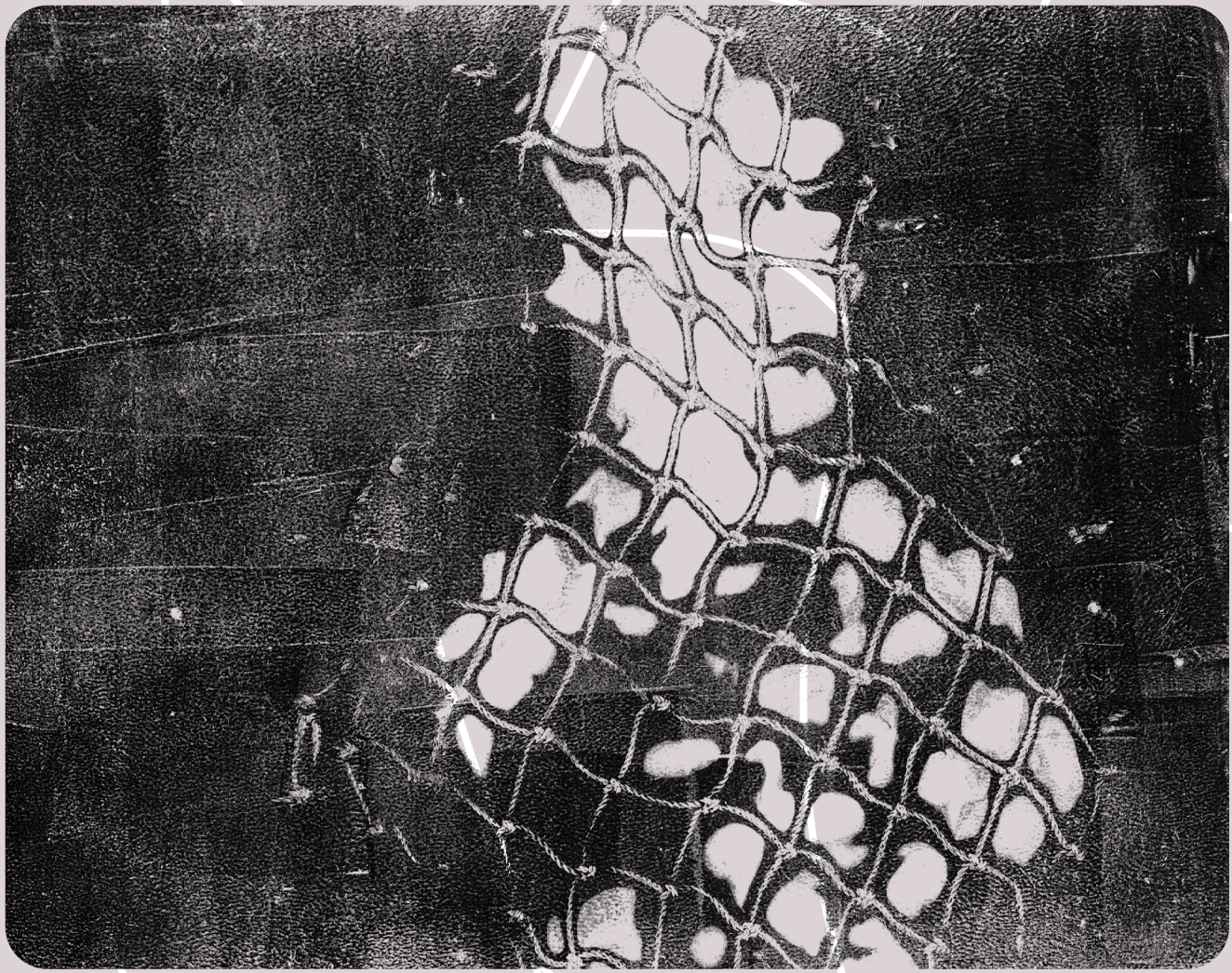
CC The access to justice work started around 2005 when

Carol Thomas, an Indigenous lawyer who was the head of the Aboriginal Unit within NSW Legal Aid, came to me and said, we really need to know something about the civil law needs of Aboriginal people in NSW. She said we know a lot about what the criminal justice needs are, but we don't know much about the legal needs around things like housing, racial discrimination, child protection, Centrelink and all those types of issues. That research started with the NSW Legal Aid Commission. It was driven from the very start by Aboriginal people working in the area who had specific research needs or research questions they wanted answers to. Those questions overlapped with interests that I had and they have had a very direct policy impact. There were changes to NSW Legal Aid to improve the services provided to Aboriginal communities in New South Wales, and eventually the establishment of an Aboriginal Civil Law Service within NSW Legal Aid and that's still working there today. Now, a decade and a half later, we are having discussions with the Aboriginal lawyers in that section in Legal Aid about doing some work for them on the legal needs of Aboriginal young people.

I have academic outputs. I write books, I write journal articles and I do things that an academic is supposed to do. But for me, it's always been about working with Aboriginal communities or organisations to bring about change and benefit to Aboriginal people.

RQ Have there been issues with knowledge holders around culture or language when you have come to understand the community and the organisations you have worked with?

CC A lot of the work that we have done over the years has been with Aboriginal community controlled organisations many of whom have Elders involved within their boards, or in professional positions. The people I have worked with have been knowledge holders. Working with and respecting what people already know is really important. This translates in practice through the types of research questions you ask. Our work is driven by what Aboriginal people already know and what they want answers to.



In terms of language, a lot of the work we have done over the last decade has been in remote communities, working through national projects with a focus on access to justice. We have just finished a major project for the Aboriginal Legal Services and Legal Aid in the Northern Territory, which involved a lot of remote area work in the Barkly region. Language is a really big issue in this work because people don't speak English or English is the third or the fourth language. Working with and respecting people in this instance translates to recognising the need to use interpreters. You might think that people speak English, but in fact, it is not their primary language. So it is really important to have people who can translate the everyday English that academics and researchers use into something which is understandable to people in the community you are talking with.

In terms of cultural dimensions, one of the things we see as important in the work we do with legal need and access to justice is the use of Yarning Circles as a process to gather knowledge. We always leave it up to communities to make a decision as to whether they want separate groups for men and women. On rare occasions a community may want to meet men and women together, but in most cases, they much prefer to meet and have those Yarning Circles separated. The communities themselves can make the decisions about how the research is done. You cannot simply direct research in a way that you as the researcher might think is best or convenient for you. There is a great need for respect and flexibility.

RQ How do you bring the different community preferences into the design of the project you are working on?

CC Maggie Walter and Chris Anderson wrote a book called Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology. It is a great analysis, from an Aboriginal perspective, of the problems with a lot of statistical work that is done in relation to Indigenous people, both in Australia and Canada. It analyses the way social, health and justice statistics can reflect a deficit approach to Aboriginal people. They write about how numbers and statistics are used to hide as much, or more than, what they might tell you. And I think, the way you get

around that is by sitting down, talking to people and providing them an opportunity to tell you what it all means. I think the current emphasis on data sovereignty ties into this: it is about providing the space for the community to determine research agendas, priorities and interpretation of data outcomes—so in a broader sense returning knowledge/data to the community.

RQ Does this sort of thinking inform the way you approach an ethics application?

CC The work we have been doing has been generally defined and generated by Aboriginal organisations, so it answers at least some of the questions you get in ethics applications straightaway. Principles of reciprocity, benefit and informed consent also need to be thought about and put into practice when developing the research design. We designed and implemented the work we have done on access to justice with the Aboriginal Legal Services. It was not us going to remote communities to talk to people about their legal problems. We actually went with lawyers from the legal services to address those legal problems and give legal advice. This is an example of reciprocity in the design of the project. It was a real kind of activist approach. We were providing practical solutions to people that had real problems. It was really important for us to give something back straight away whilst working in communities.

RQ Can you talk about the impact of your research outcomes and the data that you have collected?

CC One of the outcomes from the legal needs and access to justice project was the production of infographics. We made five minute infographics with the assistance of Aboriginal narrators from the general areas where we had taken the information from. The intention was to present the results of in a way that goes directly back to the community. NSW Legal Aid used the research to redesign their civil law service for Aboriginal people in NSW. The most recent impact was in the Barkly region in the Northern Territory. The North Australian Aboriginal Justice Association and

the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission have used the results to reframe the way they provide services and allocate lawyers in remote communities in the Barkly. Aboriginal organisations have used the results from this research into legal need over the last decade, to argue in funding applications for what they actually need to provide services. It has also been picked up by non-Aboriginal organisations, for example the Productivity Commission's report on access to justice arrangements, which came out a couple of years ago now, relied heavily on the work.

RQ Would you like to comment further on the importance of an evidence base in effecting policy development in the field you work in?

CC It is really important. There had never been an assessment of the civil and family law priority areas for Aboriginal people, until we started doing this work in the early 2000s. Everybody knows about the really horrible over representation of Aboriginal people in prison, problems with over policing and deaths in custody. That is something that is much more in our face all the time. There was much less information on the legal needs and issues around matters like housing, credit and debt, racial discrimination, social security, consumer problems and child protection—all of which are really big issues for Aboriginal people and communities. We did this work to provide an evidence base and to ask what the key areas of non-criminal, legal need are for Aboriginal people. We were able to identify, for example, that housing and racial discrimination were the two most frequent issues that people in the community identified as a problem with a potential legal response and remedy.

RQ Would you like to reflect on any learning experiences you have had working in this research area?

CC Negotiating the politics around research can be really difficult. I do not say this in a negative way and I don't think the politics of research is any more or less predominant in Aboriginal communities than in non-Aboriginal communities. Sometimes it is negotiating the politics within and between Aboriginal organisations, other times it is negotiating

the politics between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous organisations. There is a lot you need to do that you often learn through mistake, or by thinking something sounds straight forward but it isn't. I certainly have made mistakes in terms of not being clear, particularly of relationships. I'm not necessarily thinking of just cultural relationships, I'm thinking about political relationships as well. As a non-Aboriginal person, you have to tread carefully and respectfully.

I think the only way you learn that is through experience, it takes time and I think you need to be aware that you are going to make mistakes. You won't always be the most popular person around the place. It is about negotiating and working your way through all the issues as they arise. For example, a lot of Aboriginal people are sick to death of being researched. People can be very reluctant when you arrive in a remote community, even though you might be doing work for an Aboriginal organisation. You need to be patient and explain the reason you are there and doing the work. You need to explain, for example, that it is an Aboriginal community controlled organisation that wants the answers to your questions so they can better understand and improve the work they do for community. It is really important to explain yourself, what you are doing and the kind of benefit that comes back to the community.

RQ What is it like to walk into a place where people have been giving and giving, where they might be reluctant to sit down and give of themselves again?

CC Explaining ourselves carefully has been a way we have tried to get around this experience. Our research strategy has been to employ local people, which has been really important. For example, we went out to Alpurrurulam, which is one of the most remote communities in the Northern Territory near the border of Queensland. It is about 500 kilometers down a dirt road to Alice Springs. Whenever a plane comes in they take somebody away to arrest them, they remove a child, or it is because of a medivac. There is a sense of people coming here is not good news.

So it is not surprising there is initial distrust, and it is important to explain what you are doing carefully. Also we engage people locally to do paid work for us, bringing people together for a Yarning circle and paying the people in the Yarning circle for their attendance. We have done this by working with Aboriginal community controlled organi sations, Elder groups or the Local Aboriginal Council. I think that is an important practice, rather than just rocking up there cold and expecting people to talk to you.

***RQ** Do you think the research community has moved on from worrying about paying people for participation and the impact on objectivity?*

CC I hope so. I wrote a book with Juan Tauri, who is a Maori scholar, called *Indigenous Criminology*. In one section of that book we talk about an approach called 'committed objectivity'. We actually took it from Biko Agozino, a Nigerian scholar who has written extensively on the need for decolonising research. 'Committed' and 'objectivity' are not mutually exclusive concepts. We want to bring them together. You still want to do good research, but you can be a committed researcher at the same time. You can have a level of commitment to the benefit of the community as well as producing good research. You may not want to use the word 'objective', but we have used it as a term qualified by 'committed'. It is the idea of bringing good quality research from a committed perspective.

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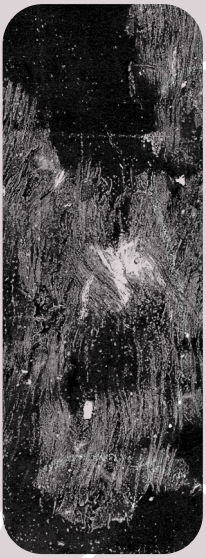
The Emplaced Designer

MARANA DYARGALI



Interviewed By:

Associate Professor Jason De Santolo

Jacqueline Gothe

Dr Jacqueline Gothe is a Designer and Associate Professor in the School of Design at the University of Technology Sydney. Jacqueline has worked alongside Indigenous people on Indigenous led projects since 1999. During that time, Jacqueline has come to think deeply about the role of a designer, working on Country and lands where sovereignty has never been ceded.

For the past two decades, Jacqueline's work has focused on Indigenous land management and how non-Indigenous designers can work respectfully, reciprocally and alongside Aboriginal people to support the work. Jacqueline explains that the best place for her to sit is to be led by Indigenous people.

"Being led by Indigenous Elders was the way we were going to move forward."

"The ethics process during the time that I have been working on this project has changed significantly. There has been a big change in the universities around responsibility, reciprocity, and the recognition of the human relations that are engaged in the process."

In this chapter, Jacqueline discusses her journey as a designer and design researcher and the work that she has done to adapt to support work with Indigenous knowledge systems that have been here for 120,000 years. As a researcher, Jacqueline changed her thinking about delivering her professional and personal expertise, bringing to the surface the habitual Western ways of a designer and thinking about how research and practice might change when working in contemporary Australia with land management.

About Jacqueline

Dr Jacqueline Gothe is a design researcher in visual communication design in the School of Design at UTS. Her research approach emphasises research through design as a knowledge creating paradigm. Jacqueline has widely researched the application of communication and design principles in the natural resource management sector, investigating transdisciplinary approaches in projects dealing with the consequences of environmental flows and pesticide toxicity on the Hawkesbury Nepean River. Her doctorate, awarded in 2016, titled *Tracing Country: Visual Communication Design and Chorography*; *Towards a critical practice in Visual Communication Design*, investigates the role of the visual communication designer in complex interdisciplinary and cross-cultural environmental communication design projects.

Interview between Associate Professor Jason De Santolo & Jacqueline Gothe.

JDS Could you discuss the relationship building that has happened throughout your research?

JG I was introduced to Victor Steffensen in 2003. Our first meeting was at the Australian Museum in Sydney. Victor was videoing Elder Tommy George's responses to items in the collection that had been collected in Cape York—photographs and objects.

We walked to DAB Building at UTS to meet Clement Girault, the Video Production Co-ordinator, and see the video and digital facilities. Victor invited us to his hotel in Glebe, where he and Tommy George were staying, to share the database of the recordings of traditional knowledge that he, Tommy George and George Musgrave had been recording and documenting. I realised that there was much work to be done to ensure this work was preserved, translated, interpreted and shared with mainstream Australia. I had some previous experience with catchment management authorities and natural resource management but I was suddenly aware of the gap in contemporary Western land management practices.

Victor and I began to make the database more functional for community use and ensured the archiving of all of the material. Some challenges were technical and we worked with the support of Cape York Development Corporation (CYDC) technology partner CISCO. There was no research question yet, and I didn't have an agenda. I began to realise that my idea of research was not matching with the Indigenous- led process. I worked alongside Victor and the Kuku Thaypan Elders for about six years and we were funded through an internal UTS grant called *Communicating Shared Traditional Knowledge*. It was very clear that I had a role as a mediator, translator, facilitator guided and led by the Elders' requirements.

In 2010, we realised that the work of archiving was not sufficient in making things change on the ground. We had focused on the needs of Victor's project, developed resources to communicate shared knowledge and supported the production of a video 'Water We Know'. Alongside the importance of water is the relation to fire and Victor understood this connection. The National Indigenous Fire Workshop was first held in 2004 in Cape York and by 2010, we were starting to get a sense of a cultural burning movement and the network was growing. We received philanthropic funding through UTS, and held a meeting with local New South Wales Elders, Traditional Owners and Rangers at UTS with Elders from Cape York, Victor and Peta Standley. It became clear to me during that meeting that UTS could host a community of practice for the Indigenous Fire network.

It was really hard to grasp where the research was in this project from a conventional research perspective as it was design research and practice led. I understood that my task was to bring into visibility, with the guidance of knowledge holders, the relational understanding of fire, water and Country. In terms of what we understand about impact now, it was very significant research, but the word impact was not in use in 2010. A group of designers began to form around the work alongside production co-ordinators, technical staff, admin and academics from UTS. We kept working, and we began to make films and design the identity for Firesticks. We began to think about communicating this knowledge through various media. I was definitely being given some authority as a practitioner to use my design skills to make work under the guidance of Elders and community regarding the messages and concepts of the value of Indigenous burning and cultural fire in contemporary land management.

In 2010, Oliver Costello with the Nature Conservation Council (NCC) secured funding that enabled me to consolidate the team of designers to work on the website and print communications. This specific project was focused on the Northern Rivers. There were eight communities involved and the idea was to develop cultural fire plans and cultural fire calendars. Fire planning in land management is technical and focuses on operational risk management. We investigated ways to bring cultural values to that process. We considered

the idea of culturally significant species of plants and animals as a key element in planning for fire. The focus of the burning turned to the health of the Country, the health of species to restore the food, animals and the participation of people in that process. I worked with graduate Lyndal Harris, Mitra Gusheh and Sian Hromek to develop the website and templates for the fire plans, to be used in communities. Those templates were spaces for discussion around what was culturally valued with a focus on the cultural revitalisation of landscape and land management practices. In addition we created seasonal calendar and report templates for use by project teams and community. It was clear being led by Indigenous Elders and community was the way we were going to move forward.

In 2010 I started writing my PhD. I was having difficulty finding a voice for this work. I was activated by designing, participating and collaborating and I was learning a lot, but when it came to writing, it felt like I often was telling stories that I was associated with. One of the Indigenous project collaborators in Cape York read a piece I had written prior to starting my PhD. He suggested that my voice was not properly represented because I was trying to be like a Western researcher with a voice of authority, and that voice didn't hold any truth when it came to describing these circumstances that I was experiencing. Alongside this was the continuing response from non-Indigenous researchers who often categorised my work in the space of Indigenous knowledge which was incorrect. It became clear that my task in the research writing was to understand my contribution and responsibility as a visual communication designer working in Indigenous-led projects.

