



## Welcome to our first issue!

Womin Djeka! Welcome to the very first newsletter of the Ngarara Willim Centre at RMIT. We are pleased to be able to share our work with you, to promote Education and opportunities at RMIT and to highlight the achievements of our deadly Students, Staff, Alumni and Community.

The first few months of 2020 started strong for Ngarara Willim on the back of a successful year in 2019. In December we celebrated the achievements of 122 Graduates across both Vocational and Higher education programs at our Deadly Alumni End of Year Celebration.

Ngarara Willim city campus opened its doors to a newly renovated Centre that provides space and allows for a larger computer lab, extra study rooms, a larger social area and a shared kitchen. The new space allowed, the very first time, for the Ngarara Willim team to hold our Gama-dji Orientation program within our Centre. See more about Gama-dji on page 5.

We continued to appreciate our new space early in the year holding an on-campus experience for the National Indigenous Business Summer School (NIBSS) in collaboration with the University of Melbourne. See more on page 10.

We held a public lecture titled 'In Conversation: Critical Indigenous Studies' presented by Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton Robinson, Professor Brendan Hokowhitu and Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith in February. See more on page 8.

Early in the year Ngarara Willim celebrated the achievements and success of students engaged in the Career Trackers program. One student was awarded the 'Mark of Excellence - Internof the year'

and several students awarded 'Gold Diaries' for their distinction average or higher results for the year. The Ngarara Willim Centre also won the Career Trackers 2019 'University Partner' award for leading University.



The year had an impactful change in March when COVID-19 spread rapidly, and far and wide, and Ngarara Willim staff commenced working remotely. RMIT programs went online and we quickly moved forward with contacting all students. We checked in with students to support them through recent changes to study and providing support with access to resources to cater for online learning.

Ngarara Willim continue to deliver academic, social and cultural programs to our students and have adapted to remote working delivering initiatives online.

Recent times have been challenging, some are not coping as well as others, so please be mindful of that. Stay connected with us, with your family, with your friends and with your Community.

We look forward to providing you with updates on our activities throughout the year through our new Ngarara Willim Newsletter.





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## New students, new opportunities

The start of a new semester is always exciting, although this year has been a little more challenging than usual. Our new students are enrolled across a wide range of programs, from Nanotechnology to Fashion, and across all levels from VCE through to PhD. We welcomed the new students at the Gama-dji orientation dinner at Captain Melvilles with their families, and it was lovely to meet them and share a meal together.

We are well into first semester now, and it will soon be time to welcome more new students for Semester 2! Applications for mid year opened on 1 May. There are a range of programs open, opportunities to study for fun, to broaden your current field, or to try something new. If you're applying for a Vocational Education program or a bachelor degree, please make sure you also apply for the Indigenous Access Program (IAP). This will enable us to support you throughout the application and enrolment process. The IAP is for people who meet the prerequisites for their chosen program, and consideration is given to life, work and academic experience. There are also scholarships available to students commencing mid year, and there is something for everyone. We encourage all applicants to submit an application to receive a scholarship while they're studying. If you're unsure about where to begin your learning journey, you might want to consider a pathway. Feel free to reach out and discuss your options.

### Important Links

Programs offered mid year at RMIT:

[rmit.edu.au/midyear](https://rmit.edu.au/midyear)

Apply online (from 1 May):

[rmit.service-now.com/rmit-apply](https://rmit.service-now.com/rmit-apply)

Indigenous Access Program:

[rmit.edu.au/students/support-and-facilities/student-support/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-students/access-program](https://rmit.edu.au/students/support-and-facilities/student-support/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-students/access-program)

Pathways information:

[rmit.edu.au/study-with-us/applying-to-rmit/local-student-applications/pathways](https://rmit.edu.au/study-with-us/applying-to-rmit/local-student-applications/pathways)

Scholarships (follow the link, then click 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' to filter):

[rmit.edu.au/students/work-study-opportunities/scholarships/browse-scholarships](https://rmit.edu.au/students/work-study-opportunities/scholarships/browse-scholarships)

If you'd like more information about application, scholarships, pathways and access to study, please contact me directly. My name is Cathy Doe and you can reach me on **+61 3 9925 8807**, or via email at [cathy.doe@rmit.edu.au](mailto:cathy.doe@rmit.edu.au)





# Study Scholarships



## Study free at RMIT in Semester 2

Ngarara Willim at RMIT are offering a limited number of fee waiver scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members to support you to study in a vocational education program in Semester 2, 2020. Applications open May 1!