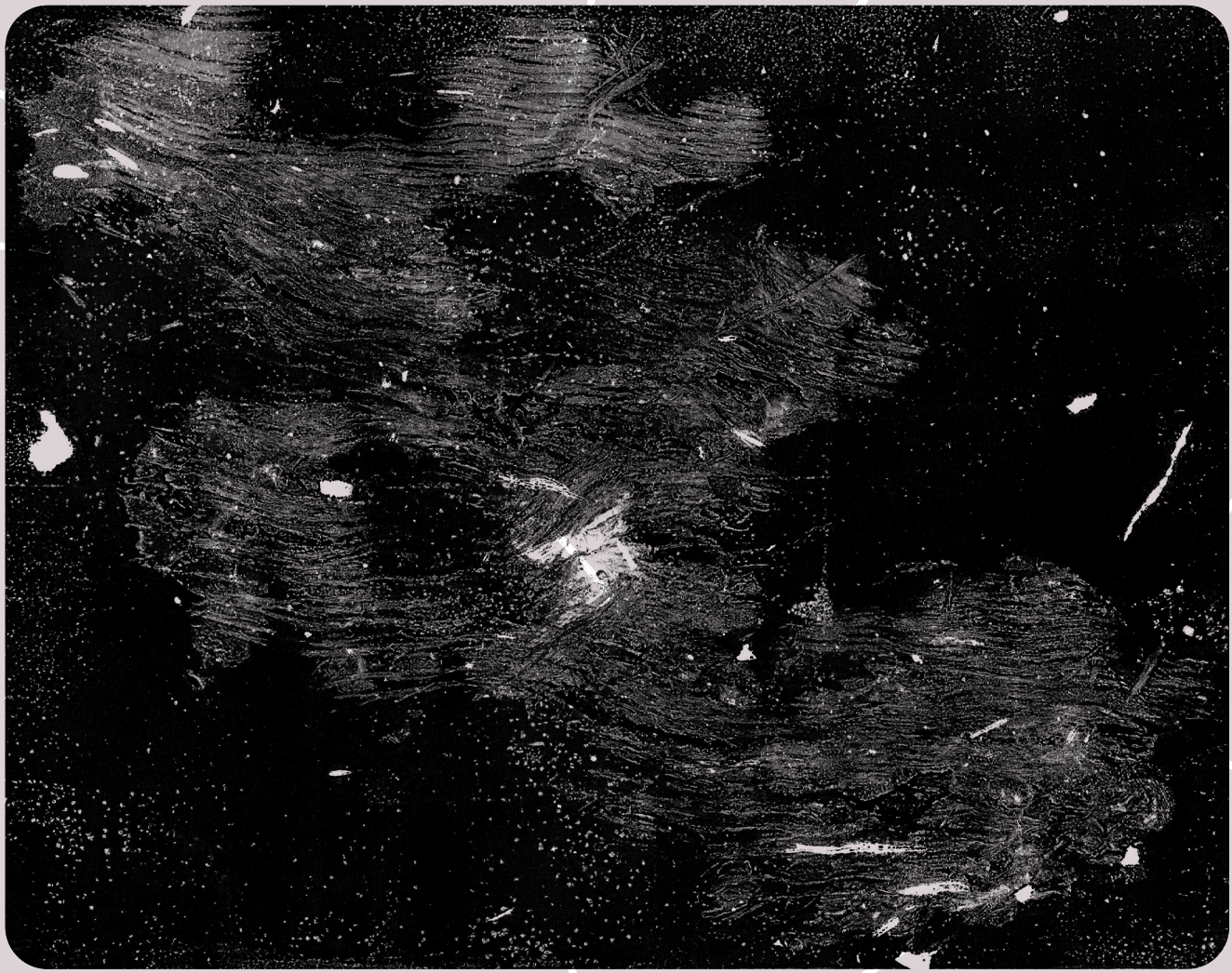
***JDS** Often we don't hear about the immense commitment it takes to work with communities in that way. It is often too difficult to achieve, given that we have different outputs that often do not match the aspirations or pace at which things happen in community. Could you share a little bit more about that idea of being an emplaced designer and how it manifests in your work?*

JG I always knew the projects could never respond to the timeframes of the university. I saw my role was to buffer the community, partners and collaborators from the pressures of the university's requirements. The people who I was working with were working all the time and the additional weight of a deadline seemed arbitrary in the scheme of the bigger work that was being done and the community connections being made. Whether the deadline was for a grant or something else, I tried to hold the pressure off by not adhering to the institutional requirements and ensuring there was a lot of time and space embedded within the project expectations. This required attention to institutional conventions and expectations in order to ensure the projects had autonomy in an operational sense. This was an important learning experience.

Regarding your question about 'the emplaced designer', the key quality of the critical practice of an emplaced designer is the openness to emergence and poses the question: How can we come to understand what we don't know? This is a theoretical challenge and for a designer is significant when attempting to communicate differing worldviews. It is very important to develop the quality of opening to other worldviews.

The idea of the emplaced designer focused on that openness to emergence—the opening to differing worldviews. What I identified through a reflexive analysis of my experience as a designer in various cultural contexts was the experience of continual ambivalence and the recognition of a sense of being between. The designer's role is often characterised as interpreting and imagining what might be good for someone else. Ambivalence provides a reflexive counter to this view and is a fascinating and productive place for a designer and researcher concerned with creating an openness to multi-perspectivality and resisting the position of authority. The acknowledgment of the experience of ambivalence requires the designer to occupy the position of 'continual stranger'. Zygmunt Bauman, suggests the stranger is in a state of 'permanent unassimilability'—neither inside or outside, neither included nor excluded.

The practice of an emplaced designer requires particular qualities of action between the trajectories of resistance



and openness, refusal and acceptance, non-adherence and listening, erasure and mimesis. Let's take for example the idea of mimesis. Mimesis has been derided at times in literature and art history as mere copying, and at other times it has been seen as a way of connecting empathetically across difference. In the designerly movement between mimesis and erasure, the designer moves from understanding the significance of connection and meaning to the recognition that actions manifest in erasure. This movement between these experiences is uncomfortable and involves critically engaging between the connected feelings and ensuring cultural leadership is embedded in the process. The emplaced designer offers a model of a designer who is open to what they don't know, recognising the importance of Indigenous leadership in order to work respectfully on unceded lands.

***JDS** Could you share some of the outcomes of the work, in terms of how it serves or benefits the Aboriginal community, the land and the School of Design? We are a School of Design on unceded Gadigal land in the Anthropocene. What does that mean in action for us here?*

JG I believe that on-ground outcomes are what is most important, and my commitment to the durational collaborations between the School of Design UTS with Firesticks, Traditional Knowledge Recording Project and The Living Knowledge Place attest to this principle. This work is always undertaken with the leadership and advice

of Indigenous collaborators and is informed by the notion of the emplaced designer. The most important thing for me as a visual communication designer and creative practitioner is that things are reflexively considered and the idea of emergence is strong as an ethos. As long as there is movement towards social justice for the people and the Country there is hope. The metaphor of fire is extraordinary when you think about the way fire moves across the land in a cultural burn. When the fire is moving in the right way, being led by the right people, the softness of the gentle burn moving gently across the landscape, through the grass and the plants around the trees, leaving the canopy unharmed and ensuring the animals and insects have time to move away.

The project is to ensure Indigenous land management practices are recognised in contemporary landscapes, and that Indigenous people on Country lead non-Indigenous people to manage Country. The most important thing for me is that the design I do, does not impede, misdirect, mislead or is not true to the meaning and the intent of this project. Design can be made to persuade and tell a particular story and often design and designers find themselves doing inappropriate designs due to insufficient attention to emplacement. It is a complex challenge—the question of responsibility as we design and responsibility as we work with people. Our responsibility to Country and to the practices on Country is central to my outputs and outcomes.

So much has been achieved—it is amazing how a term like cultural burning is now evident in the mainstream media, scientific journals and policy. I feel privileged to support cultural burning and am very pleased that cultural burning has found some traction as a practice and an idea. It is a powerful and complex idea. It is an Indigenous led practice that brings the word culture into the landscape. This is a very strange juxtaposition for most mainstream land managers and scientists. Culture often signifies art and the idea of land management as art requires the emergence of a deep understanding and a commitment to the sustainment of relation between entities in the landscape. How to communicate this connection is the project for design, and that is why enabling the emergence of understanding and connection in audiences through representations and

information design to enable a sensitivity and awareness of relational connections in the landscape.

I also am committed to a creative practice led investigation. This media practice holds drawing as tracing at its centre and addresses the challenge to find a visual language for place and Country informed by Indigenous recognition of relationality and connectedness mediated through Western cartography. These works document a sense of connection that I am discovering through the long term on ground engagement and a growing understanding of the places that I live and work in—Gadigal, Wongal and Ngunnawal Country.

Alongside these projects is my continuing learning and the opportunities to share. In particular I have been working with Jason De Santolo for the last three years developing curriculum and delivery for Emergent Practices in Visual Communication Design. Working with Gadigal Elders Auntie Rhonda Dixon-Grovenor and artist and designer Nadeena Dixon, community educator Uncle Jimmy Smith, researchers and practitioners Robynne Quiggin, Kirsten Thorpe, Peter Wildman, Lauren Booker, Tristan Schultz and the studio leaders. It has been an amazing experience to share with students the processes and protocols that respect the value of cultural knowledge.

Institutions do not always value and respect the contribution that people provide. Like the media, institutions consume content, often without respect and the proper protocols and processes for cultural knowledge. When we think about sustainability, we need to recognise the planet and each other's values. Working in Emergent Practices in the School of Design with Gadigal Elders during the Anthropocene, we realised that there are other ways of being together in the institution. Being together, with respect, in the curriculum development has been amazing for me as we challenge the conventions of the system. Bringing the richness of 'being here' into that space is inspiring. It has been incredible to be a teacher in that space with the leadership of Indigenous academics and Elders in the school to create the learning experience and to share with students. This demonstration of curriculum development and delivery has an impact on the School of Design, bringing to light the

value of Indigenous leadership, mentorship and cultural understanding. This supports Indigenous postgraduate students as leaders and future scholars.

JDS Is there anything specific around the ethics process that you feel has enhanced your process or do you feel there are some challenges or ways that we can improve the ethics process here at UTS?

JG The ethics process during the time that I have been working on this project has changed significantly. There has been a big change in the universities around responsibility, reciprocity, and the recognition of the human relations that are engaged in the process. It used to be seen as a demanding expectation and an additional barrier that got added to a project. Now it is recognised as contributing to the strategic and responsible thinking about ethics that helps us understand what we are doing, when we are doing it and supports the development of a responsible research project. I am excited about this because it is important that we are clear about what we are doing. The ethics processes give the researcher an opportunity to imagine why and how the research is to be undertaken. There is a great benefit to engaging in the formal ethics process.

Bringing autonomy, authority and independence to all of the voices present in a research process is a complex task. We are still learning out how to do this respectfully and without harm. I was excited when I was invited to speak at a conference 10 years ago where Bawaka, the Country, was named as an author in the presentation. Country being recognised as a participant in the making of the research was significant. We need to go back to our documentation and referencing systems to think about how to acknowledge people, materials and processes in the authorship and referencing practices. When we think about Aboriginal people who made something that was taken from them years ago, what is it important to understand? How do we give reference among many things—to place, the material and when in the seasonal cycle that material was chosen? The reference hold stories that require conversations and engagements to draw out.

The other day during a conversation about ethics we suggested that even working with materials could be negotiated through an ethics application. The way we make things may need an ethics application that considers where that material is coming from, what responsibilities we have if we are using materials including how we will be working with the material, the lifecycle of the material, how you are ensuring sustainability. There are factors that have not yet been identified if we consider how we ethically engage in the world. I understand ethics as an open, emerging area as we imagine what we will consider in the future that places importance on sustainment.

JDS Is there anything that you would like to finish on in terms of what you see as part of a broader ethical consideration of what we do given the UTS 2027 vision policy and strategies to achieve Indigenous led, community driven, on Country work?

JG I am excited that there is an emphasis on Indigenous-led, community driven and on Country change in the UTS 2027 vision. I am overwhelmed with a sense of optimism—a wave that moves me out of my rational mind and into an emotional response of 'how incredible —

I am hopeful'. However, I do understand the complexity. If the alignment between the strategy, the engagement on the ground through processes and protocols to enable respectful relationships the strategy and the work can be activated, it will be meaningful and change creating. The university is a privileged place to be. I always imagined UTS as a culturally safe place in the Firesticks network holding relationships and enabling communities through the resources available at the university. I feel excited that we are doing the work and thinking about how to do it properly and the University has come some way to recognise the importance of supporting these efforts. And I am here and will continue to be committed to supporting Indigenous leadership for the health of Country and the people.

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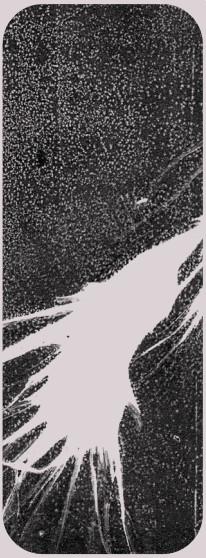
Enabling Better Health Outcomes Through Sport

MARANA DYARGAL



John Evans

Interviewed By:

Professor
Robynne Quiggin

Professor John Evans is a Wiradjuri man from Lake Cargelligo (Euabalong, Western New South Wales). John is the Indigenous lead of the Indigenous Health discipline in the School of Public Health at the University of Technology Sydney. John's research has a focus on sport and physical activity, including type two diabetes, and housing and infrastructure in Indigenous communities. John currently leads two Australian Research Council (ARC) grants. The first investigates the pathways of elite Indigenous athletes and the second analyses sport and physical activity in Indigenous communities.

"The underlying philosophy is that research should be about trying to find those enablers in the community that allow people to have a better life through improved health outcomes. More specifically, getting people involved in sport from a very young age, right through to the end of life, means they'll be much healthier, and they won't suffer from things such as type two diabetes, cardiovascular disease or stroke."

John shares his experiences of being involved in research for the past twenty years and discusses what he describes as the "vexed issues" of working through respectful ethics processes in partnership with Indigenous communities. He tackles the issue of working with large scale, mainstream datasets, where the data has been collected without strong community engagement or regard to protocols. John shares his insights on the challenges he has faced in engaging in participatory approaches with communities and some of the competing priorities that arise when it comes to designing and enacting ethical research approaches.

About John

John Evans has extensive experience in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander physical activity and sport research across both qualitative and quantitative disciplines. John has built an academic career, which has blended personal experience from the sport and physical activity industry with a professional career in the academy. John is recognised as a leading academic in the areas of Indigenous sport sociology, Indigenous sport and physical activity studies, pedagogy and coaching. John Evans is one of a small number of Indigenous academics with the skills that can traverse both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and incorporate an Indigenous standpoint. His expertise has been sort by a number of national sporting organisations such as Netball Australia, The National Rugby League and the Australian Rugby Union.`

Interview between Professor Robynne Quiggin and Professor John Evans

RQ Can you tell us about the kind of relationship building or engagement with stakeholders and about any consultation or negotiation you have done whilst scoping or thinking through your projects?

JE This is something that I probably need to get better at. And that's because, hand on heart, I can't say that any of the research I've done has come from a community driven approach. Normally we go to talk to people in the community and ask, what do you think about this research? Do you think it's going to bring about a good change in your community? I'd much prefer to be in a position where we respond to a community initiative. For instance, in the research area of type two diabetes, if we had a group come to us and say, oh John, what we'd like to see is research done in X, Y, and Z, rather than what you want to do in M,N,O,P. That's always the difficulty with talking about our research, because normally, when we think about research, we think about whether this is right, wrong or indifferent. We are thinking about our careers as academics and being inside the institution.

The ideal situation is where community organisations decide what research they want to be done. It doesn't mean other people can't do research, but I think that would be a much better position to be in. The key is being in a situation where we are more responsive to what communities want. On the flip side, the work we're doing with the State Government is about work that's already been commenced by the state government and they asked us to come in and evaluate or monitor what they're doing. So it's already a flawed process. Luckily there's already been a significant amount of consultation done with the community on the two housing projects we are working on. We are coming in at the side a little bit and working off some of the consultation that's been done between the Department of Planning and Innovation and Environment and the Local Aboriginal Lands Council.

There is a relationship built by them. We are reporting on and provideing some advice to communities about what they should be doing as far as housing and infrastructure.

What we fail to talk about is, how well established is our research in the community and how is it being community driven? Very little of the research I've done in the past has been community driven. However, It has been led by Indigenous researchers like myself and we are more than happy to go and work with communities and try to convince them of the authentic nature of what we're trying to do. What's missing in the big puzzle is, how do we respond to community initiatives or community ideas about what research they'd like done?

RQ Do you think some of the community driven element is met, with yourself as a researcher and a community member, giving your input, even if it's not community originated research? Does your input give it an element of that?

JE There are elements of it. I wouldn't say it's completely devoid. I would imagine a lot of people in communities are saying the research we're doing around type two diabetes is fantastic and we should be doing more of it. However, the genesis of that research doesn't come from a community organisation or the Aboriginal Medical Service.

What I would like to see us do in the future, one of the big projects, would be to have a research compact with the community, either at a local level, or a much broader level. The community comes to us and says, these are the big picture things we want research done on, which part of this can you do? And how might we do that in the future? We could go to somewhere like the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) and say, what is the big picture research you need to be done? What is really important to you? Then we could respond.

RQ Also working with them to develop their own ethics, which everybody has to follow as well.

JE What we should be doing as our big research push into the future, would be working with Aboriginal community and teaching them about research, helping them to develop their

own research approaches, and us being responders to them. For example I've just responded to the Ian Potteer Foundation for a type two diabetes research project. We can say we've got just the project for that, a community is active in this area, this is the sort of research they want to be done. Or maybe, a Lands Council comes to us and says, we've really got some difficulties here with our housing infrastructure and this is the state of our housing, what advice can you provide us, and how could that be turned into research?

One of the things we have to do with the New South Wales State Government is engagement work with communities, running off the back of the productivity Commission's recent ideas about what evaluation and research should look like. That is the next big piece of work that universities should be doing, both individually and collectively; a compact with Aboriginal organisations. There are some types of research that Aboriginal communities will quite happily be involved in. However, if they don't like the research then they use descriptions, like, we've been researched too much, or this is just you guys looking after your careers. In some ways that's a valid argument. I think it's a much better position to conduct research that supports communities, what they want to do, and they use us as a conduit for that.

RQ How have you engaged your own knowledge about community, or other people like individuals, Aboriginal senior people or knowledge holders or community members or other people with expertise to develop a research idea? Have there been cultural or language issues you've thought about as you're working an idea up?

JE The Elite Athlete Program was research that didn't involve talking to community leaders or Elder's. It was really about talking to individual rugby league and AFL players. This is the sort of research that is in a different hemisphere than what I would call genuine community based research. The other piece of work, on the analysis of sports, we used databases to scope out the work and try to present that work in a positive light. For instance, the work we did on a cluster analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children, was about trying to demonstrate the positive impact that sport and physical activity had on the educational outcomes of Indigenous kids. That was quite a positive outcome of the research. We didn't go and talk to community leaders about that, or community Elders, because it was an LSIC itself, managed overall by an Indigenous Community Reference Group. We had ethics clearance through the university, and I'm not saying we've abrogated our responsibilities, but it's hard to know what local engagement you would have to do because it's a national survey and has a National Advisory Group attached. In that situation I went back and talked to what they call the Rayos', which is the Aboriginal Field Officers, about that research and talked to them about what the research meant and what the data looked like.

We did not consult, in those two projects, with a genuine community base, and that is a kind of a gap in the research. If you're dealing with a national database, like ABS, or Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children, or the Hilda Survey, because you're dealing with those databases, there's no local community organiser for which to consult with. It's the same with the rugby league players because you're dealing with them individually, as people. I've worked with rugby league players like Dean Widders and Georgie Rose, and I deal with them on a personal level. So who would be the point of consultation if it wasn't with those players directly? So there are some interesting anomalies with this.

The view we have taken in both of those projects was for it to be Indigenous lead and to have some benefit to the community by understanding the issues associated with them. So I didn't really consult with an organisation or Elders, which you would possibly do if it was a community based project.

RQ That's a really important issue, where you are working with those big data sets. When it is really

important to work with them, but you don't have control over how they're collected.

JE We should probably write in the journal articles that come out of those, a recognition that they do have an Indigenous Reference Group attached to them, but they are also big databases that we're trying to use.

I guess that's probably something that could be addressed in data sovereignty and future research. That could be an interesting issue to be canvassed. Because, the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children was set up by an Indigenous person, Mick Dodson, and he has prominent Indigenous Professors on that advisory board, in some ways, so long as we're using the data for good, not evil, then we've met our responsibilities. That would be an interesting discussion to have. At the moment, the assumption is that we have met our ethical responsibilities when we use and publish from data sets.

RQ Thinking about the ethical frameworks of the review process, can you talk to us a bit about some of the ethics applications you've done and some of the issues that might have come up there?

And any of the feedback you've had from ethics committees, whether it's been useful or how you approached it?

JE The ethics process is quite thorough. And I do admire people who sit on the committees and have to make assessments about them. From my point of view, as a researcher, I just wish it was quicker. I know this opens up for all sorts of abuse, but I would much prefer to be able to sign a declaration that we've met a whole heap of requirements for the research and be able to get going on it.

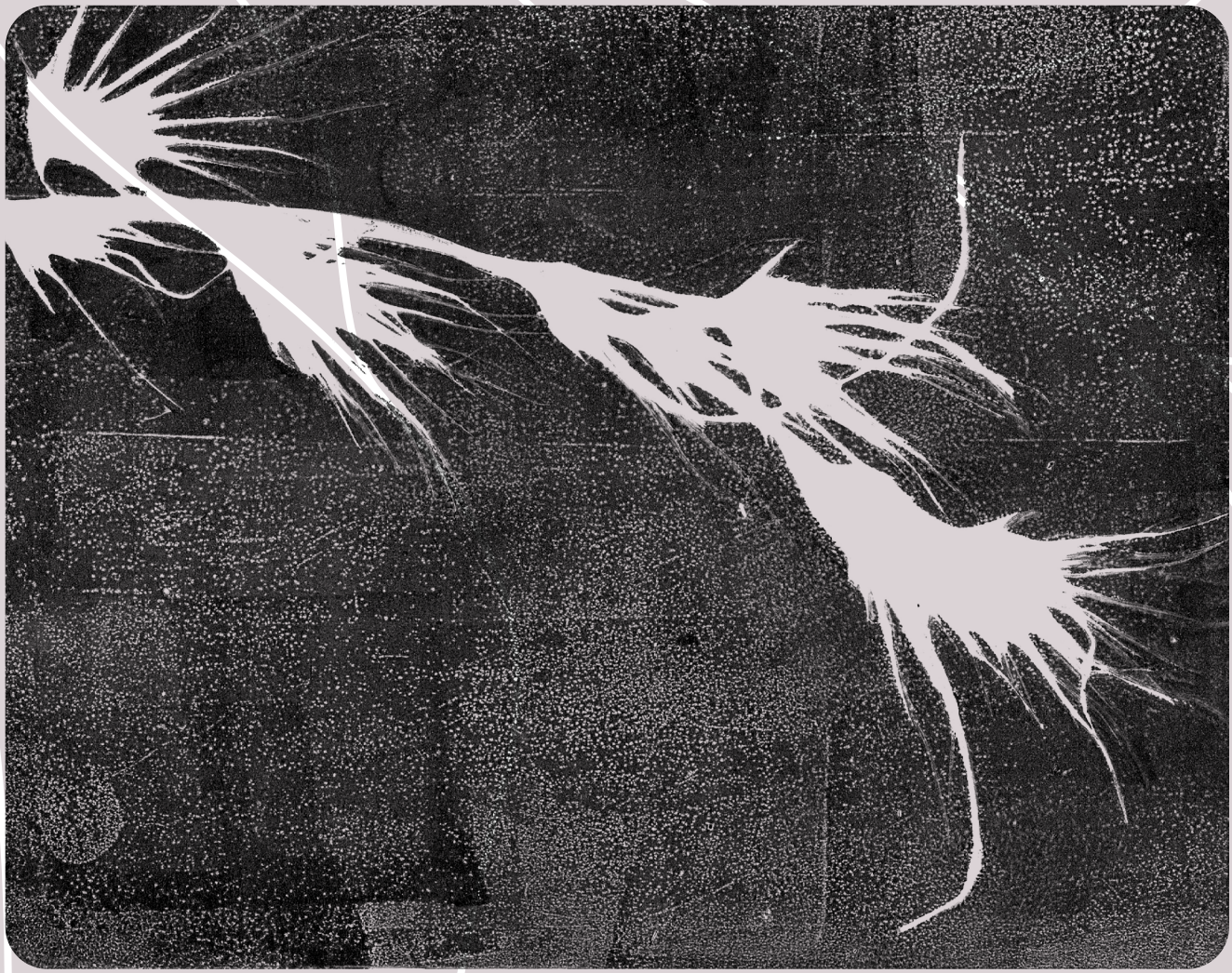
I'll give you an example of one that I think may be difficult for us going in the future. My PhD student's project is looking at the career transition experiences of Indigenous and Pacifica players. We're going to interview eight Indigenous players and we're going to interview eight Pacifica players. We are going to try and understand what their experiences have been in rugby league and the sorts of enablers and challenges to them finishing; what's happened during their time as rugby league

players and then moving out into society. Both of those are unique groups of people, there is no real sort of community based group of people who we would initially go and consult with. This has come from discussions with some of those players through previous research that I've done with them. They were saying there are real problems within the system, about them, things like mental health, career planning and life skills that aren't being addressed. Unless you develop your own community for something like that, or your own reference group, and if you're dealing with the whole broad range of guys from all over the state, all over the country, then how representative would be a reference group like that? How big could you make it? I just find the whole process a bit daunting.

RQ In an example like that I imagine you and the researcher, because of your own backgrounds, would bring the knowledge of systemic racism and difficulties that people have. Something like a really strict application of an ethics process, or an advisory group might add, you two actually bring that yourselves through your own knowledge to some extent.

JE My view is that you'd like to think that you're doing everything right, as a researcher, when you go down a particular track. I can definitely imagine the application of strict ethics. If you are going into a community and you want to work with a community on the ground. Say, the Wellington Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) for instance, and you wanted to work on the ground with people who are using the AMS. Say you want to talk to them about their lifestyle issues, you want to talk about social and emotional well being for instance, I think that's where you need a really robust ethics process. That's where I see the real role for ethics.

People who are probably reading this, probably think I'm a heretic, but there are different types of research. I think different types of research require different thinking about what the ethics process is. For instance, if you wanted to go around and interview all of the Indigenous professors in the Australian university system, because you are interested in what enabled them and the challenges they've had, what



their disciplines are and what the opportunities are there. I think that's different than going to an Indigenous community, say, Wellington, or The Lake and going to Murrin Bridge and saying, I'm here to do some research, just pony up and help us out. It's a lot different, they're whole heaps different issues and you need different sets of skills in both those situations.

RQ What's the difference between the professors and going straight out to community?

JE If I went and interviewed you or Susan Page, you'd have a list of questions that you'd already want to know about the research and be quicker to be involved in the co-design and the reporting on those types of things. You would probably be a lot more informed and much more confident about being involved in research. I went out to Murrin Bridge where a few of the guys have been out to in the past, and established a very good relationship with them around re-designing some of their infrastructure there. But one of the things that they tell me, because I've come late to this particular project,is that a lot of their time is spent just being on the ground, establishing relationships, making sure that people realise that the research is about doing good things in the community and the community prospering from that involvement. Just establishing a long term relationship.

One of the public things that we can look at, say Larissa's work at Bowraville, for instance. When people think about Bowraville and what happened at Bowraville, everybody thinks about Larissa and UTS and about the great work that she's done there. When you go to a community, you'd like to think that you can establish the same rapport with them that goes for many years afterwards. So that in the future when they're designing other infrastructure projects, or they want some advice, they say, well, let's ring that mob that John Evans established at UTS and maybe they will come out here and help us and be involved. After being to a couple of communities already and seeing what communities have paid for in terms of services to non Indigenous providers, it's just astounding what some of these providers have gotten away with in terms of what they're prepared to charge, to walk away from communities and leave them very little to develop their future infrastructure and housing.

There's a whole range of things that need to be teased out, and I think it's good that we're talking about it, because I think there's horses for courses, and I think the comparison between me interviewing a whole heap of Indigenous professors and going out to community, I think there's a different skill set altogether and different assumptions you can take and should be taking to those discussions.

RQ Are there different responsibilities? In your view?

JE Oh, without a doubt. Without a doubt.

RQ What would they be?

JE If I interview you or Susan Page or, Michael McDaniel, or, Lisa Jackson Pulver, they would almost be running the show in terms of your involvement with them. The narrative would be different. But if you go to a community, and you might go to a community that doesn't have many resources there, your relationship with that group would be a whole heap different and the sorts of assumptions that you would have would be challenged when you go there.

RQ Do you want to talk to us a bit about the responsibilities in relation to data collection, data storage, data safety, returning data to community, or how you manage the data that you collect from your research?

JE In the ethics process, you have to guarantee the safety of that data and I think that's an imperative, you have to do it. By and large, most of that storage is on your laptop or your computer at work or you put it on a hard drive and lock it away. That's the extent of the security when it comes to storing the data. I think that's an important thing to do.

Where you work with people in the community, that data should get back to them in the form of transcripts or the analysis that you've done. And there should be a way to undertake some sort of community engagement as a result of that. For instance, we are conducting interviews with people with type two diabetes who've got off insulin and metformin. We would like to establish a group of people and develop some sort of webinar. We also want to go to communities

where we've done the work and be able to say, well, look, you know, here's Aunty Flo, she was terribly overweight, she's been through this progress, and now she's off insulin and metformin, this is what she did. I think that's the responsibility you have in terms of going back to community and doing those sorts of things.

RQ Would you like to reflect on sharing and translating the results into action some more?

JE There are some elements of this that are really easy to do and there are also some that are really complicated. For instance when we produce the journal article on cluster analysis of kids and academic performance, that's in the academic environment. But has that really influenced the government's policy making around sport and physical activity? If you go to their latest strategy around sport and physical activity there is no mention in there about Indigenous participation in sport and physical activity. And the place where it does get a mention is a reference to Robert Decostello's marathon project.

One of the things we said wanted to do was influence government policy making and we failed dismally. We failed dismally there with good articles and you'll find it hard to challenge the veracity of the results that we've got. I think we need to be quite blunt about it. Unless you've got other ways to get that message out to politicians, invariably, a lot of that research falls on deaf ears in terms of making changes to policy. We should be making changes to the national sports policy, and we should be doing things differently.

You need to work out who's reading your research. How do you get in front of the appropriate minister, for instance the Department of Health and what they are reading, unless you know someone personally in Indigenous Health or the health research area? You might say, this is a really good idea, how can we improve the amount and quality of physical activity that kids are getting throughout Australia and in Indigenous communities? I have to say, hand on heart and that I haven't affected any policy change through the work that I've done.

RQ Yet, it makes a building block for the next person.

JE It may also be the building block for more debate about the things that I raised in there. Maybe people can find holes in the research, can say, look, maybe you overstated some of these things. Or the things that you've used to argue for the things you've argued for aren't relevant enough. Maybe there's other things we should be doing. So that's really good. If you take a project where you've worked with community on the ground and you're able to go back and affect change through talking to them, engaging with them, and producing material, which can help drive community projects, then that's different. That's the whole other end of the spectrum. That's the stuff that we've got more control over and it's the stuff we should be better at.

RQ When I talk to you and I reflect on myself as somebody who's done some research, my observation is, you have this real willingness to say, maybe I'm not right.

JE I think you have to. I think any academic has to. One of the things I'm seeing, especially in type two diabetes research, is all these guys out there beating their chest. And a lot of people would say look at all those hairy arse men making all these claims about things and they may not be right. Go back to the studies around thalidomide. You have to be very careful about the sorts of statements you make and the proclamations you make about your work, because they are, in my view, always provisional.

RQ Do you think that's specific to health or specific to research overall?

JE I think in lots of domains. It's the way we should be thinking about our work. Because things do change. If there was only one vaccine for COVID we'd be looking pretty good. But we've got eight or 10 different groups thinking about what that vaccine would look like. So not one of them are categorically going to say, our vaccine is going to work, because there's other factors that influence the research that underpins it and what might change over time. The virus might mutate, it might change, it may affect different groups

of people differently. You have to take the position that your work is provisional and what you rely on is other people testing what you say in your research, getting similar or the same results, or rejecting them. So long as they've got good basis to reject it, we shouldn't take those things personally. I certainly wouldn't. If someone came out tomorrow and said, all the research you've done in physical activity in the past is crap, John, and this is the reason why, I'd go, oh well, show me why and then, okay, well, maybe you're right, maybe we've got to change tack or maybe we have to do things differently. But I think you do have to take that position of being provisional about where your research is at.

RQ It's a very non-ego way. When we talk about community driven research, we talk about research that is about people building careers. But that provisional approach is about really putting your ego in the back pocket and saying, it might help my career, but I'm also willing to for somebody else to show something really different.

JE I think we get into trouble if we don't. If we steadfastly welded on to our views it gives rise to hubris coming before the fall and that arrogance about the work we do, the highbrow idea. When you are found wrong, it's a very degrading situation for yourself, because you haven't entertained the fact that you might actually be wrong. And even within community driven research, things change.

If you have been in a community, doing really good research, changing the dynamics in the community because of the work you've done, you might start getting better results. You look at the stuff you were doing and you go, well hang on, that may have worked 20 years ago, but look at the community now, they're thriving in this area. So to take that same approach you did before wouldn't work. You've got to think of new ideas. Is it Einstein who said, you don't solve today's problems with yesterday's thinking. And you do need to be evolving in your thinking about your research.

RQ Were there any other experiences or tips for new players that you wanted to share?

JE Ethics is a much more complicated area than people give it credit for. I fundamentally agree with the whole idea about ethics and about working with community.

There are going to be situations where the point is defined by a community based project is tested. I'd like to think that in the future, if I wanted to go and research something, especially with Indigenous rugby league or AFL, then the ethical situation doesn't prevent me from doing it. On the flip side of that, I think that we should be working with Indigenous communities, in their organisations and teaching them about what the research process is, so they can design the sorts of research that's going to solve the problems that they think they've got on the ground. And that's a whole heap different than some of the other research that goes on in a whole range of Indigenous areas.

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Advocating for Self-Determination & Legislative Reform around Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Child Welfare

MARAMA DYARGALI

Terri Libesman

Interviewed By:

Professor
Robynne Quiggin

Dr Terri Libesman has a long history of working with First Nations, Australian and international organisations. Terri's advocacy and research has applied human rights principles in the child welfare space. This work has been successful at contributing to legislative reform nationally and internationally.

In this chapter, Terri discusses her involvement and advocacy to support principles of self-determination for Indigenous peoples. Terri's research spans advocating with the Committee to Defend Black Rights for a Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, working for the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in custody, and working on The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, Bringing Them Home in the 1990s. Post Bringing Them Home, she has researched and advocated for the full implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle and rights to participation and self-determination in looking after Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander babies, children and young people. Terri stresses the importance of research being designed with Aboriginal communities and with principles of mutual benefit and reciprocity.

"Without the commitment and interest of the Aboriginal partner organisations and members of the advisory committee, the project would have no direction and no form. It is about what they see as important. It is a privilege for researchers within the university to be involved with those organisations. It is about taking their remit, serving it and trying to offer the skills, experience and capacity we have. We also learn from those organisations. We develop a research project to learn and transfer skills back."

About Terri

Dr Terri Libesman researches in the fields of Indigenous peoples, chlidren and the law. She works closely with Indigenous children's organisations and her work critically engages with the meaning and implementation of human rights with respect to child welfare. Her research focuses on national and comparative international models for Indigenous children's well-being. Terri has worked for major national inquiries and conducted research on cultural care, placement in out of home care and principles of self- determination.

Interview between Professor Robynne Quiggin & Terri Libesman

RQ Could you describe the research you have been doing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' participation in child protection decision-making?

TL My current project, which is a collaboration with the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, funded by the Law and Justice Foundation, looks at how legislative rights which provide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship groups, families, communities and representative organisations participation in all significant child protection decision making in NSW, are breached or complied with. There are provisions in the NSW child protection legislation, specifically section 11, which provides for self-determination, section 12, which is quite an unusual provision, both nationally and internationally, states that Aboriginal families, kinship groups, communities, and representative organisations have a right to participate in all significant child protection decision making, and section 13 addresses the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child placement principle, which must be applied when children are placed in out of home care. This research project is focused on the extent to which section 12 is breached or implemented, and what effective participation means.

The Aboriginal Legal Service is the peak Aboriginal organisation that goes to court, advocates for, and represents children and families in child protection matters. The Care and Protection Division of the NSW Aboriginal Legal Service is extremely underfunded making fulfilment of their remit difficult.

This research hopes to raise awareness of legal rights, and to achieve incremental improvement in implementation of these rights, because breach of Aboriginal families' rights is embedded in deep set colonial values. The aim is to advance the dialogue, make progress in implementing rights, and get better outcomes for Aboriginal families.

In developing this project, the researchers spoke with the key stakeholders and organisations including the community advocacy group Grandmothers against Removals (the peak New South Wales, Aboriginal children's organisation), NSW Child, Family and Community Peak Aboriginal Corporation (AbSec), The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) the peak National children's organisation, and local Aboriginal community organisations in Sydney and the northern and western regions of NSW.

Colonial institutional stakeholders have enormous power, and an aim of our project is to also engage with them about rights which appear to have been forgotten or minimised. We engaged with the president of the Children's Court and obtained permission to interview Children's Court magistrates. We also engaged with the Child Welfare Department, the Department of Communities and Justice, to discuss the project. The project advisory committee included SNAICC, AbSec, the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), Grandmothers against Removals and the President of the NSW Children's Court.

RQ Could you speak about the development of the project with your research partner?

TL Engagement with Aboriginal organisations is crucial to a project like this. The removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been historically traumatic and has a significant impact on contemporary experiences of child welfare. The retention and strength of community-based care for children is important to communities and particularly for children involved with the care and protection system. Communities' values and experiences are at the heart of what this project is about. Without the commitment and interest of the Aboriginal partner organisations and the advisory committee members, the project would have no direction and no form. It is about what they see as important. It is a privilege

for researchers within the university to be involved with those organisations. It is about taking their remit, serving it and trying to offer the skills, experience and capacity we have. We also learn from those organisations. We develop a research project also to transfer skills back.

The Aboriginal Legal Services, our key partner, have an incredible history. They were established in the 70's and have had the very difficult task of having to work, resource and time poor, trying to best represent children in the Children's Court, which remains a colonial institution.

This project is about contributing to transforming how the voices of Aboriginal peoples are heard, bringing Aboriginal experiences and voices to decision making processes and institutions. The project aims to educate and to create authoritative information from the findings of this qualitative research project. Projects such as this offer front line service providers, such as the Aboriginal Legal Service, a space to step back from the immediate day to day work they do to respond to what they see as a need for reform. Relationship building is an important part of the research process, regardless of how long one has worked in a field. It is important to spend time. That is why we spent a year developing this project, working out what can be achieved, what the questions and goals are and each element of the project.

There is often tension in research projects, with universities and funding bodies needing projects to be developed, funded and completed quickly. Deep set, long-term problems, can't be addressed, as urgent as they are, in a rushed way. The tension between funding cycles and communities' priorities should resolve in favour of how communities and community organisations want to and can work. There is also tension with the urgency of the problem. Everyone wants to get some answers and progress quickly, but shortcuts often do not work. The relationship, how we frame the research questions and our methodology are based on action research. What we mean by this is that as you progress the project, you transform and carry out some of the change you are looking for through the research process. This partially responds to the need for the research to be relevant to community partners.

When looking at section 12 of the New South Wales care and Protection Act, which provides for participation in child protection decision making, we knew anecdotally that it had not been implemented, that people do not experience their rights to participation in a substantive way. We asked, what can we do to give this meaning along the way and not just wait for the outcomes and findings? We thought we could have an educational component in our research questions. For example, when interviewing Children's Court magistrates, we would ask them if and how they included Aboriginal families, kinship groups, communities, and representative organisations in their decision making. That would give us data about the use of s12. However, it would also be an opportunity to draw their attention to the provision. Our questions were developed with our research partner and commented on by our advisory group. The nuance in what is meant by participation, and how we asked questions, could through this process be reflected in our instruments. These processes took a lot of conversation and were built on a history of many peoples' experience.

RQ Why would you say there is a tension between the university and the community partners in the project and why should the burden of that tension fall to the university?

TL Our responsibility as researchers is to the communities that we are researching with and to the integrity of our research processes. We are accountable to the people we are working with, we hope to achieve the aims of our research for their benefit. To the extent that institutions allow us, we have to take on that responsibility and the tension has to be absorbed by the institution. It is a give and take because communities are benefiting and so is the university. There is a reciprocity that is always two ways. There is also, however, a power differential working in a colonial context. Universities are trying to decolonise through projects like this. They are trying to provide a fairer, more equal, more reflective approach to researching, but the resources, the power and history, mean that imbalance still exists. It is our responsibility to bear that imbalance and to try and redress it.

RQ Do you think taking that approach has benefits for relationship development, trust building and increasing capacity to work with communities?

TL Undoubtedly. There are so many things that need to be done, and communities will generally only participate if they see the benefit of the project. There has to be trust for research to work. If communities have a history of experience with you, this is a circular and recreating process. The shared purpose and relationship does not begin at the start date of the project and end when the project has completed. Some projects inevitably will be one off projects. However, major research questions tend to be long relationships, which span over research projects, advocacy, law reform, a whole range of work that happens. In my experience, these are the kinds of relationships that are necessary to work well with communities.