Build on or develop new skills through Vocational Education at RMIT in a wide range of areas including:

- Health
- Art
- Business
- Engineering
- Fashion
- Communication
- Design
- Education

...and many more which can be found on [rmit.edu.au/midyear](http://rmit.edu.au/midyear)

### How to apply:

1. Complete an application online for your desired course, click [here](#) for FAQ's about the application process.
2. Contact Ngarara Willim

If you are interested in studying in a vocational education program debt free, check out the list of courses available or contact Ngarara Willim to discuss your options on **9925 4885** or **0419 839 183** or via email at: [lewis.brown@rmit.edu.au](mailto:lewis.brown@rmit.edu.au)





# Ngarara Willim Renovation





# Gama- dji Orientation

We started off 2020 with a very successful Gama-dji Orientation to welcome our new students to RMIT and Ngarara Willim.

For the first time ever, we were able to hold the orientation program in our own Centre, which has been transformed by the recent renovations. We were fortunate to have a few of our current student leaders involved in both the Vocational Education (VE) and Higher Education (HE) orientation days to help keep everything running smoothly. Our student leaders shared some of their personal experiences at RMIT and engaged with the new students throughout the day.

The success of Gama-dji also relied upon the involvement of RMIT staff from across the university, who connected with our new students and shared vital knowledge and information to ensure success at RMIT. We also had several community organisations attend the HE orientation day where students were given the opportunity to make connections, learn about services that are available and chat about ways to get involved in the community.

The orientation culminated in our official Gama-dji dinner, where Ngarara Willim staff joined students and their families at Captain Melvilles in Melbourne city. The dinner was a wonderful way to get to know everyone and make connections that will continue to grow throughout each student's journey at RMIT.



## Ngarara Willim Tutoring

The Ngarara Willim Tutoring Program is a specialised tutorial program funded by the Commonwealth Government to improve the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people studying at RMIT.

During the closure of the University as a result of COVID-19, Ngarara Willim have responded promptly

to continuing to support students. This includes supporting student success through continuing to provide tutoring through online delivery.

If you require tutoring contact Simon on **9925 3567** or [ngararawillim.tutoring@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngararawillim.tutoring@rmit.edu.au)



# Research News

## Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson joins RMIT

Ngarara Willim are very pleased and excited to have Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson join us at RMIT as our first Indigenous Elder Scholar in Residence. Professor Moreton-Robinson is one of Australia's pre-eminent First Nations academics and was the country's first Indigenous Distinguished Professor. Most recently Professor Moreton-Robinson was the first Indigenous scholar elected from outside of the US into the American Academy of the Arts and Sciences which was founded in 1780. Professor Moreton-Robinson joins other international members who include Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King Jnr and Nelson Mandela.



## Congratulations to N'Arweet Carolyn Briggs on her PhD Completion



Congratulations to Aunty Carolyn Briggs on the successful completion of her PhD examination! Aunt achieved an outstanding C1 result (no amendments required).

We are all so very proud of you N'Arweet! We look forward to celebrating this wonderful achievement with you as soon as we can.

## Congratulations on confirmation of PhD Candidature

Congratulations to Shannon Kilmartin-Lynch who has recently passed his confirmation of PhD candidature. Shannon is an RMIT Vice Chancellors pre-doctoral research fellow studying a PhD on composite materials in concrete. Shannon's research involves incorporating Indigenous knowledge systems and raw methodologies, introducing them into concrete mix designs to aide with curing and reliability when using recycled materials as a replacement for natural aggregates.







# Studying Off Campus

Ngarara Willim have been looking into the Indigenous Programs that are run off campus for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in community and how support can be better accessed by these students.