For example, going back to a project in the mid-2000s, I worked with SNAIC and the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency (VACCA) around self-determination in child welfare. One of the outcomes of that project was the implementation of section 18 into the Victorian Child Welfare legislation. This allows for the transfer of delegated power to Aboriginal organisations, such as the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, to serve as the guardian for Aboriginal children in out of home care. That provision was implemented into the legislation with anticipation, but like section 12, lay dormant for a very long time. VACCA did a lot of lobbying and after a second inquiry, its dormant status was addressed. In 2018, there was funding for a pilot program which was very successful. VACCA and the Victorian Government are now rolling out the transfer of guardianship across Victoria. There has always been aspirations for self-determination, it has been the defining aim of most of these projects, and it has had different practical manifestations. This is a successful step along the way. Currently, VACCA and the Victorian Child Welfare department are seeing how there can be a delegation of greater powers to Aboriginal children's organisations in Victoria.

That was a project that formally ended a very long time ago. However, the ongoing impetus and conversations are still happening. I hope with our current project, while the write up will finish in the middle of 2022, that the conversations around its findings and the relationships between the research partners continue. In this field, communities and researchers have seen non-linear progression and movement back and forward over a very long time. We look to the long term goals, and how we can produce research together that has some immediate impact but also longevity.

RQ It seems like the research is laying a foundation so there is an evidence base that can be at the service of better political times?

TL Absolutely. I do not think the world is, in the western frame, a linear progression getting better and better. I don't think other non-Western frames see time that way, how past and future connect. While self-determination has been the language, and it is the language of international human rights, it is a political language that has absorbed its own meaning within the First Nations child protection and child well-being sphere. Having imagination and capacity to respond to different political situations, while keeping the aspirations of the community firm on the ground, is something that I have learnt from working with First Nations children's organisations. The research is looking towards the goal of culturally safe, community controlled care for children that connects them to their past, present, and future. This has been a consistent aim, and the research has had to be quite adaptive.

In the current environment, there is a move towards privatisation of many aspects of child welfare. A project that I'm developing with Jumbunna and with First Nations organisations asks how can we conceptualise the space of privatised child welfare to better serve Aboriginal children's organisations aspirations. This shift to privatisation is an international movement, not specific to First Nations children,

part of what people loosely describe as ‘neoliberal’ values. We are asking if we can harness this shift to the non-government sector for a different purpose, to facilitate greater Aboriginal self-determination in child welfare decision making and service provision.

Our research is always in the present, looking to greater community control, grounded in the history of experience, both traumatic and filled with strength and culture. It asks how to be adaptive to the current circumstances, because whatever one’s aspirations are for the future, there are always children in the now. There is always a tension between the now and the future. The power imbalance has never shifted to anything that looks like equality, so the research is about taking the opportunities in this colonial environment and asking how to decolonise them and make them work for communities to the extent that one can.

RQ It has never occurred to me until we are talking to you now, how to some extent we have to be patient, but children don’t have time, they are moving through childhood and out.

TL That is why it is an area constantly filled with hope and grief, an urgency to look to the future and have long term aspirations, but also to work out what can be done now. To be pragmatic, as well, because one cannot afford the luxury of being utopian, they are children in the here and now. In every way and every project we work on, we ask how decision making relevant to children in the current situation can be improved. We discussed exactly that in this particular project. What can we do while we are doing this project to make those rights in the present work better? In the course of this project we got unwelcome reforms to the New South Wales Child Protection Act. There was no meaningful consultation or participation of the Aboriginal communities that we were speaking to—or any Aboriginal communities in New South Wales—about this reform. We took the opportunity during field work to speak to people about their participation or lack thereof in this law reform process. As part of our ethical obligations and reciprocity, we also took the opportunity to offer people information about the law reform. We have the privilege and benefit of people participating in our project and telling us information that we use to write reports and to advocate for law reform, so we could offer people that information while we were doing field work.

RQ How do these considerations flow into the questions in an ethics application in the university?

TL We took the ethics application process as an opportunity to refine ideas and to hone down and think specifically how we would do the project. This included development of our questions, instruments and process for consulting with our advisory committee. When doing the ethics application, we thought about consent, reciprocity and risk. It gave us a structured opportunity to think about the safety and well-being of our participants. Talking about child protection is traumatic and painful for people. We had to think about how our interviews might impact participants. We included a protocol for referring people to local supports and services. We recognised that sometimes people would speak to us, but would not want us to use their information, so we had a willingness to do that and not feel we had a right to their information. We had to think; this is child protection, it is often connected to a range of issues like family violence, domestic violence, abuse and neglect. What would we do if participants disclose this kind of information to us?

As a part of our ethics application, we asked how are we going to get informed consent? How are people going to know what this project is about? We prepared community leaflets to provide a background to the project and spoke with the organisations in the local areas we were doing our fieldwork to form a project based relationship with them. This provided participants with some background in addition to the information sheets and conversations before obtaining usually written consent.

As we were developing the ethics application we thought about how we could reciprocate the hospitality and generosity of participants sharing with us. We hoped that in the medium term the research might contribute to law, policy and practice reforms and that it may be used for advocacy purposes. We also thought about what we could we offer participants when doing field work. As mentioned, child protection legislation

was amended while we were doing the project. We offered information and to hold a meeting in each region we visited about these reforms. We also formed a partnership with a legal firm, so when we heard about unfair experiences which might give rise to administrative review, we could offer access to legal support.

There is an ethical accountability of all parties to each other in research. A lack of accountability back to communities has historically been prevalent in child protection. This project draws attention to this lack of accountability, including the breach of participant's rights in child protection decision making, and thereby contributes to highlighting failings in the child protection system. It was part of our action research methodology to draw solicitors and judicial officers' awareness to Aboriginal children, young people and family rights, through the focus of this project and the questions we asked them. The ethics process provided us with a structured way to think about our accountability to our research participants.

RQ To what extent does this detailed and thoughtful work come out of your years of experience, or is there something you might say to earlier career researchers about the kind of process that you have just described?

TL If they are working with communities and community organisations, they can speak to them about what they think the consequence of the research they do might be and what they would like it to achieve. They can then put their minds to the key ethical responsibility of not causing harm and being sure that the benefits of the research outweigh the burdens. The ethics process prompts researchers to think about consent, risk, reciprocity, and respect. Rather than seeing the ethics process as a hurdle and a nuisance before they get out there to do the research, I would encourage people to see it as an opportunity to think about how they can bring the greatest integrity and respect to the process. Be willing to take the time to do things appropriately and to serve the community's aims and purpose through collaborative research.

RQ What is the process for data storage and keeping the information safe and private when working with very personal information?

TL Child protection raises sensitive issues. It is particularly sensitive in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or any First Nations communities. There are processes. With qualitative research, there are methods that we use for de identifying participants, for making sure information your participants provide is either confidential, cannot be identified by context, or that they are anonymised post interview. If you are working with small communities in localised areas the information that participants share could make them or others in the community whose privacy must be respected identifiable. You are often going to have to make a decision about how much of that particularity you can use and how much you have to generalise to some other abstracted story or event that is not going to identify them or other people.

Storage of information can become tricky when working with a community organisation, you want to be equal partners and both want to access the data. You have got your data stored in the university's cloud, in Stash, which is a secure storage system at UTS. You might have to get your interviews transcribed, deidentify them, and then securely share them with your community partner. Thought needs to go into how you collect your information, the point at which you deidentify if necessary, and separate your interview transcript from other interviewee information such as consent forms or verbal consent. You have to decide the point at which it's safe to share your data and interviews with your research partners. In the converse, some people want to be acknowledged for their knowledge and research. There is a trend to deidentifying everything. However, sometimes participants have great expertise and their preference is to have their ideas recognised as their work. That needs to be respected too. You cannot just be mechanical about how you go about it.

RQ Could you talk to us about dissemination, sharing the findings and any protocols around acknowledgment and attribution?

TL A component of our current project is action research, so the outcomes and the research take place simultaneously.

Talking to people about section 12, raising awareness amongst solicitors and community organisations that advocate for children and families, decision makers like judicial decision makers, and getting the provision into discussion. Part of the research asks, when people participate, what do their voices sound like? What is Aboriginal expertise? People have a lot of expertise that isn't heard. A response to that is to try and get discussion, consideration and change taking place as to who is recognised as an expert within the formal decision making processes.

For example, one event that arose out of this project, was a joint Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC), ALS and Jumbunna, symposium which problematised who are experts in the child protection decision making about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Raising awareness that there are experts such as clinicians and psychologists, the people that have historically been recognised for their knowledge in the Children's Court. However, there is a huge amount of Aboriginal community expertise that should be recognised within the formal court process. One of the key findings, which was not unexpected, is that section 12 of the NSW Care and Protection Act; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, kinship groups, communities, and representative organisations rights to participate in all significant child protection decision making, is routinely breached.

Most of our participants, because of the subject matter, have elected to keep their identity confidential and for this reason we cannot acknowledge them publicly. When we interviewed participants, we asked them about how they wanted us to report our findings back. There will be three formats, a page pamphlet, a summary, and the report.

RQ Is there anything you have learned from this project or any unforeseen things you want to share with new researchers?

TL There is always a lot happening in communities and you often have to deal with the unforeseen. You can turn up and your research participants might have had to go to a funeral, meeting, court or elsewhere. It is not specific to this project, but I think one always has to recognise that there are many complexities with the group of people you are working with and a lot happening other than a research project. We are privileged to have community participants working with us and have to work around what is happening to make it work. One has to be self-conscious continuously. Australian institutions remain deeply colonial, with subtleties of colonial language, and practice recurring. Even if we have worked for a very long time with organisations and people it is our responsibility to be constantly reflective.

RQ Is there anything you want to say about sitting on the Indigenous Research Advisory Panel (IRAP)?

TL I am happy to sit on the IRAP. It is great that there are more and increasing numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers at UTS. I would never want to shirk or minimise my responsibility, I am happy to do it. However, I can see a point where the assessment of Indigenous research will take place by and for Indigenous researchers. Everybody is so under the pump at the moment, so pressured, and many First Nations academics within our institution are pulled in many directions, to do so many things, that there is often not availability, and I am happy to fill that role. I have enjoyed assessing ethics applications on the IRAP, and I have also enjoyed speaking to and consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HDR students. As members of the ethics committee, we generally speak to researchers, but on the IRAP committee, it has been a particular pleasure to talk with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers. It is wonderful to see a much greater number of First Nations academics within the university.

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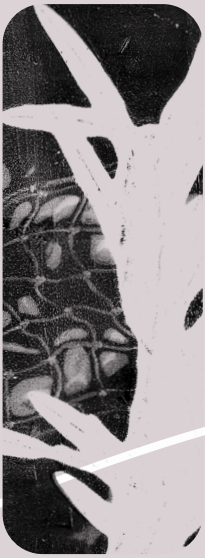
Listening to the Voices of First Nations Women in Prison

Thalia Anthony

MARANA DYARGALI



Interviewed By:

Professor
Robynne Quiggin

Professor Thalia Anthony is based in the Faculty of Law at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Thalia's research focuses on colonial manifestations within the legal system, especially in the criminal justice system. Thalia's research asks how we can work with First Peoples' communities and people to counteract oppressive structures and create new spaces for a resurgence for healing and a future where we have a society in which First Nations people live with the expectation of justice.

Thalia discusses a recent research project focused on First Nations women's experiences of incarceration and criminal sentencing. The research has sought to identify problems and alternatives in sentencing by listening to and privileging the voices of the women in prison. The project is a collaboration with New South Wales (NSW) Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) and Mudgingal that also seeks to understand sentencing through conversations with ALS lawyers and judicial officers. It investigates the whole system to identify how sentencing can be changed to ensure more humane outcomes for First Nations women. The project also asks how we can shift away from criminal sentencing and decarcerating First Nations women. Importantly, the First Nations women engaged in this research, also undertook their own research journey and spoken to their own truths.

> *"Reciprocity and longevity were central principles, seeing these as long term relationships and commitments, rather than just being there for the duration of the project. We are researchers, but we do research because we want things to change."*

Thalia explains how the research design of this project prioritised local community members, long standing relationships with them, valuing people and place. Inherent in this relationship-based work is accountability to people affected by the research and ensuring collective design of methods and outputs. For Thalia, this is a a key foundation for engaging in ethical research practices. In addition, a First Nations Women's Advisory committee *Sista2Sista* was a critical enabler of the project's overall governance.

About Thalia

Dr Thalia Anthony's expertise is in the areas of criminal law and procedure and First Nations people and the law, with a particular specialisation in settler colonial criminalising techniques and First Nations community justice mechanisms. Her research is grounded in legal history and understandings of the colonial legacy in legal institutions. She has developed new approaches to researching and understanding the role of the criminal law in colonisation and the governing First Nations communities, including the settler state's regulation of First Nations justice strategies. Her research is informed by fieldwork with First Nations communities and partnerships with Indigenous legal organisations in Australia and overseas. Dr Anthony's research informs her approach to teaching that seeks to for challenge racism and white privilege and fostering cultural competencies in the law curricular. This commitment had its genesis in 2008 when she organised an Australian and New Zealand conference on this theme.

> *I think I was born with a sign in my hand. I grew up a part of the invasion day protests at primary*

school in 1988 and have a family that just sees colonisation, including in criminal justice and child protection. This comes from where I'm from, which is Cyprus. My grandparents lived under British colonisation, and my father's side of the family are now dispossessed of their homelands due to Turkish occupation. Colonisation has been a threat to life for us, a struggle for life over death. My parents and myself grew up in Australia. For us, it's always been very clear that colonisation bears responsibility for ongoing oppression. There can only be change by transforming the structures and power imbalances. This requires promoting accountability for the dominant powers in society that operate to maintain white privilege against Indigenous peoples.

The research project was conducted with Professor Larissa Behrendt (Jumbunna) and other distinguished researchers including Wiradjuri woman Gemma Sentance, Dharug woman Michelle Toy, Guringai woman Ellen O'Brien, Gomeroi woman Alison Whittaker.

Interview between Professor Robynne Quiggin & Thalia Anthony

RQ Could you talk us through how you went about developing the relationships with the Indigenous participants?

TA The first thing we saw as critical was setting up a First Nations Women Advisory Committee. This became a focus for developing the research and a support group in itself. We call this group *Sista2Sista*. So it's a group only for First Nations women in the local community. Initially, the women we reached out to were the ones who we had pre-existing relationships with, for example, from Mudgin-gal. We were advised, especially by Elders, to reach out to other organisations. We reached out to Wirringa Baiya, Aboriginal Legal Services and Aboriginal workers within Centerlink and Housing, because we knew bringing them on board would in turn help the women inside. We wanted this group to be made up of women committed to longer term change who are working on the ground.

The first meeting was in 2016 at Redfern Community Centre. It was bursting to the seams with these amazing First Nations women committed to helping women inside prison and giving them a voice. Even though they're women inside, they're only inside for a short time and they're still women of the community. We organised the meeting at Redfern Community Centre because we thought it would be a safe and familiar place. We had Aboriginal catering and ran it in a really informal way. We broke into smaller groups, so everyone could have a say. We also had a lot of follow up, a lot of informal phone calls or catch ups over coffee. We provided support for some of the women from the group who needed support with family. Some of the women had kids in child protection and we provided support with that. It was a very deep relationship. It wasn't just a research relationship. I think that goes to the heart of these relationships being built from reciprocity and being sustainable, long term, not just your typical fly in fly out relationship. We didn't want to be extracting information and

not speaking to the needs of those women. We wanted the needs of those women to be at the forefront of what we were doing, even if it took us away from where we originally planned to go.

RQ Were there protocols or values that led the way you all worked together?

TA The foregrounding element of the project was self-determination, having the First Nations women determine what they wanted from the research and how the research would be executed. Also, being place based and having it originate in Redfern was important because we wanted to bring the women together somewhere not only familiar, but which also has a history of making change and being a gathering place. As we went to do the work with the women in prison, we also created relationships with places located near the prison. We had a relationship with the ALS next to or near the near where the prisons are located.
Reciprocity and longevity were central principles, which involved developing long term relationships and commitments, rather than just being there for the duration of the project. We are researchers, but we do research because we want things to change. We can't expect change with one project. We need to work with the people whose experiences are centered in what we want changed, we need to have those relationships over the long term. Otherwise, any gains from the research will be quickly lost.

RQ Sometimes there is a sense that researchers must achieve a measure of objectivity, to be at arm's length and this does not sound like the description of the relationships you are developing. Can you talk about how you are situated in these close relationships that you purposefully maintain over a long period of time?

TA That is a fantastic question, Robynne. I have received criticism from people inside institutions or with racist prejudices that I am subjective and too "sympathetic" to First Nations people. However, I approach research in a manner that challenges the historical and current bias that excludes First Nations people and their narratives.

The purpose of research should be to shed light on knowledge and truths that have not otherwise been disclosed or presented. I feel so many of the truths within the criminal justice system prop up that system and reinforce stereotypes about First Nations deficits, including that First Nations people are lawbreakers. Because I have these long term relationships, I know those truths are not reflective of reality and are extremely harmful. They're truths that are necessary for the colonial project.

I believe it is necessary for my research to be subjective and grounded in rigorous scholarship in order to provide a diverse set of truths. The only way I'm going to be able to ascertain truths that have been concealed by epistemological colonial hierarchies is through relationships, because there's no better way to understand people's diverse experiences. Through relationships, I can appreciate not only the realities of what I'm told, but also see realities firsthand. This may be when I receive a phone call in the middle of the night when a First Nations woman fears for her children being stolen by the state or when a mother fears for her son in police custody. Being close to these experiences, and offering support, places a unique lens on First Nations peoples' lived truths.

I may be accused of being an advocate, rather than an academic, but I would suggest that legal academics are always advocating—either in pursuance or defiance of the status quo through the knowledge we generate. If we only analyse institutional knowledge, it's unlikely we will produce knowledge outside of institutions. The academic project should be to expand knowledge. And I feel that my research is contributing to that work.

RQ Do you want to just tell us a bit more about the design of the project, the involvement of the women, Elders and senior knowledge holders. And also the corrections people, everybody who contributed to the development and design and how that worked?

TA We had the *Sista2Sista* meetings to primarily govern the project's framework. In addition to that, we had meetings with corrections because we needed access to prisons. The ethics

committee of corrections valued the fact that we had set up *Sista2Sista*, because they saw it as bringing more sensitivity to the project. It demonstrated that the researchers had thought-through issues of trauma for First Nations women in prison, either because of pre-existing trauma or the trauma that prison brings.

The ethics committee in corrections and at UTS are aware that researchers can add harm to the women inside through ignorance. Having *Sista2Sista* meant we had thought through a lot of the risks and set up ways to support the women if they had any negative response to the research.

For example, we had a phone number the women could call to have a debriefing about the interviews. In one case, I remember a woman was having a self-harm episode and I was able to engage with her at that moment. And I was able to go back to corrections officers, with the authority of the First Nations woman, and intervene in a really helpful way for her. Having *Sista2Sista* was a really important backbone for this work that corrections did appreciate. We also had the Aboriginal Legal Service guide the project and give us access to their lawyers to discuss what their

female clients experience in criminal sentencing and prison. The ALS is part of *Sista2Sista* and at the end of the day, our research decisions are made according to the advice of *Sista2Sista*. For example, if *Sista2Sista* and corrections had different priorities, we just would not have proceeded with that element of the project. Even if it sacrificed something from the project, we would not have compromised on the leadership of *Sista2Sista*. This did not occur, but we had a hierarchy that honored the First Nations Women Advisory Committee above all else.

RQ Can you tell us about how you went about creating a project that is Indigenous led and community driven? How did you navigate the ethical requirements, for working with the university and the corrections ethics committees?

TA Even though I find ethics applications extremely tedious, ethics protocols are really important to ground projects. Ethical principles and practices needs to drive all research decisions, especially with First Nations people that have been so harmed by research. Ethics is something to think about at the beginning of a project. Community engagement in setting up the project and having a local First Nations advisory group in the design and execution, including to review what happens when things don't go to plan, means you can go back to the advisory group and make changes in accordance with your ethical principles, especially to ensure First Nations self-determination. It also needs to be followed through after the project to ensure ongoing accountability.

Not that I want to add another layer of bureaucracy, but I think accountability to community, going back to community, not only to show your findings, but seeing how they want to move forward after the project should be built into research projects. Sometimes ethics is something people do at the start and put it behind them but it needs to be something alive. We are still doing this work with Sista2Sista, and I've very much thought about how I can keep this group going after the project, because there is an interest by its members for it to be maintained. Obviously, there's always the issue of resources and so forth. But if there's a will there's a way. I think

it would be good for researchers to have more discussions about how research can continue to nourish relationships that are born through research.

RQ Would you like to talk about how Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property informed the way you thought about the work?