In 2019/20 RMIT programs included Diploma of Community Services, Diploma of Alcohol and Other Drugs as well as Conservation and Land Management. Students have been studying in the Northern Territory, Regional Victoria and Melbourne (Dandenong and Preston) with more to come later in the year. Indigenous organisations partnering with RMIT in 2019/20 include: VACSAL, Dardi Munwurro and the Dandenong Co-Op.

To date we have been able to provide opportunities for these students to participate in the Gama-dji Orientation Program, Access academic support as well as customising career and employment information that's relevant to these students working in community.

Students, for the first time will benefit from scholarships, tutoring support, study tours as well as access to other services across the University that provide relevant assistance to meet student needs.

Students now have the opportunity to connect in a more meaningful way with RMIT and feel like they belong to the Ngarara Willim Community.

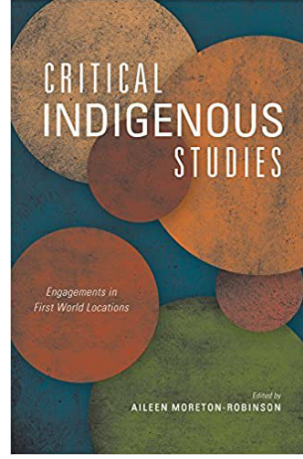
The newly renovated space at Ngarara Willim will also provide community the opportunity to come onto campus.

The group at VACSAL (Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd) graduated at the end of 2019, a proud moment for the students and their families, the community and RMIT University.

We look forward to celebrating with our graduates from this year's programs.



# In Conversation: Critical Indigenous Studies



Building on previous public talks hosted by the Office of Indigenous Education and Engagement, Ngarara Willim held an intimate panel conversation with three erudite Professors on the topic of Critical Indigenous Studies.

RMIT's Professor of Indigenous Research, Distinguished Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson

was joined by Professor Brendan Hokowhitu and Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith PhD, both from the Faculty of Indigenous Studies at New Zealand's University of Waikato.

The three Professors were in Melbourne editing a book, with Professor Steve Larkin, and Ngarara Willim were lucky enough to host the event in the new refurbished Ngarara Willim premises.

This new handbook changes the certainty of disciplinary knowledges produced in the 20th century when the study of Indigenous peoples, was to a large degree, the knowledge/power domain of non-Indigenous scholars. Scheduled to be released in 2021 from Academic Publisher, *Routledge*, it will also feature RMIT's Dr Crystal McKinnon.

Critical Indigenous Studies is expanding and establishing its' territory from Indigenous Studies through the work of a new generation of Indigenous scholars.

The audience listened to the main issues that Critical Indigenous Studies encompasses, the key challenges that conversationalists encounter, and what the future holds for this emerging discipline.

It was a full house and lots of interest for the conversation with audience members bringing insightful questions and four guests were fortunate to receive a signed book of a previous collaboration by the panellists.

Ngarara Willim looks forward to hosting more discussions like this in the future.

To attend future events like this, be sure to email us [ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au) or follow us on Eventbrite.





## VAHS Family Mixed Netball Carnival

In February, Ngarara Willim sponsored the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS) to host their 2nd VAHS Family Mixed Netball Carnival. A friendly event for families to come together and play against each other in a netball tournament, spreading the message of anti-smoking and a healthier lifestyle. This year, 18 teams were registered, separated in three groups of six teams to play in a tournament style competition.

Ngarara Willim were lucky enough to put in a team made up of staff, students and alumni to compete against 5 other teams in our group. The Ngarara Willim team showed great effort and continued to improve throughout the day, despite all these players not playing on the same team before!

## Wellness Packs for Community

The Ngarara Willim team, Yappera Children's Service and Djimba Consulting team are pleased to have created a "Wellness Package" for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families isolating at home and keeping their community safe. These packs are intended to provide families with useful information and activities for the kids. These packs include:

- Healthy snacks
- Activities
- An Eddie Betts, Eddies lil' Homies keyring and colouring activities
- Ngarara Willim Merchandise (pencil case, mini pencils, ruler, sticker, stress ball)
- A "Calm Baby" essential oil roller from Earth Blended
- More stickers and a lucky dip item (either a paint pot and stamp, a frisbee, a skipping rope, or sports cone with a tennis ball).