TA It is actually really hard with this project, because we wanted to give the women a record of what they told us, but we didn't want to edit it into our own words. We selected a series of quotes and put them into themes. We wanted to give them their words unfiltered. We gave it to *Sista2Sista* to check that there wasn't anything too traumatic or inappropriate in there. We bound these quotes in a booklet and took it back to the women in prisons. They really valued having this booklet, seeing their own words on the page.

We were really quick in getting back to them with the feedback because we knew First Nations women in prison cycle in and out so often. We got all of this together within a few months and even then half of the women had already been released or transferred from the prison. I think there are challenges and the only way we can make sure women who contribute to the research get to see what they said and how it was put together, is if we keep connecting with the women, keep having those relationships, as people know each other in community. We have been able to spread the word, but it is a bit tricky when it's such a transient population in prisons and because of the nature of the system. It absolutely highlights how problematic the system is where the women are there a few months, may lose their homes or children, may lose their jobs and then they're out again. Rather than being strengthened, their lives have been completely displaced. I know we've always seen the statistics that women are in and out of prison, but going back after a few months, and seeing so many of them gone, really highlighted the unnecessary nature of imprisonment. Also it demonstrated the difficulty for researchers to give back to the woman who we originally reached out to.

One of the things we did do is prepare a leaflet with all of our members, the services, and our Advisory Group in it. All their contact details were on the leaflet as were ours. So when the women wanted to join *Sista2Sista*, or if they wanted some help when they left prison they could give us a call. And some of them did give us a call. They knew we had their backs if they needed it.

RQ Would you like to talk about data collection and any issues that were raised in collecting data?

TA Our approach was based on a Yarning model where we would have our prompt questions, but a lot of it would be listening and letting the discussion go where it needed to. We had yarns where women ended up crying; interviews where we had to get nurses involved, because there were health concerns that the women hadn't felt comfortable bringing up before. The women learned about one another. I had friends or family of friends who were there, so I could ask things others wouldn't be able to and in some circumstances the research questions were incidental because we needed to catch up.

When we were listening to stories we found the women didn't necessarily focus on sentencing. The stories, nonetheless, revealed that women felt silenced and dehumanised in sentencing. They felt their sentences were disproportionately harsh. What they also wanted to talk about and were huge worries for them were things like housing or their children. Many of them asked us to try and contact child protection to find out where their kids were, because they didn't know how to contact them. A lot of our findings have been about those challenges and not only about the sentencing process. We have had a really wide net and followed up on all of these themes when presenting the data back to the women. It is an ongoing project, so we are speaking about working with the data moving forward. Larissa Behrendt and I have been discussing how we can make these stories into a valuable community resource. I have already used the data for advocacy, because a lot of the women wanted to change their situation. So, a lot of their voices have been found in submissions to Parliament to have more healing centers and more options, alternative to custody, so they can stay with their kids. We've used the data in ways consistent with the advice of the women in prison and *Sista2Sista*.

RQ Often ethics applications want us to answer questions in a singular way, as you have set out for

example with sentencing, but as in your example, sentencing comes with housing and children.

TA Things are holistic and interconnected when we're talking about the lives of First Nations people. Artificially, research forces us to be monofocal, with the need for a hypothesis and a research question. But people's lives aren't like that. There's this rich tapestry and even though the focus might be on prison, for example, prison is such a small part of their overall life experiences, feelings and thoughts. The women in prison hated sentencing but their main concern is something like how they are going to get a call from their kid while they're in prison. It's not to say it's a different project, or a diversion, quite the contrary, it's speaking to the original problem. Sentencing is undermining Indigenous women's well being, because it fails to see their holistic experience, contribution and strengths. We can't work out why sentencing is problematic unless we see the totality of their lives and impact that imprisonment has on them.

RQ How did you then talk to the judicial officers and the custodial officers? Were you having the same kinds of conversations? How did you go managing those two different groups of people?

TA It was like chalk and cheese. In some cases we spoke to fairly progressive judicial officers who understood the impacts of themselves and their part within the system. In other cases, judicial officers focused on the position of the First Nations women from a negative, deficit perspective. For us and the women in prison, it was this negative, deficit based approach toward the women that needed to change. But for these later mentioned officers, they thought it was the women who needed to change. I haven't yet reconciled that. What I've focused on is producing work that honors the voices of the First Nations women. I am bringing the research together in the next stage and I'm wondering how I'm going to do that. It is interesting, because who you choose as your participants shapes what lens you take to the research. The participants will give you data from their perspective and that will filter into your findings. You need to take a critical lens to all views, especially when they are coming from people aligned to institutions.

When you have a meeting or an interview with a judicial officer, you also have a relationship. It's difficult to then go and criticise their perspectives without potentially losing the prospect of being able to talk to them again. I think the only way to manage this is to set up expectations from the outset. For example, I always offer the judicial officer the transcript so they can ensure their views are properly represented. I always make it clear that the findings and the analysis will depend on the overall project and that their perspective might not be the dominant one in the research findings. All that expectation setting and good faith needs to be planned at the ethics application process, so no one feels undermined.

RQ Could you reflect on maintaining the security of the data, maintaining confidentiality and the technical elements to your data storage?

TA We keep it on very secure services. Everything is double password protected and can only be accessed by the researchers on the project. Everything is de-identified, including information, such as the place the person is from or what prison they went to.

Seven years seems to be the standard for how long you keep data, so I would like to have discussions with *Sista2Sista* within that period to see if there is a way the de-identified data could be useful long term, maybe in an archive. It is such rich data and would be valuable to reflect on and use to continue to advocate for change. It would be a pity if it is lost, because this research is fairly unprecedented in terms of its scale in NSW prisons. It took a lot of work to bring these women together, both in prisons and outside of prisons. It would be unfortunate if all that hard work didn't have some ongoing impact. Its longevity is definitely something we will continue to consider.

RQ Were there any learnings from the project that you would like to speak about?

TA One of the important learnings I had was the need to do things in culturally safe spaces. This is crucial, even for the staff you employ on the project. You need to employ First

Nations researchers on projects with First Nations people and they need to be supported. One of the best ways to do that is to employ more than one First Nation researcher. It's traumatic work, can be triggering and if the work is spread it just gives space to share. I am not a First Nations person, but I'm their supervisor. They need the support of First Nations peers as well. We've been so fortunate to have Gemma Sentance, Michelle Toy, Ellen O'Brien and Alison Whittaker work on this project at various times. Larissa is a co-investigator who is a fantastic leader and provides support.

I have really deep relationships with the researchers but it is different when you have someone with you who is truly your peer. This is what we wanted to do with the advisory group, make it peer to peer, so the First Nations women on the advisory group are the peers of the women inside and within the research group. The advisory group becomes a collective and culturally safe space.

In relation to prisons, generally we tried to avoid having one on one conversations, because we couldn't be there to pick up the pieces if something went wrong. We didn't do research in some prisons where there was only one First Nations woman, because there would not be anyone who would have their back when we went away. We tried to break them up into smaller groups of peers, connecting women who would be in their room, because we wanted the research to be supportive. We did not want anyone to be left alone to feel they had nowhere to turn when the research was over or got too hard. Because these are hard issues and people's lives. We wanted this research to be strengthening.

We received feedback that the women in prison loved having us visit, because they got to share their stories that no one had ever asked them about. They also had never had the space to sit together as First Nations women in prison. Creating culturally safe and strengthening spaces does not happen in prison. We created that space and the women got to meet each other and share things. We felt like stepping in and supporting these women had a beneficial effect. And my only concern is not being able to go in there and check in with them. But I do work with Aboriginal community justice organisations like Deadly Connections and we're hoping to do that kind of work on an ongoing basis.

RQ Can you talk about any engagement you have with the AIATSIS ethical guidelines and other guides that researchers new to this space might benefit from? And are there any reflections you have on the value of ethical guidelines and protocols that are referred to in ethics application processes?

TA I think the AIATSIS ethical guidelines are a really strong and important development in ethical principles for First Nations research. Equally strong are the ethical guidelines of individual, local Aboriginal organisations. For example, we worked with Waminda, which is an Aboriginal women's organisation on the NSW South Coast. We saw how strong their principles are around decolonisation and research as we filled out their ethics form. I think ethics application processes ensure that research is true to its values to serve First Nations communities and organisations.

It keeps you accountable. If you don't do something right, the participating organisation will see it. Checks and balances in community keeps you honest and keeps you focused on the needs of those you're doing research with. I see is as a part of the relationship building. And I would encourage anyone doing research in that space to look at the local organisations to see whether they have their own ethics process to include in your research.

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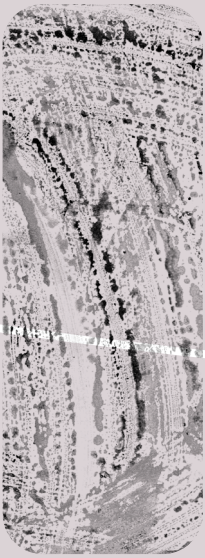
Insights from Administrators

MARANA DYARGALI



Racheal Laugery

Interviewed By:

Associate Professor Jason De Santolo

Racheal Laugery is the Senior Research Ethics Officer at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) having worked in the area of research ethics for over a decade. We hear from Racheal about her role supporting researchers to manage the research ethics process, including giving advice to Higher Degree Research (HDR) students and academic staff on research ethics. Racheal explains how the team work to tailor their advice, providing one on one consultations, as well as running ethics clinics. The aim of the team is to be able to facilitate high-quality research by encouraging UTS researchers to think ethically and to consider risk throughout the life of their research projects.

"Mentoring researchers on how to do Indigenous research will contribute to that. There needs to be a willingness from all students and staff to want to see the vision. It is going to be easier to move forward in the 2027 strategy if we can see the vision and work towards it together. This will make it much easier to facilitate high quality research, because people will want to embrace the process and embrace best practice."

Racheal works as part of a small team to provide support for the university. When she first started, the number of human ethics applications were around 180 a year. Today, the team manage and oversee approximately 600 human ethics applications, as well as managing additional processes around animal ethics and biosafety. UTS have five ethics committees, one of which is an executive for the human ethics committees. Racheal also introduces the work of the Indigenous Research Advisory Panel to guide the UTS commitment to Indigenous research ethics. Racheal discusses the work of the ethics committee to align with the vision of the UTS 2027 Strategy.

About Racheal

Racheal Laugery has worked in the field of research ethics for a little over ten years in a variety of roles and is currently Senior Research Ethics Officer. She provides individualised expert advice on research ethics to HDR students and staff, not just through the preparation and submission of ethics applications, but throughout the research lifecycle. She plays a key role in the continuous improvement of processes and systems to streamline the UTS research ethics process and to raise the profile of ethics to a value-add activity for excellent research. Some of her key functions include undertaking reviews of applications prior to dissemination to Committees, reviewing responses to Committee outcomes, reporting to governing bodies and regulators, inspecting facilities and providing expert advice and training to research staff and students. Racheal studied a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Security and Counter-terrorism. During her free time she loves traveling, hiking, cycling and art.

Interview between Associate Professor Jason De Santolo & Racheal Laugery

JDS What is important about building relationships with the people you advise and why is it important in consultations and negotiations with different stakeholders?

RL You need to build trust with researchers. Some people really enjoy ethics and they find the process very informative, enlightening and beneficial. Others see it as a bureaucratic barrier getting in the way of what they want to do and love. There are a lot of different viewpoints, and we try to work with all of these with a positive attitude. When we build relationships, both parties learn about what the other is doing, why they are doing it and why they are passionate about it. Knowing this helps us see things from one another's perspective, which helps us as we work together to address any ethical issues while ensuring the best outcomes for the research. The relationship becomes a partnership, and it's no longer an 'us and them' thing. This is important when it comes to researchers working with communities and other stakeholders, because researchers will engage with ethics early in the process, and they ensure consultation and negotiations are being done in the best way possible to meet the standards of the NHMRC guidelines and AIATSIS Code. We try to support researchers in that process, while respecting the relationship between the researcher and the community.

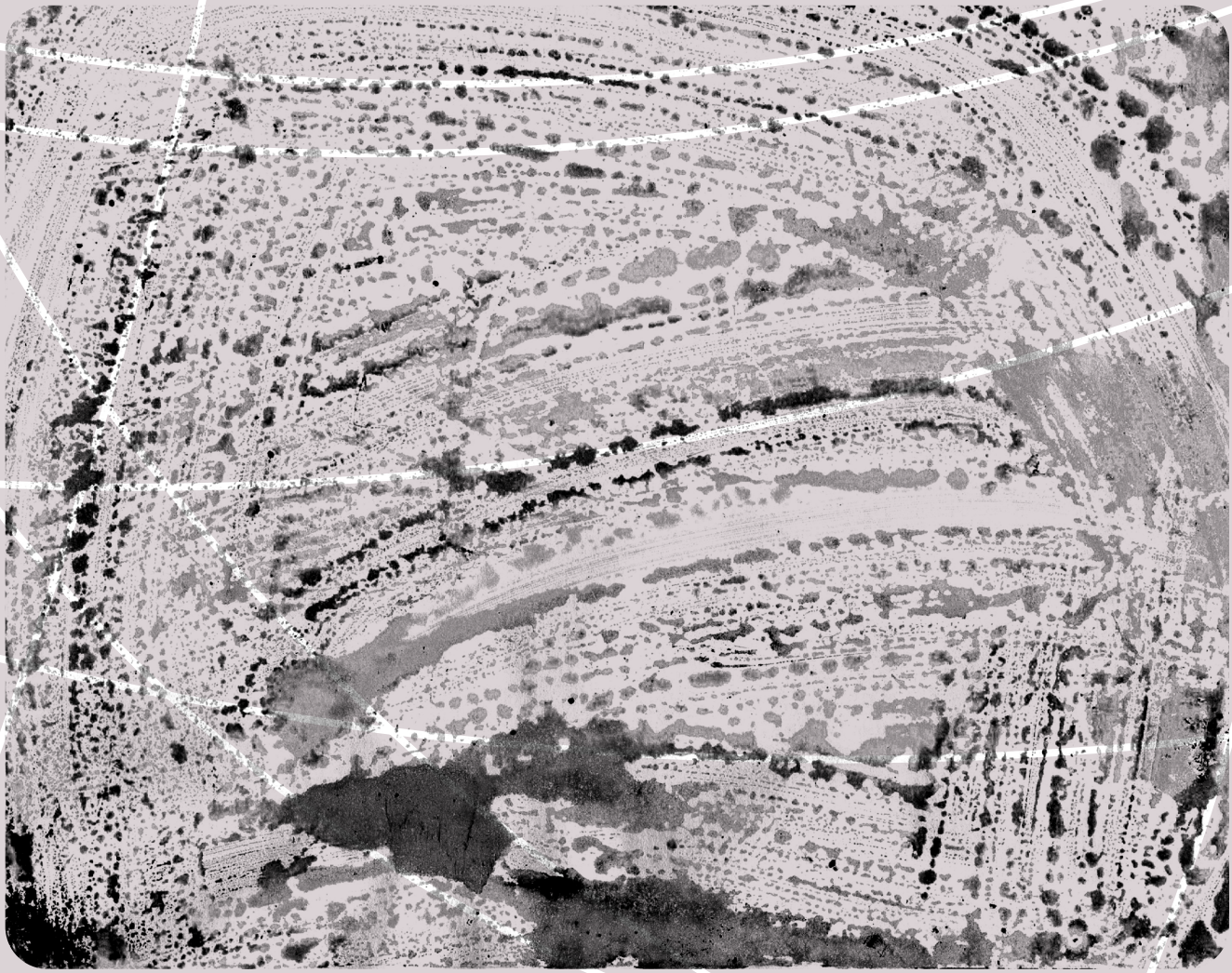
JDS Could you explain what happens when someone puts in an application in our space? What happens as it goes to the research advisory group?

RL The Ethics Secretariat do an initial check when the application comes through to provide feedback prior to the application going to the Committee. For example, I look at what sort of consultation has been done with the community and I use my knowledge of the AIATSIS Code, the National Statement and NHMRC guidelines to make sure that those things are being addressed. We then send it through to both the Indigenous Research Advisory Panel (IRAP) and the Ethics Committee simultaneously. One person from the IRAP will sit as a primary reviewer for that application at the meeting. We will also have a member of the Ethics Committee as a secondary reviewer. The representative for the IRAP is invited to attend the meeting to speak to the application, or if they are not able to attend, we will refer to their written feedback. It is preferable for them to attend in person to avoid having to interpret their written comments. If the IRAP member or Committee have any comments on the application, we forward the response to the Chair and the IRAP member for review and approval.

JDS Are there any examples or insights that you can provide from some of the good stories or some where things went wrong? And what does that mean for you, as key administrators, navigating the relationships that you have with the process and looking at the outcomes that we are all trying to achieve?

RL Most of the applications we receive that are with or about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are from Indigenous researchers, or involve a supervisor that is an Indigenous academic. Sometimes we receive applications where none of the research team are Indigenous, but the researcher has worked in the community for many years and has built trust with the community. You could be deeply involved with the community, but if you haven't done research before, you might not know or be familiar with Indigenous ethical principles. Also, having a dual role in the community can introduce ethical dilemmas so this has to be carefully managed.

What really shines in a great application is the way the principles of the AIATSIS Code and NHMRC guidelines are addressed. The researcher doesn't provide a blanket statement that says, "I will apply the AIATSIS guidelines"; in the excellent applications we've received, researchers go into detail on how they've adhered to or will adhere to these



principles within the context of their specific project. They describe how the project was initiated, what consultation they've done with communities and stakeholders and how. They also describe what feedback they've received from communities, how it's influenced the research design, and how they plan to continue the consultation process throughout the remainder of the project. They also describe how the results will be shared in a way that works for the community as custodians of Indigenous knowledge, and their respect for the community really shows in their responses. It's really obvious when these principles haven't been addressed, we usually get one-liner responses and that doesn't really give us any information.

For smaller and remote communities, people might overlook the potential for participants to be reidentified, particularly when stories are shared by community members which may also identify others, so special consideration needs to be given to how this will be managed. Sometimes research involves discussing sensitive topics such as experiences with the law, discrimination and housing. Good applications give careful consideration how potential distress is managed, but great applications consider how to do this in a way that is culturally appropriate. One Indigenous person or community is not the same as another, so what works for one might not work for another and that's why consultation is really important.

In terms of a story where something went wrong, I have a recollection of one project where there was no consideration, or respect, for the community where the research was being conducted. You could see there was a goal in mind at the end that was not for the benefit of the community. We had a member of the Indigenous Research Advisory Panel reviewing that application. They and the Research Ethics Manager did a huge amount of work ensuring we met our responsibility and obligation towards the community involved and to support the research team in addressing this.

The AIATSIS Code and the NHMRC guidelines have really good questions and guiding principles that have undergone huge revisions following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. However, I think having examples from our own researchers is the best way to lead high quality research by showing how to put principles of ethics in Indigenous research into practice. Examples of lived experience, not just guidelines, are easier to relate to and learn from.

JDS Would you be able to shed some light on what is being used for data storage?

RL In ethics, we rely heavily on the Indigenous Research Advisory Panel for their expertise, but the panel and the research we do at UTS are not homogenous either. I think the more we discuss this the more sensitive we will be to the diversity of Indigenous peoples and communities. I think many of us could benefit from further training about Indigenous communities and research, including Ethics Committees. I went to a great ARMS presentation this year that talked about Indigenous peoples in New Zealand. The speaker said that because she was Maori there was an assumption and she must know every Maori and every Indigenous person in her country, even in her city, and she had to try to drum into people that, "we're not a homogenised group, we're actually very different and we think differently". That really left an impact on me. She also talked about researchers coming up to her saying, "this is groundbreaking research that is going to benefit Indigenous peoples", and she would ask them, "Why? Where's the evidence that this is going to benefit Maori people? And who are 'Maori'?". I think we can ask the same questions in the Australian context.

The National Statement is going to change next year and the concept of vulnerability is going to be reintroduced. The National Statement will recognise that life stages determine vulnerability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be taken out of the National Statement as a vulnerable group. This is a positive move forward, because although there needs to be additional

considerations to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, they shouldn't be grouped as vulnerable.

JDS Our strategy is about achieving Indigenous led, community driven, on Country research. Do you have any thoughts about how we achieve that at UTS?

RL There are two categories of research to consider here, HDR and academic. On the HDR side, there needs to be guidance from the supervisor right from the very start because by the time the project comes to the Ethics Committee, it is too late. The project will already have been through a stage one assessment and so much time and effort will have already gone into the design. Is it then the Ethics Committee's responsibility to say the research does not align with the strategy? In terms of academics, for the most part I think we're doing research that is Indigenous led and community driven but perhaps where we let ourselves down is with contract research. Researchers need to request and negotiate for the research to be Indigenous-led and community driven from the beginning of the negotiations, rather than agreeing to the contract and then trying to work it into the strategy and ethics requirements. It is a really tricky thing, because obviously the university needs money, particularly now, and there might be pressure from organisations to get the contract signed. I have no answer to what might be the best way forward with that, because on one hand we need the money, on the other hand we might be working with an organisation knowing the work is not going to be Indigenous led or initiated.

JDS Is there something that you personally would be committed to, in your role with us, which you would like to share as a statement to a broad audience about what we are going to achieve leading up to the UTS 2027 vision?

RL We have so many wonderful researchers who are already engaging with the strategy, but to fully embrace the strategy we need engagement from everyone. Mentoring researchers on how to do Indigenous research will contribute to that. There needs to be a willingness from all students and staff to want to see the vision. It is going to be easier to move forward in the 2027 strategy if we can see the vision and work towards it together. This will make it much easier to facilitate high quality research, because people will want to embrace the process and embrace best practice.

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Meaningful Collaborations & Relationships Guiding Ethical Research

Beata Bajorek

MARANA DYARGALI

Interviewed By:
Professor
Robynne Quiggin

In this chapter, Professor Beata Bajorek discusses her role in contributing to the UTS ethics committee. Dispelling myths of ethics being a "tick the box" process, Beata shares insights on how the purpose of the ethics process is to strengthen research design and rigour while also respecting human participants. Understanding the ethics committee's questions around research design and engagement helps people consider the impact of their research. This understanding is important both in terms of the engagement with research participants as well as considering the impact of the research both within communities, society, industry and academia.

"One of the key pieces of advice we would have for researchers undertaking Indigenous research is to be really clear in your application about what has practically taken place before you have come to the point of submitting your ethics application where you outline your proposal. What conversations have you had around your research? What is the level of engagement that you have had? Who have you spoken with and who is actually being brought into your project? We are particularly looking for meaningful collaboration and engagement."

Beata also discusses the unique and collaborative approach taken at UTS to review ethics applications. Bringing a diverse range of people together to get the best outcome for research while ensuring that engagement with research participants is based on principles of respectful relationships. Beata reminds us of the importance of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Code of Ethics which is guided by four principles that underpin ethical research 1: Indigenous self-determination, 2: Indigenous leadership, 3: Impact and value, and 4: Sustainability and accountability.

About Beata

Professor Bajorek is a clinical academic pharmacist, having practiced in community & hospital settings, and is the inaugural Academic Pharmacist at Royal North Shore Hospital. Previously she has been a Research Fellow at the Clinical Practice Advancement Centre, University Health System Consortium (Chicago, USA), followed by 9 years in academia in the Faculties of Pharmacy and Nursing, University of Sydney (Australia), before coming to UTS in 2011 to help set up the Graduate School of Health. She is a highly experienced clinical educator and researcher, and has been recognised through awards and nominations for Outstanding Teaching, Support for the Student Experience, and Research Supervision. In her own research, Prof Bajorek has focused on consumer engagement and multidisciplinary stakeholder collaboration to address health-related problems.

Interview between Professor Robynne Quiggin & Professor Beata Bajorek

RQ Could you tell us about the ethics committee, the ethics proposal review process and the kinds of discussions you have in the meetings?

BB We look at every proposal as an independent group of researchers, experts and lay persons who reflect the broader community viewpoint. We come with a very diverse range of perspectives and lenses through which we discuss a detailed research ethics application form that has been filled in by a researcher. We try to make sense of the research, understand what's happening through this really concise presentation. We are trying to understand the story in that application and the purpose of the research. We imagine what the value and experience would be like for a research participant, whether that is at an individual or a community level. We try to make some sort of judgements around that and proactively work with all the people involved in the process to ensure the research is meeting ethical principles. Ultimately, we're making sure that the proposed research is able to move forward and achieve the best possible outcomes for all involved—following ethics principles will ensure these outcomes.

When we get to a meeting, we have extensive discussions around the proposal. It is a very collegiate discussion congratulating the researchers on addressing the challenges of their research area. Sometimes we have no awareness of the issue being addressed and we discuss our interest and learnings about this as a problem. We use this as an educational moment for the committee members. We work together and seek clarification from each other. We seek out each other's experience with particular methods or topics, and we often turn to the expertise of the research team itself to assist our understanding—we invite researchers to attend our meetings where we feel a joint discussion would assist our understanding of the research proposal. It is a very positive discussion about moving the research proposal forward and

we always canvas what practical advice we can offer the research team to ensure ethics principles are applied.

If there are things that we don't understand, because we know that we are reading limited detail within a form, we go back to researchers and ask for clarification. We are never in a position where we would not approve a research study to go ahead. That is never the conversation. That is one of the myths around the research ethics process that it is either you get approval or you don't get approval. For our committee, that is not what it is. It is about discussing whether we have done everything that we can possibly do to adhere to ethics principles, so we can with confidence—send the research off into the real world. We discuss whether there is benefit to all, and the relevant safety measures, within the research proposal. We check that people are fully informed and that the research will generate worthwhile outcomes. We have lots of follow up conversations with researchers to exchange information, which is both beneficial to the committee and the researchers in clarifying the processes and thoughts around the research.

RQ How does your experience inform your participation on the ethics committee?

BB You have to bring in multiple lenses when you are on an ethics committee. From a researcher perspective, what you are bringing is knowledge and experience around the "how to" in understanding the unique problem being faced and how it can be best addressed. So, how do you know it is a problem? What's your evidence base for that and how has that informed your approach? We're looking to ensure that your proposed research will be meaningful, addressing real issues, taking on board learnings and feedback from previous research, the community, and society more generally. Taking it from that point in your research, its about understanding how you will engage with all the people that are going to be involved in the conduct of, and impacted by, your proposed research. Experience of that entire research process and understanding what you are striving for in terms of actual research outcome allows us to understand how and why the data are being collected to have meaningful impact and to address the original stated problem. Being on an ethics committee and

having that ‘researcher’ insight is extremely important. You are able to look at someone else’s application and understand the process of working through that.

The other lens you have to be able to review ethics applications through is as a research participant or recipient stakeholder. We try to foresee what an individual going into this research study might be expecting. The ethics committee tries to imagine what that would be like for that individual participant and the impact of that contribution for the communities and population they are representing. How have they understood what this research is about? Why have they been invited to participate? What would they be expecting to contribute? What is the benefit or value in the participant making this contribution? The ethics committee recognises that people participating in research are giving up a part of themselves, individually, or by way of representing their communities or broader populations. That is quite a big investment on their part into research that is going to benefit a lot of people. Applying this lens can be quite hard and it means, as an ethics committee, we need to be human. We can’t just be academic researchers, looking at a process and making sure that we’ve got all “the i’s dotted and the t’s crossed”, as the saying goes. We have to bring in that human element, be personable and think about the ‘lived experience’ of participants—‘life’ in more general terms is the true context for human research. Research is ultimately about improving our lives.

What is really important from an Indigenous research perspective is for us to try and have that human understanding, or at least that sensitivity, because if we are not Indigenous researchers or Indigenous persons ourselves, we are never going to fully understand that lived experience. We need to have a starting point of sensitivity to know what we are looking for and who to consult with. Who do we seek expert advice from? Who do we engage in that process so that we understand what that research experience would be like and what the real value and the true impact of that research will be? Being on a research ethics committee is more than just about the research process. Again, it is about being human.

One of the reasons I really enjoy being on the ethics committee is because I think research is so invaluable—it does change our daily lives in so many different ways. However, it is only valuable if you are addressing problems that people want addressed, in which they can see that their perspective and their experiences have been taken on board. My own research is not in the Indigenous research space, I’m a clinical health researcher, but I’ve spent a lot of time talking to people, patients, carers, clinicians—and if you allow them to speak freely, they will tell you what the issues are and what they need from your research. I remember one of the very first research projects I did as a PhD student, I was fairly naive to methods and the whole research process. I remember sitting back and thinking, I just need to let these people talk whilst I get my head around what I’m doing. However in allowing them to speak freely and openly, in different ways they were each effectively saying, this is what I think you’d really ought to be doing with your research—such a simple first step in the research process. There was nothing complex in the method nor approach, it was purely about listening to people to understand the problem from their perspective and how it could be resolved. That was so impactful and powerful for me. I thought, this isn’t really about me, I am a PhD student, I will get a PhD at the end of this, which will be great for me in my own professional development, however, the research is not actually about me or for me. I needed to make the research truly focused on the people at the heart of the research, those who were going to benefit from it. That was such an important life changing experience for me and it has changed the way I approach research across the board. The ethics review process reflects that—it’s not about you—as a researcher—ticking off the boxes regarding your research methods to complete a project. It’s about the research per se—you always have to remember what the purpose of research ultimately is.

When I have people coming to me with proposals to do a PhD, asking me to supervise, I ask them what topic they want to do. When I ask them why they want to do it is sometimes very hard for them to articulate that because they have just picked it as a current ‘hot topic’ that has appeared in different research or public media. However, they are not quite sure why it is important, or why they should be doing it,

other than it gaining media attention. I try to get them to go back and have that human connection to it and understand the base from which this research is coming. Why are they really interested in doing it? How will they judge whether their research has been a success, and for whom will it be a success? I try and view things from that human aspect and that is why I enjoy being on the research ethics committee.

RQ How do you gauge what is valuable for the participants and the community?

BB The number one thing we do as a committee is go back to the researchers and ask them, as experts in the field, what have they done to ensure the research is inclusive of the community that they are engaging as research participants? What level of collaboration and engagement have they had? How have they received that evidence that they are proposing is worthwhile? Have they determined this as an area of need for that population or group? We go back to the researchers themselves. There is a lot of trust in this part of the ethics process. We try and learn about the research teams. Where did they come from? What is the research context for them as people with a lived experience, stakeholders, or academic expertise? What is their background? What is their expertise and professional or personal experience? A lot of researchers go into their fields of research because of personal experience with events, history, context, culture and other aspects of life. These are the things that will enable the ethical conduct of the research, and this is what we're really interested in when we ask for researchers to briefly describe their experience or track record—we're not really interested in a list of formal qualifications per se. We go back to the researchers and ask them to demonstrate to us how these factors have been considered and facilitated within the research proposal.

"One of the key pieces of advice we would have for researchers undertaking Indigenous research is to be really clear in your application about what has practically taken place before you have come to the point of submitting your ethics application where you outline your proposal. What conversations have you had around your research? What is the level of engagement that you have had? Who have you spoken with and who is actually being brought into your project? We are particularly looking for meaningful collaboration and engagement."

This is not what we tended to do in the past where you would just send someone an email saying you have an interesting project idea, and ask them whether they would like to be a part of it, yay or nay? Then, you simply told people—including those likely to be impacted by the research—what you were doing or you had already done, after the fact! So, effectively getting feedback after you've done the project. That approach doesn't fly these days. Research needs to be meaningful and have value. The only way you are going to make that happen is if you are establishing relationships, working with communities, asking them what they need and what they want. It is important to let communities drive research because if you let them lead, it is inherently going to generate positive outcomes. We always go back to the researchers to explain that relationship-building process, as one of the most important steps before you physically conduct your research. It is a really detailed first step that should be invested in quite heavily by all of those involved in the research.

RQ When you rely on the word of a researcher and need to consider risk to a community, what are some of the considerations and thoughts about the risk the committee take when offering an approval for that research to take place?

BB There is a lot of trust in the whole research ethics process. Trusting the researchers do have the experience and expertise they profess to have. Trusting that they have done what they say they have done or will do in their ethics application. Trusting the research participants will adhere to what they are being asked to do and that the data they provide is correct. There is a lot of trust placed in that process. For the most part, we have that trust and it can be better assured if everyone is working towards the same goals with the same shared understanding of what research is about and what its

importance is. The process is not entirely risk free and we accept that. Research will never be 100 percent nil risk. Even what we call low risk projects may receive complaints, because someone has had a slightly different experience in life and might react differently to questions that have been asked or around data they have been asked to supply. That will always happen in the context of human research. It is about people's lives, their context, their experiences, so we accept that.

At UTS we try really hard to work with researchers in a practical and proactive way to ensure there is trust in the whole ethics review process, between the research academics, participants, stakeholders, and ethics committee. In one scenario where we had quite extensive conversations with the research team about their project involving Indigenous community groups, we tried to engage the broader collaborators in that as well to understand the level of community and stakeholder involvement and facilitate discussion on expectations around outcomes, effectively building up that trust for all involved, which I think is a unique process at UTS. I don't think most institutions would engage in that level of discussion and conversation to try and understand the application and its context. It took a few iterations, especially for the non-Indigenous researchers to understand how the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) principles needed to be demonstrated, what that meant practically. We just kept moving forward with that process step by step, in small steps, to get them to a point where we felt that there was enough practical demonstration and also to a

point where the extended collaboration was comfortable with the proposal.

In effect, we were trying to understand the level of support from, and meaningful engagement with, the extended collaborative network, including the Indigenous communities and organisations that were part of the research, to gauge to what extent the research—which addressed highly sensitive issues—was acceptable to them all. It also became an example of where we often recommend staging the research to optimise community engagement and consultation throughout the research project. We might get a really large proposal that has multiple objectives in it and it may not be possible for the researchers to demonstrate the application of Indigenous research ethics principles across the whole application. We would recommend breaking the research down, articulating it through a number of phases, so we can get it off the ground and ensure there is the right level of engagement and collaboration for that project. The researchers then build from that as they move forward. Staging the research ensures that there is time for proper pause and reflection on the conduct of the research, with appropriate consultation. I did a lot of follow up with the lead researchers in the aforementioned case and we still have that application open for the researchers to come back for the next phases of the larger project. They did move forward, it took them some time, however they did learn quite a lot in that process. They learnt what it means to have meaningful engagement and what it means to establish meaningful relationships in the process. It was a worthwhile process, influencing the way those researchers and community groups have positively engaged with subsequent research activities. The investment in this step has been critical to the success of that project.

RQ What changes to the research ethics process have you seen over the years that you have been working in this space?

BB Lots of changes on lots of levels. There is a lot more emphasis on ethics in the review rather than the mechanics of undertaking research. The value of the research, what can be practically done to provide that value, alongside the

assurance of reasonable safety, within that. Historically, people have seen the ethics review more as an administrative, risk assessment process where universities or institutions would review applications to ensure the risk to the institution, researchers and participants is negated. That is important, of course, as we want to ensure safety as much as possible in the process. However, there are hard problems that have to be explored in research, and it's not always possible to reduce risks to 'zero' percent, so sometimes we have to accept that there will be risks whilst trying to address these problems. The research ethics review, the principles that have been put forward and the process of review, is about putting everything into context. It is not about whether a research proposal is approved or not to proceed based on whether there are any risks present. It is about discussing what the risks are, how can safety be maximally attained in context, whilst addressing real problems in the world through the research. It's about discussing to what extent any identified risks are acceptable given the potential benefits and significance of outcomes from the proposed research, and how research participants, communities, and stakeholders have been enabled and empowered to contribute to that discussion and related decision-making, be it on an individual or societal level.

There have been fairly recent revisions to the National Statement (National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research) and in terms of Indigenous research there has been the revision of the AIATSIS guidelines, which are now—as of 2020—formally a code (The AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research). UTS was quite involved in that review process back in 2019 and it was fantastic to have a voice at that consultation table. The AIATSIS guidelines, now a code, have always been a really wonderful resource for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers. The 2019 revisions made it clear that following the code is not optional, it's not just a guideline recommendation or something to flag in the background. It says that these principles need to be front and centre, this is how research proposals need to be framed, it's best practice, reflecting the appropriate way of undertaking research in this space. A key revision in the translation of the guideline into a code in 2019, was the consolidation of the four overarching

governing principles. They are very easy to find online and are supported by a guide that demonstrates to researchers how you can practically align your research activities to these principles. Everyone is in agreement with the principles, you don't find researchers that disagree with the principles, everyone is committed to them. However, researchers often struggle to demonstrate to an ethics committee how they are practically acting on those principles—what exactly are they doing to apply these principles. Again, through meaningful engagement and collaboration at the start, researchers will easily identify what Indigenous communities and organisations expect of them in this regard.

More generally, I also think there is better cultural awareness within research. In Australia, we have a lot of interest in undertaking research in people from different ethno-cultural backgrounds, whether we are talking about our First Nations people or whether we are talking about people who have migrated to Australia within our modern history, in recent decades. There is generally a lot more engagement with concepts of culture, ethnicity and diversity, which has had an impact on the way people approach research. There is better consideration of how research needs to be conducted in a culturally sensitive way, respecting the diversity in people's lived experiences, expectations, and understandings, as well as the need to engage people from those different ethno-cultural groups within the research process. This engagement relates to both diversity among the co-researchers as well as in seeking guidance from community groups around the conduct of the research. Collectively, there have been changes both from a societal perspective and from a research ethics perspective, particularly in the last five years. There has been quite a tangible shift in attitudes, sensitivities, and understanding.

RQ What is the common misconception about ethics and ethics applications in people's attitudes toward them?

BB Fortunately, there has been a change in mindset. Historically, people have seen the research ethics process as another layer of administration and bureaucracy, because it is another formal step prior to physically starting the research

project. It is not an insignificant step for researchers to have to go through. There is a form that needs to be filled in, papers and documents that need to be provided, a process of formal review, often followed by researchers having to respond to specific committee queries, and then a final approval step. We still get researchers with a mindset of, I know what I'm doing in my research, why do I need to fill in another form to tell a committee that doesn't have my expertise about what I'm doing? Why do I need another committee to be telling me whether I can or can't do my research? That mindset does still exist in some settings, however it is rapidly changing.

The first thing I would say to those questions is that the ethics of research is not separate to the conduct of the research. It is not a standalone step that you have to go through at the end of everything else, as a tick box, administrative exercise to get the green light to go ahead. Research ethics is fundamental to the process of undertaking research. When most people create a research proposal they are already thinking from an ethical perspective—for example, when they are describing the rationale for and significance of their research, the consultation and communication process, participant recruitment, reporting of research findings, potential for harm to those involved in the research—researchers aren't always aware that these are all part of the ethical considerations. Instead, they get to a final point in actioning their research where there is a formal process called the research ethics review and approval step, which they see as being something extra and quite separate, however, they have already been engaging in that process when planning out these aspects of their research.

It starts with understanding what your research is truly about, what has informed your research questions, who you have engaged to help clarify those research questions. The beneficence of the research is about ensuring that the conduct of and engagement of people in the research is actually informative and beneficial, outweighing any unavoidable risks. It is also about ensuring that people who may be affected by the research have the autonomy to participate in, and voice to influence, the research. This is the first step in preparing your research proposal, and most do consider this carefully, to at least some extent. For

example, the proposal describes the research question, provides a literature review, and canvases the research team's composition to confirm that there is relevant experience and/or engagement with the community. In the next step, the researcher has thought about their research method and how it is undertaken to engage people in a meaningful and safe way, so that participants feel their contribution is valued whilst minimising risks. And researchers do think about research dissemination, who is going to find out what the research outcomes are and how they will use the research findings to ensure impact and value.

Most researchers can competently complete these steps when they prepare their proposals, they just don't consciously see them as being ethical considerations. That is a reflection of our training process. We probably have not engaged enough in the broader research training and we don't use the word ethics as much as we should when discussing research. When we think about research design, we think more about the physical mechanics of recruiting participants to meet our sample sizes then collecting and analysing data, and we don't always see it through a human lens—and we consciously need to as those mechanical aspects are where researchers interact with and impact people. There are lots of ethical considerations within these mechanics—even sample size calculations are critically important to the ethical conduct of research. Ethics goes hand in hand with the process of designing the methods and mechanics of your research proposal. People just need to have a little bit more self-awareness around that, that that is what they are doing. Ethics review is not an extra step, it is inherent to what you are doing already.

The second thing I would say is, it is not really an approval process, even though we tend to call it that. It's an independent review of a research application to ensure that the research is undertaken to the highest ethical standards possible. The value in having an independent review, involving other experts as well as lay persons representing different parts of the community, is that you have many people with different viewpoints, ideas and strategies inputting into that application, providing suggestions about how we can attain those high ethical standards. That is what the ethics

review process should be seen as. How are we all viewing this research, especially if we were the recipients of it? Are we all on the same page with understanding this proposal, noting the potential diversity in expectations? And what are the opportunities for optimising the ethical conduct of the research? The review is about supporting the researchers in undertaking the proposal in the best way possible to optimise the outcomes for all of the people who are engaged with the research.

We appreciate that when you complete an ethics application, it can feel like a series of checkboxes, and I've been in that mindset too as a researcher. Like anyone else, if you ask me to fill in another form of any kind, I will probably roll my eyes initially as well. We all have plenty of administrative tasks and related workloads that we have to manage. However, the ethics review process is an important one. The best way to approach it is to keep in mind that you have already worked out most of your research proposal before you get to the ethics application form and then all you are doing is simply relaying that information back to a committee. Remember that when you are putting information into those boxes on the ethics application form, it needs to collectively tell a story from beginning to end. That is how the committee looks at the application. Fill in the boxes, but go back and reread the inputs, and think about how the information in these fields will be interpreted by somebody who is looking at this fresh for the first time and who perhaps knows nothing about this research area and perhaps doesn't understand your research methods. Can they understand what this story is?

RQ Do you think UTS runs a more thorough or clearer process than others?

BB I have been on other research ethics committees, so I have a frame of reference, however I have not sat on any Indigenous research ethics committees. The UTS approach is unique in the sense that we are much more engaged in the research ethics process via our openness to conversations

with researchers. We engage a lot more directly with researchers to better understand their research, what they are trying to do. We encourage researchers to engage with us at the very beginning of their research and make contact with the ethics office, even before receiving funding, so that we can support them through the process. We'll arrange to have a meeting with them, work through their proposals, exchange information, and give them lots of practical advice on how to do things. We make ourselves available to review documents for their studies and provide detailed guidance around that. We can also identify other researchers across the university who may be able to provide advice around specific types of methods—we're fortunate at UTS that we have a community of researchers who generously share their expertise across disciplines.

We also support researchers by having ethics applications pre-reviewed by the Secretariat prior to their submission to the ethics committee so that any obvious ommissions can be addressed early—this prevents the "to-ing and fro-ing" between researchers and the committee that sometimes happens during the review process. We also follow up with the researchers at the end of the formal committee review and make ourselves available to clarify the committee's discussion comments and suggestions. We get amazing feedback from our researchers about that level of engagement. Once researchers have had a conversation with us they really change their minds around what we are about and what we are trying to achieve. It's a very supportive process.

We have our co-committees like the Indigenous Research Advisory Panel, which we rely on quite heavily for their expertise. There is a lot of information exchange between this panel and the ethics committee, which is unique to UTS. That makes our process much more collaborative in moving research forward. We are probably less strict than most committees. A lot of external committees will very quickly reject an application outright at the first step in the submission process, and send it back to researchers before it's even made its way to a committee. UTS researchers have a lot more engagement with the committee across the whole ethics review process, to expedite review and the start of the

research project. People have much more interaction with us where it is needed.

UTS is in the unique position of having a very diverse research portfolio and one that is well complemented by strong industry and community partnerships. You do not see this in a lot of universities, even those that are research intensive. We see a different type of research at UTS, research that is community-based and committed to practical outcomes, less so on understanding or developing theories. This makes the ethics process really worthwhile for us when reviewing proposals—we can immediately see the translation of the research into practical outcomes. There is a strong design commitment from the community to help our research move forward. UTS has a very strong research office, research ethics unit and committed ethics Secretariat managed by a dedicated research ethics manager. There is a whole range of support and resourcing to help us drive research forward.

It is wonderful to see the university invest so much into this. There is not only a commitment, but resources available to drive forward the UTS Indigenous Research Strategy and related research portfolio within that. However, it is also the uptake of the strategy and available resources by UTS researchers that supports the process and enables positive outcomes. You can make resources available, but if people are not engaged enough to use them you are not going to get any of the desired outcomes. We have both resources available and researchers who are hugely responsive to and engaged with them. Both aspects are working really well in tandem. We are seeing successes at the moment. The amount of Indigenous research ethics applications that have come through in the last twelve months has significantly increased compared to the last five or six years. It is also big-ticket research, not just pilot studies, or initial preliminary studies undertaken by students, we are talking about large, nationwide projects that have been competitively funded through large government grants. They are projects with impact that are going to make a real difference and it is really pleasing to see UTS leading that.

RQ You spoke about ethics being relationship building with your participants, building trust and having that in your research. I wonder if you could speak to relationship building as work within the university and the time it takes to do?

BB It is more difficult to undertake research with the changing academic environment, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are limited external resources, more pressure on university staff to do a lot more as part of their day-to-day work. All of that does make it harder, there is a lot more pressure. However, it also means that investing in relationship building, establishing those collaborations and partnerships, really engaging at the front end of the research process, is more important than ever—there needs to be a conscious decision to invest real time and real effort in this process. These cannot be tokenistic activities if you want your research to succeed in addressing real world problems and in undertaking research that's going to have an impact.

These are fundamental steps in the process, and they can't be cut short. If you go through a tokenistic framework to make it look like you have engagement, once you start undertaking that research, it will very quickly unravel. We know that as it can be seen through the lack of participant recruitment, or when your collaborators start to disengage, or when there is a lack of quality and integrity in your data, and you don't get the outcomes you ultimately require. You may not be able to get the research published, because people can't see the value of it, or you can't get any uptake of your research findings into policy, or the translation into practical that is needed from that particular research.

The consultation and engagement process is a fundamental step, you have to work at it and it requires effort. If you meaningfully make that investment at the front end everything else that follows from that will be a much smoother and efficient process. You will get your research impact. You don't want to be a researcher that goes through the motions, going through those checklists, being busy all the time, but really not getting any impact from your research. People who

collect publications, the “collectors”, may have lots of papers in low impact journals, the rungs on the board, as part of your track record. However what impact have they really had? That is why there’s a lot more attention now being paid to impact metrics. It doesn’t mean necessarily gaining citations in papers, but practically how are the research findings being taken up in the community, industry, practice? How are they being used? What you don’t want is to get to the end of a research project, analyse your data, and that’s the end—it goes no further than that.

RQ Do you have any additional reflections about Indigenous research and the ethics process that you would like to add?

BB One of the things that sticks in my mind about the Indigenous research space, is non-Indigenous researchers not having the awareness or understanding of when they need to think about the AIATSIS principles—or why the code even exists. We often get projects where people say in the application that the research is not about Indigenous people, Indigenous concepts or topics, but may incidentally involve Indigenous people. And, the researchers give no further consideration about the implications for Indigenous people who are recruited to the research, even incidentally. They do need to think about whether this could be a different experience for an Indigenous person? Would there be different considerations? Do I need to think about the way I’m asking questions or the information I’m gathering in a different way for these individuals? What might I get in terms of research findings? Would that have a different impact for people in an Indigenous community versus in a non-Indigenous one? We often have those conversations around our research ethics committee and when we go back to researchers they say it is not an Indigenous project. That is true. However, the participants may be Indigenous, as part of an open recruitment process where anybody can volunteer to participate.

I would encourage researchers to go back to the AIATSIS code for every research proposal. Knowing that Indigenous people could be participants in any study, researchers should go back to the code and read the introduction as a minimum.

Try and imagine the engagement of Indigenous people in the research project through that lens. We have open fields in the ethics application that ask people to speak to those considerations—what do they mean in the context of your specific study? How could you manage those considerations practically? Does it mean you might need to reframe the question, or have sensitivity to the responses? Are you—as a researcher—appropriately experienced and qualified to interpret the responses? Maybe those participants need more support or guidance? Maybe you need to engage an Indigenous person who can represent the community and be able to provide some expert guidance around the research—its conduct and interpretation of findings—or to serve as a point of referral if somebody needs support. The practical actions taken around these considerations can be quite simple. They are not complicated actions to engage with stakeholders or community representatives as a starting point. And, it is demonstrating in an ethics application that you have both thought about the considerations and actively addressed them. You show you are sensitive to where there might be a different experience for those participants. The next step is asking how can you make the research safer, and a more positive and meaningful experience, for those people. After all, research is about helping to imp- rove the way we live—so, we need to consider the specific and unique needs of those with the li- ved experience and enable them to drive the r- esearch. As a researcher—yours is not the most important lens through which the research is viewed—it is the community’s.

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Learning from Country

MARANA DYARGALI

Katrina Thorpe

Interviewed By:

Professor
Susan Page

Dr Katrina Thorpe is the Chancellor's Post-doctoral Indigenous Fellow at the Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges (CAIK) at the University of Technology Sydney. We talk to Katrina about her research project called Learning from Country in Teacher Education in Australia and Canada. The project's focus is on enabling the voices of Aboriginal people to be heard in relation to working with pre-service teachers around learning on Country.

"Yarns are really about hearing stories of experience and having the reflective conversations and dialogue."

Katrina discusses the research design and processes that support community-led partnerships in the research. This includes building reciprocal research relationships to give community members the time needed to be involved in decision-making, for example in reviewing documents and works-in-progress. These are ongoing relationships that stretch out beyond the ethics consent process to keep community informed and in the driving seat. Katrina's approach to ethics is that it is not a one-time thing, it is something that is constantly being negotiated with community research partners throughout the life of the project and beyond.

About Katrina

Dr Katrina Thorpe (Worimi, Port Stephens NSW) is the first Chancellor's Postdoctoral Indigenous Fellow at the Centre for the Advancement of Indigenous Knowledges. Katrina's research will focus on examining innovative educational approaches that engage teacher education students in "Learning from Country" experiences in Australia and Canada.

Katrina is passionate about developing culturally responsive pedagogies that facilitate connections between students and Aboriginal people, communities and Country. In her work she continues to support future and in-service teachers who are developing an Aboriginal education activist identity and want to connect with others who share a commitment to social justice in Aboriginal education. Katrina has 20 years experience teaching mandatory Indigenous Studies across a number of disciplines including education, social work, nursing, health and community development.

Interview between Professor Susan Page & Dr Katrina Thorpe

SP Can you tell us about your research, what led you to it?

KT My research has been fermenting as an idea for probably two decades or more. I've been involved in teacher education over this period, teaching mandatory Indigenous Studies units and taking students out on Country to learn from Aboriginal Elders and community members working in a range of different government and non-government organisations. I've had some wonderful opportunities, particularly in elective units, to enhance student learning by going out with Elders to learn the different layers of meaning of Country in the city. Students often hold a stereotype that Aboriginal people predominantly live in the "the outback" or in rural areas, so it's essential that preservice teachers start to think about all the places around us as being Aboriginal Country—there is a long history and connection to place wherever you are in the Australian continent. So with that in mind, it's important to educate the future generations of teachers about that and inspire them to engage with Aboriginal communities, build relationships and find ways to build Aboriginal perspectives into their teaching.

My research grew from my personal experiences at school, university and later my teaching at university. Teacher educators who work in Aboriginal education are always thinking about ways to engage students, particularly the resistant students, or students who have never met an Aboriginal person. We often hear from preservice teachers that they've never had the opportunity to meet an Aboriginal person. Learning from Country is a way of connecting people personally and building relationships. One of the things that is reinforced in educational policy is that to become an effective teacher, you need build relationships with parents and communities. The research is also a way of discovering how teacher educators can model those relationships to preservice teachers and inspire them to work with Aboriginal people when they start teaching. The research began by wanting to know more about what the preservice teachers are experiencing and learning when they go out onto Country with Aboriginal people.

Initially, when we interviewed preservice teachers about their learning experiences while on Country, we could see that it was quite transformational for those students Then, as we were working with Aboriginal people, it was essential to hear their voices as well. Rightly, much educational research about going out on Country has focused on student learning and some teacher educators have written about the significance of taking students onto Country from their professional lens. In my project at UTS, and with a team of cross-instititional researchers, my research has shifted focus to include deeper engagement with Aboriginal communities, educators and Elders to hear their voices. This focus has become important—to think about Aboriginal voices, Aboriginal self-determination, the significance of the learning experiences, and the engagement with preservice teachers from Aboriginal community perspectives. To hear what knowledge and experiences they are hoping to impart in relation to Country—for example their knowledge of local political histories or the ecology of the places that we're visiting. We are really interested in hearing what community members hope to get out of it, what legacy they hope to leave.

Some of the Elders that we work with have had quite difficult experiences in education, so they're passionate when they talk to preservice teachers. As one of the Elders said, in a recent interview, there's not a lot of time, there's no need to dilly dally around, we need to get straight to the point and tell the truth. They see it as a way of subverting all the layers required to have Aboriginal perspectives included in a classroom, they can talk straight to the future teachers and have their voice heard.

SP Can you tell us a little bit more about that relationship building, how did you begin those relationships in the research process?

KT The relationships have been built through prior connections and long held relationships that my colleagues and I have with individuals and organisations. Some of the

Aboriginal students we taught as preservice teachers are now in schools, however some have gone on and created their own businesses, which have an education offshoot as well.

It's from these connections where people are embedded in local schools and communities, and are part of the community for example through sport, volunteer work, or friends of friends. It grows, as you become connected with people in the community and we are hopefully part of the community in that way as well.

SP Can you tell me about some of the challenges?

KT This year, there have been big challenges, because one part of my work, one project that I'm trying to get up and running, has been affected by Covid. But in another way, it's opened up new opportunities as well, so that's been quite exciting.

The international component of my research suddenly fell away as Covid impacted on place-based teaching and international travel was banned. To get some exercise while in lockdown, I happened to be walking near my home and noticed a new Aboriginal artwork that may be an appropriate location for a placebased learning experience. I reached out to the organisation that developed the art project and from this contact, I now have another research area to explore—it's exciting. So even though I had difficulty due to Covid, it has opened up another locally based research project. You never know where a challenge might lead if you think about other ways of redirecting your energy, time, and knowledge.

My new project is emerging from our ongoing conversations—discussing ways we can connect, work together and support each other's work. It's been a conversation about what my research interests are, what research opportunities can come from the support of UTS and exploring what kinds of research processes and outcomes would be of benefit to the work they are doing in their local context. For example, we've been exploring research ideas that can help the community apply for funding. I had some good news the other day that the people I'm working with have sourced some funding for a 'placemaking' project.

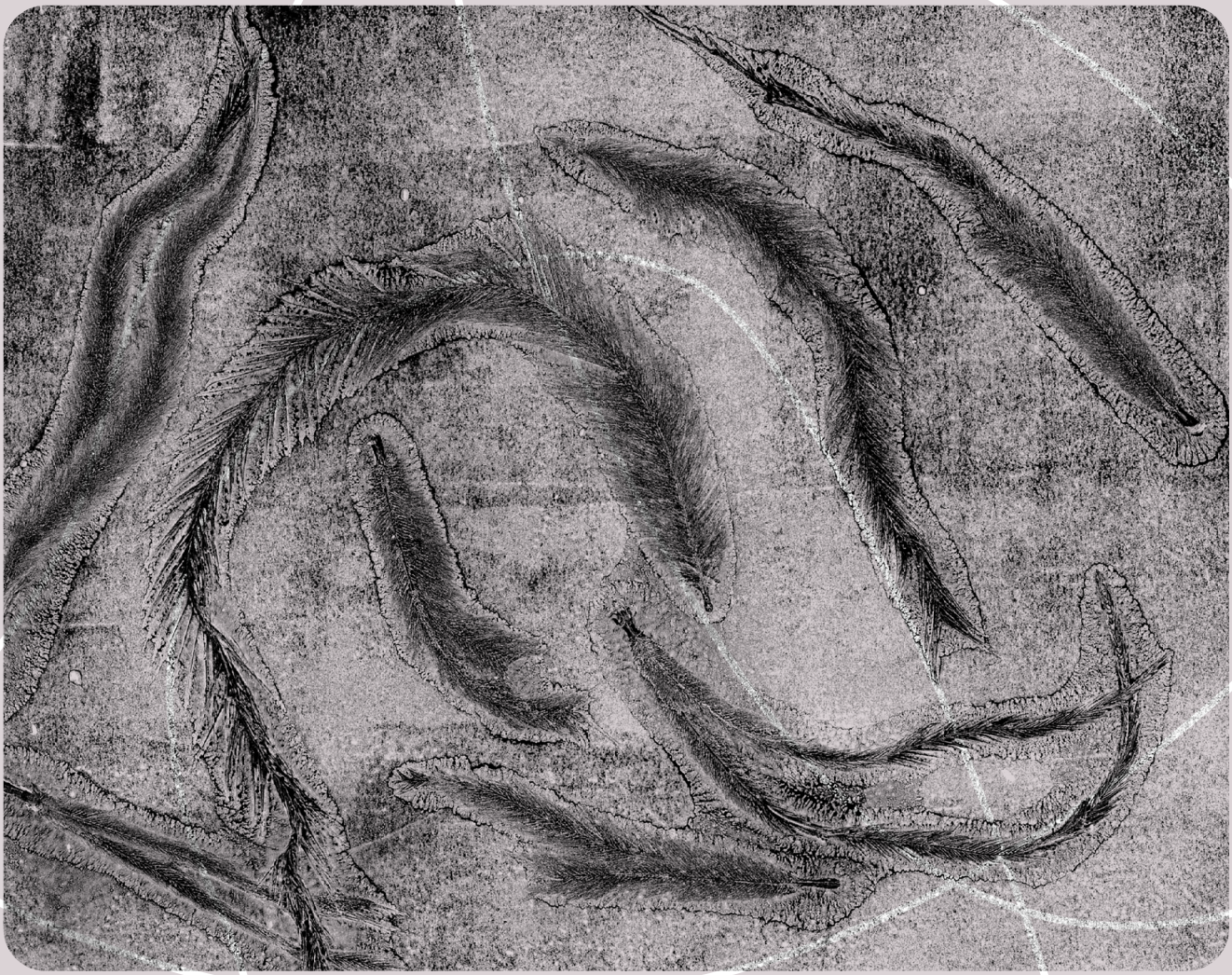
We're going to meet next week to talk about how we might conduct research as this project unfolds, documenting the stages that we're going through in placemaking and building knowledge around this particular site. That's quite exciting. We haven't worked out what exactly we're researching yet, but that's part of the conversation. It's about acting as a team, bringing our particular knowledges and skills together to work out how it can benefit both parties. It's reciprocal in that way.

I think in terms of ethics, that's a fundamental part of the process, and that takes time. That's the other challenge, the time that it takes. For example, I have a project where I wanted to get some interviews done a few weeks ago and time is ticking with the funding that I have. There are deadlines, but I see the benefit in taking more time. To have those conversations about working out the best ways forward, I think the project will be stronger in the long run if I don't push them to fit to the university deadlines.

People are busy. That's another challenge. The people that I'm working with all have careers and jobs that they're busy at too. Everyone's got competing demands. You have to find ways to keep chipping away and connecting. When I say chipping away, I mean with our ideas. Keeping the ideas on the agenda and having those conversations, meeting up and writing together. That's the other thing that I found quite useful, just having a shared document that we can dump some ideas in. Community partners do not necessarily want to write in the academic style, so they put their ideas down, and then I write it up, get their feedback on it, and it keeps documentation of our thoughts. In the end, we might be able to share with other people who may wish to do similar Learning from Country experiences, or placemaking, in a broad sense.

SP Is there anything else that you'd like to say about the way that you've thought about ethics in this project?

KT There's the formal ethics process that you go through with the university. It can be quite frustrating at times. I've found the UTS Ethics Committee very helpful in answering questions, and it does hone your thinking as well. Sometimes you might skip over an area, particularly even with things like



the consent forms. For example, with the local organisation I'm working with, the Aboriginal person that I'm working with was quite happy to give me some phone numbers and email addresses of potential participants. Because she's worked with them, she knows them very well and trusts me. She trusts me to contact them because we have a trust relationship. However, as the Ethics Committee pointed out, that really should be at arm's distance. So instead I will now get my Aboriginal colleague that I'm working with at the organisation to email the potential participants so there is no coercion.

It's an important process as it stops tricky situations from arising. The ethics process is really important in pointing out things that you may inadvertently do that are not appropriate, even though you are acting ethically in other areas. You are in a process with the people and organisations that you're working with. You've built trust, you're ensuring that your research brings reciprocal outcomes and is Aboriginal led, however there are still little things that you might miss. I think the ethics process helps you to pick up on those, to have another eye, or many eyes, reading over your document can give you some good insights.

SP Have you completed any data collection for the project?

KT Yes, I've done a lot of data collection with teacher educators. We have undertaken the interviews using Yarning as a method for data collection. It's been really useful for me, you have your research questions that outline the key areas that you're hoping to address, but those yarns, even on Zoom this year, have been very successful. Having people share their own story and expanding in their own way on the research themes.

The yarns have enabled a reflective moment for the teacher educators that I've been interviewing. People get so busy so the discussion points—the yarns have provided the opportunity to take time out and reflect. I've had feedback from the teacher educators that makes me think more about what I'm doing in terms of a decolonising project, and the significance of the work that I'm doing. They're reflecting on the semester, or the work that they're doing, and people are walking away, feeling quite pleased when reflecting on their achievements in spite of the challenges.

It is a privilege to have those deep conversations about the ways people are thinking about the work that they do. Conversations about what kind of future they're hoping to create for our future teachers, the Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students in the classroom. I think people have always got those perspectives in mind.

SP How are you planning to share your findings?

KT There are different ways that I'm going to be sharing the findings and it depends of the project.

There are the traditional ways the research will be shared, for example I've just signed a book contract with three other colleagues and I will also be publishing in peer reviewed journals and presenting at conferences. However with the locally based project that I've just started with my colleagues, they inform me that although the organisation is not strictly an education provider, teachers nevertheless call them asking for help on how to embed Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum. We're therefore going to provide links from their organisation to our *Learning from Country in the City* website, so teachers can make contact with Aboriginal Elders and community workers who are doing this work on Country. It will also be a way of connecting teachers to some resources. But

otherwise, I am still gaining permissions to share the findings, so there is not a lot more I can say at this stage until I work this out with my colleagues.

SP That's an interesting point because ethics is not a static thing as there are ethical decisions to be made along the way of a research project that are not decided at the beginning in an ethics form.

KT Definitely, it is an area where you have to maintain reciprocal relationships with community partners and check in with them, for example to see that it's okay to share certain information. Community partners are so busy that sometimes they take time to get back to you and it might hold something up. Still, you have to go with that and accept it as part of the process and wait before you share that information. I have to wait for someone to find the space in their day to read something and respond. Waiting for that process to unfold is challenging in the university setting.

This process can also delay research publications. That's why I've been talking about other outputs, because even though some of those outputs may not be academic papers, which is an important part of the research, I also have to find ways that we could share what we were doing in other forums that are useful for people that I'm working with—for example a story in the local newspaper, or creating resources on the website. I am trying to work out how to share knowledge in different ways that will benefit all of the stakeholders in the research. That takes time as well, but it's exciting. That's the privilege of it all, that you can sit down and have a conversation with people and think about how you're going to influence the wider community's understanding about the knowledge and information that is out there in the Aboriginal community.

It's about raising awareness, bringing people on board, teachers on board in a way that the community are happy with because the community are the knowledge holders. That's the other important part of my research, finding out from the knowledge holders how they want their knowledge of Country shared in specific educational contexts to ensure, for example, that teachers don't come in and misrepresent Aboriginal knowledge to their students. As teachers and researchers in this space we have the opportunity to model ethical practice to preservice teachers. Ultimately we want them to work alongside Aboriginal knowledge holders. It is about developing the protocols and knowledge about specific places that teachers and students can visit. Each place might have its own kind of protocol that teachers need to be aware of.

SP Would you like to share any further thoughts on ICIP and protocols around intangible knowledge, which you've just spoken about when designing a process between your research and the Elders? How did you negotiate rights with the Elders you work with?

KT We have built ways of protecting Aboriginal knowledge holders intellectual property in our research. That is through organising a number of yarning circles, where we give Elders time to have looked over their transcripts. Elders have been able to look at the emerging themes themselves and discuss with us what they want represented from their transcript. It's not just a matter of sending someone back their transcript and looking over it and asking what they want to changed? It is not a yes, or no, experience. It is a process that takes time. We took a day sitting with Elders and community workers with the transcripts, talking about the research and where we're up to. We asked questions about what key themes they wanted to see us write about from their transcript. I think that's very important for the people that we're working with, to get a bit more of an insight into the research process as well. They can see and write things up for themselves when we talk about themes. Community partners have been quite happy to do that. We also make sure in that process that the Elders are paid for their advice and input. Being paid for their time becomes part of the research process as well.

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Aboriginal Political Histories in New South Wales

MARANA DYARGALI

Heidi Norman

Interviewed By:

Professor
Susan Page

Heidi Norman is a Professor at the University of Technology Sydney in Social and Political Sciences. Heidi's research is in the field of Aboriginal Political History, where she has focused increasingly on land and land justice in the context of Aboriginal worlds today.

In this chapter, Heidi shares approaches to research at the interface of community and the academy.

"As researchers, we walk a fine line in order to feel and realise the integrity of our research. It is often the case that we are serving two masters: one is the intellectual project of the academy and the other is contributing to the knowledge and empowerment of your own communities and the people you work with. Sometimes those two masters are on the same page, but not always"

Heidi discusses how her work in the Aboriginal history field opens up opportunities for communities to have their efforts and perspectives published and recognised; how research that engages actively with community informants and voices contributes to the history of ideas and can impact public policy.

About Heidi

Professor Heidi Norman is a leading Australian researcher in the field of Aboriginal political history. Her research sits in the field of history and draws on the cognate disciplines anthropology, political-economy, policy studies and political theory.

Her work includes a political history of Aboriginal land rights in NSW ('What Do We Want?...'), history of the NSW Annual Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout, the interface of settler and Aboriginal economies and media narratives of Aboriginal self-determination. She was awarded the UTS research excellence medal for collaboration (2015), National Teaching Excellence Award (2016), Gough Whitlam Research Fellow (2017-18) and in 2018 she was announced as a 'Top 5' ABC humanities researcher. She is a descendant of the Gomeroi people from North Western NSW, a member of AIATSIS and convener of the 'Indigenous Land and Justice Research Group'.

Interview between Professor Susan Page & Professor Heidi Norman

SP Can you talk to us about how you have built your research relationships, stakeholder engagement, consultation, negotiation, protocols and anything of that nature?

HN I have focused most of my work in New South Wales and I do that for a few reasons. One is because I have family from New South Wales, so it makes sense to me to do work where I have those familial links. I tend to have a little bit of a bias towards places where I have familial links, and although not in an overt way, there tends to be natural gravitation to understanding more about what happened on Gomeroi lands, on the grasslands country in North-Western NSW. In my research I focus on Aboriginal history. My work is therefore concerned with political movements for change, social justice including recognition, rights, adjustment, and Aboriginal futures. Most of my work is concerned with on the ground approaches and responses to these concerns, along with how the state has responded to the kinds of recognition Aboriginal peoples have insisted upon and the place of Aboriginal people in the polity and economy.

As researchers, we walk a fine line in order to realise a sense of integrity about our research. You can often feel that you are serving two masters: one is the intellectual project of the academy and the other is contributing to the knowledge and empowerment of your own communities and the people you work with. Sometimes those two masters are on the same page, but not always. Most of my research is fieldwork based where I conduct interviews and observation; I love talking to people, or more so, I love listening to the stories. In relation to my current research with Local Aboriginal Land Councils, it's amazing to hear what land councils are doing. Most Land Councils are overstretched and under resourced and yet they are doing the most incredible work.

In my observation, the academy is never in front of big ideas and shifts, but instead the real action is outside the academy and can be seen in local and on smaller scales, where challenges, for example, race relations, political power, economic futures and the environment are engaged with. Research can be a kind of conduit, if you like, between the kind of activism that significantly contests the ideas I hear in the academy and in the work I hear about through my field research.

For example, in the academy, there have been debates about Aboriginal history. In the 1990s the debate was bifurcated as black armband and white blindfold. There is also a debate over the characterisations of Aboriginal worlds at 1788 that hinge on accepted definitions of hunter-gatherers and farmers. Rarely are the complexity and reality of Aboriginal worlds fully explored in these debates, in fact as Aboriginal people, we are more likely to be treated as observers of these debates, or objects of study. Yet, if we consider the kinds of activities Aboriginal Land Councils are engaged with, we comprehend that these are leading institutions in many towns and communities. Land Councils are sites for gathering and have their own kind of convening power. Across the Land Council network, significant labour is underway in the field of Aboriginal history: consider how Land Council members are looking after old cemeteries, putting interpretation signs up at missions, at former Aboriginal cotton chipping camps; are overseeing the return of their Ancestral Remains from institutions. These few examples hint at a very radical version of what it is to be Aboriginal and what is important and valued Aboriginal history and heritage at the local level.

That is what interests me as a researcher: what people are doing in their local community and how this in turn challenges, or perhaps elaborates, accepted ideas in history and political power. I appreciate that at the community level, there is not always a suspicion of research. There is a real interest in wanting to tell your story and for it to be published. People are keen for others to know what they are doing and why it matters.

SP How do you build those relationships with the people in the Land Councils? Are they people that you already know from your PhD?

HN It takes time. I have been working in the area of Aboriginal community history for more than 20 years. People are open to meeting with me because they are familiar with the research already produced. I have a few protocols that I follow in my own research. For example, I return work for review, I treat participants in my research as intellectuals, with agency and purpose.

More broadly, doing community level research I am often challenged to ask: what is history? How do we seek to represent our past? Who needs to be included? How do we navigate the different fault lines that have been introduced into our community? How do we navigate the diasporic nature of our community? I see these as challenging concepts that reveal a very sophisticated and complex undertaking at the local level as you negotiate ways to tell your own history.

SP I can see that you're really passionate about people and you love hearing the stories. How did you come to develop the research idea and focus on Aboriginal history and specifically Aboriginal land?

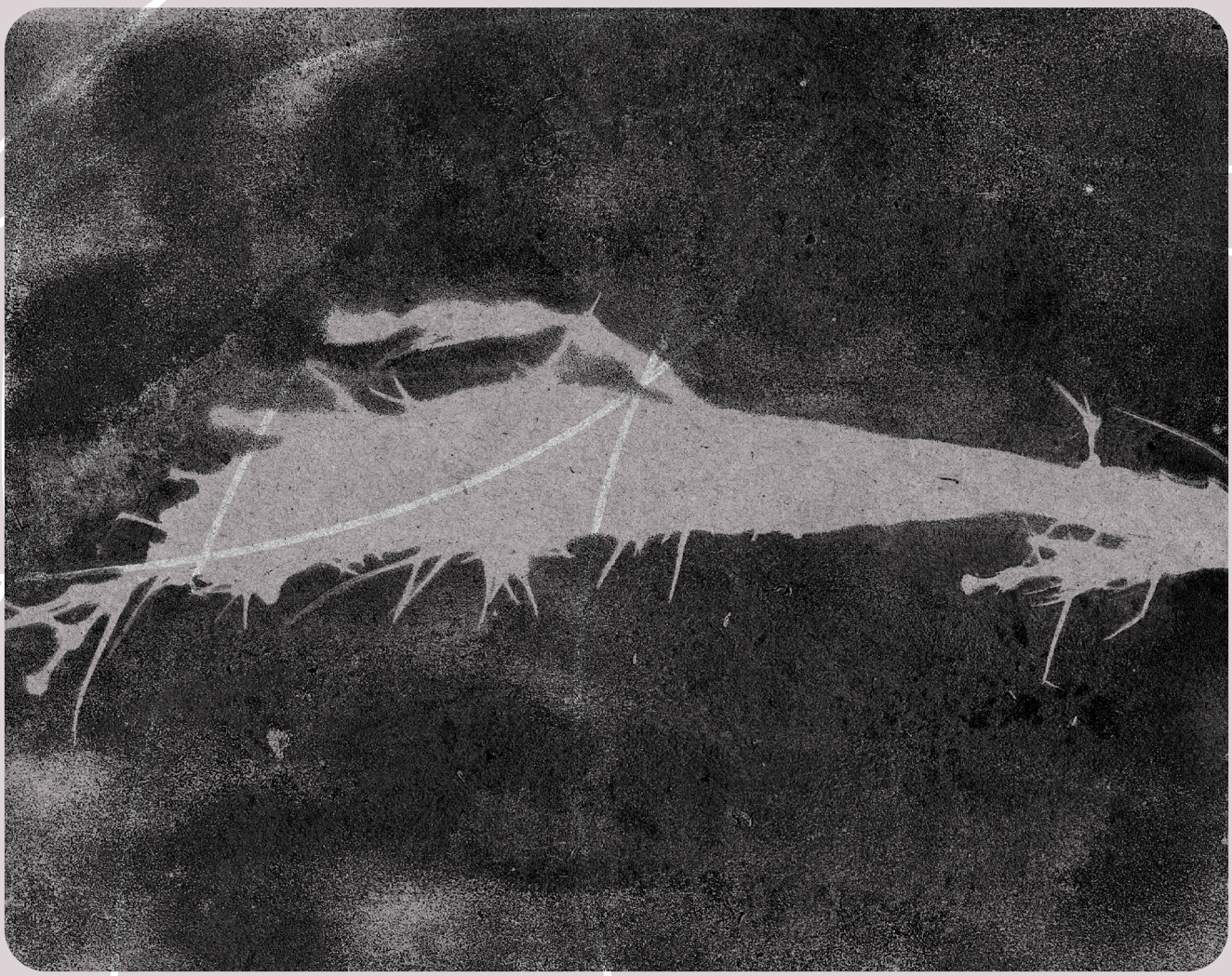
HN Land rights was the big political campaign then, always and in different ways, today. The rally cry: What do we want? Land Rights. The relative simplicity of this demand captured something very powerful and complex that went to the heart of colonial power and for an alternate and abiding reality. The interest and willingness of a colonial system to negotiate the pre-condition of its social, economic and political power was sure to disappoint. Having said that, the laws that established recognition of Aboriginal land justice in New South Wales have endured since 1983. It's in this legislative environment where we see continued effor to realise community aspirations for social, political and economic autonomy.

SP Would you like to reflect on developing projects, research design, ICIP, ethical guidelines and timeframes?

HN You have to trust and back yourself when you are doing research. If something does not feel right, if you do not feel a sense of authenticity, then listen to that. You want to be sure there is community benefit and there is a contribution to the intellectual project that we get paid for by the University. If you want to be a community historian, you could do that as well, however, that is not necessarily the work that takes place in the academy. There is also the task of contributing new knowledge and participation in broader intellectual debates.

There is a certain amount of magic, or perhaps luck, that goes with research. It might be that you stop to chat to a colleague, family member or friend who in the course of the conversation directs you to a vital research making photo, archive or contact. These sort of exchanges happened when I was doing the research on the Knockout and also the political history of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. In the case of the ALRA when I met with the former Members of the NSW Parliament they explained to me that they had been waiting for this moment—for a researcher to come along and proceeded to haul out boxes and boxes of archives—all gold for a researcher like me! They talked for hours into my recorder and shared files only they had copies of. Both of the MPs I refer to here sadly passed away not long after the work was finished.

There is a real responsibility when you do this work and there is quite a bit of anxiety you have with that. In writing up that history of land rights from the late 1970s onwards, it had simply not been documented. This was the case also in the history of the Knockout. There continues to be a lot of historical research needed, however it does make you feel anxious at the prospect of putting this down on paper of getting the story right and honouring the people who so generously spend their time sharing aspects of the story and events. You have to accept that you will miss people out of the story, someone will get offended or someone will feel they were not included. You have to accept that a lot of



this work is 'towards a history', not a definitive history. I called that first study of the Koori Knockout, 'A modern day Corroboree: towards a history of the New South Walks Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout' (Norman, 2006), probably because I was younger and less certain and acutely aware of the process of research and responsibility of writing up that tends to set accounts of the past in stone. There wasn't a risk of inaccuracy because I was drawing on archives and testimonies, however research can also shape people's perception of an event. In that work, I foregrounded the founders of the Knockout, because it was important to see why they formed the Knockout. There remains work to be done on how the Knockout changed over time to enrich that earlier research as well.

SP How did you go about collecting data?

HN I am working within an anthropology, history and political theory frame. What I do is referred to as ethnography and involves in-depth interviews and participant observation. I try and build into my work creative accounts of my own reflections on being in a place. I did that with the report on 'The Death on the Darling'(Norman 2019) when I wrote about the Darling River. I thought about my own visceral response to this absolute tragedy before my own eyes, of this deep, magnificent river bone dry. It was a deathbed of fish, mollusks and turtles. The essay on the Darling River drew on ethnographic research and included reflecting on my own responses and observations as well as in-depth interviews. You can include your observations of the depth of feeling of other people as well. I thought it was important for the reader to know the absolute grief that was running through people's bodies.

I have explained that my research involves in-depth interviews and observations (and archival research). When it comes to in-depth interviews, in my experience, community members are often keen to have interviews recorded, with audio and video. They like to have edited versions of that material returned to them for their use. They might want to put these up on their website or use them in social media. You are gathering research material, however community also want that research material they can repurpose for their own work. Out at Wilcannia, they were keen to have those recordings to share with people who come through the roadhouses, so they could tell their stories to travellers. I also draw on archives in my research and have spent many, many years at the New South Wales State Library. Loving the library and its fantastic librarians is critical for this aspect of your research. And returning your work and the materials you collect during field work, as an archive, ensures others who follow and community members can access material.

SP How do you translate, share and turn your results into action?

HN You can put research into government inquiries, you can share the recordings with community and return that research to them so that they can re-use the material for advocacy. You might make photographic essays for government inquiries and think about inputting your research in broader policy reform. I have been in the academy for more than two decades, so I've had time to build good links with New South Wales Aboriginal Affairs. I have been on their Research Advisory Committee, which means I have been in a position to contribute to the state's research agenda in relation to some key aspects of reform. I recently worked on a research paper with the AIATSIS for the Federal Government. The research paper on the National Resting Place to care for Ancestral Remains will be used to inform government discussion and announcements. That account will hopefully be used by the Prime Minister and the Aboriginal Affairs

Minister in the various announcements about a National Resting Place. Your work can be used as background briefing for parliamentarians and their advisors, shaping policy reforms within the New South Wales Government, or it can be shared with the Minister to pique high-level interest. We talked about research that is of use to community, your own community, research that advances new knowledge and then there is research that has impact (say in relation to public policy). Impact is a really good and measurable outcome of doing research.

SP You have talked about your career trajectory and your research trajectory. Are there any stories you think might be useful for students about unintended or unforeseen things? Or is there anything else you would like to add?

HN You do your best with research to make sure you honour the people who entrust you with their stories. It is highly likely you won't always agree, or that different versions of events might emerge in your interviews. There are ways you can capture these differences, especially as they reflect the ways that participants came to understand things in certain ways. For researchers starting out, we now have established and familiar pathways through the university research system. My central observation is that becoming a researcher takes time to build confidence and for your reputation too; you need to serve something of an apprenticeship, do plenty of listening and learning. You have to build up respect and credibility amongst your own people and that's also within the academy. I think it is important to quietly go about your work and build up your confidence. In this age of social media, there are a lot of bold comments and positions taken. I am much more inclined to have an appetite for the complexity, the minutiae and appreciation of the complex and contradictory positions often taken by community members. I look at moments such as the approval of Coal Seam Gas in the Pilliga Forest, where my Gomeroi family has enduring connections. On one hand, the presence

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During the writing of this book, we lost our dear colleague, Dr Dean Jarrett. Dean's research experience, his knowledge and insights are included here with his family's consent.

We miss you brother.

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The Indigenous Research Committee is a forum for the development and progression of Indigenous research across UTS. The committee is chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Research.

The Committee emerged in 2011 when Professor McDaniel, Pro Vice Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership and Education) advised UTS to institute a governance structure which sought to share the responsibility for Indigenous outcomes in the university more equitably between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. Professor McDaniel's immediate representative in relation to Indigenous research at UTS is Distinguished Professor Larissa Behrendt AO, Associate Dean Indigenous Research within the Office of the PVC ILE. Through the committee structure, Indigenous staff committee members guide the expenditure of supplementary federal funds for Indigenous Higher Degree Research, to be used for projects that benefit Indigenous research students. The committee is also an important place for exchanging ideas and progressing the spirit and objectives of the UTS Indigenous Education and Research Strategy.