There's also a resource developed by Djimba Consulting called "Feeling Good, Staying Safe: tips and info for Yappera families during the COVID-19 pandemic". This includes information about looking after your own and



your families wellbeing and some services/programs you can access at this time.

A big thanks to all those who have contributed to making these deadly packs!

- Eddies lil Homie's - [eddielilhomies.com](http://eddielilhomies.com)
- Earth Blended - [earthblended.com](http://earthblended.com)
- Andrea Brown from from Equity & Diversity's I Belong team at RMIT for her generous contribution of arts/crafts activities

For access to the Feeling Good, Staying Safe and information on being an ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, email Lewis at [lewis.brown@rmit.edu.au](mailto:lewis.brown@rmit.edu.au)





## National Indigenous Business Summer School

In partnership with University of Melbourne and Swinburne University, RMIT University supported the delivery of the National Indigenous Business Summer School (NIBSS), an initiative of the Australian Business Deans Council. The NIBSS is an exciting program developed for Indigenous high school students entering Years 11 and 12 who are thinking about studying in the world of business, becoming an entrepreneur, owning a business or just curious about studying at University.

The purpose of the program was to provide a fully immersive experience for students thinking of entering the world of business or becoming an entrepreneur. Students were given the opportunity to experience what daily life is like as a university student and hear from great speakers in the sector. Students also had the opportunity to see business in action and learn about the available pathways into business studies. During the students week long stay in Melbourne, the NIBSS students participated in:

- Working in groups to develop a marketing strategy for the Aboriginal Carbon Foundation, then judged by a panel of professionals in the sector
- Making Mangrooks at Richmond Football Club
- Hear from tennis legend, Evonne Goolagong Cawley about her story and about the Evonne Goolagong Foundation
- Spent an afternoon at the Australian Open
- Visited RMIT City Campus for a tour of the College of Business, attended a design thinking work shop, heard from Jirra Harvey and Ngarara Willim Students
- Attended a celebration dinner with entertainment from John Wayne Parsons

Ngarara Willim are proud to have been a co-host university for the NIBSS and wish all participants the best of luck in their future endeavours.

## Farewell Elise

Ngarara Willim's Indigenous Student Education Officer, Elise Manhire will be leaving her position in June to move interstate.

Ngarara Willim staff and students would like to thank Elise for her time working with us over the past year. We wish her all the very best with her new life in Tasmania, we will miss her in the office.

### From Elise...

I am very proud of our achievements at Ngarara Willim, especially the Gama-dji orientation at the start of 2020 and the Deadly Alumni event at the end of 2019. Working at Ngarara Willim has given me a strong sense of purpose and it has been a privilege to have been able to make a positive difference in the lives of so many students. I will be off on my next adventure soon and will be leaving the Ngarara Willim team towards the end of June, as I'm moving to Launceston (Tasmania) with my partner. I am very confident about the future of Ngarara Willim and greatly appreciate the friends I have made there, who I hope to keep in touch with.





# Meet our Staff



## Nicole

### Arabana

Manager, Indigenous Student Education



## Jason

### Tharawal

Senior Manager, Indigenous Education



## Cathy D.

### Irukandji

Senior Advisor, Indigenous Access and Engagement



## Lewis

### Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung

Coordinator, Indigenous Outreach



## Carlie

Coordinator, Indigenous Vocational Education



## Cathy L.

### Arrernte, Luritja

Coordinator Operations & Project Support



## Simon

### Birriah / Gurreng Gurreng

Coordinator, Indigenous Student Engagement



## Charlotte

### Gubbi Gubbi

Indigenous Student Engagement Projects Assistant



## Elise

### Ngarrindjeri

Indigenous Student Education Officer





## Connect with us

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(03)9925 4885



## Join our mailing list

Send us an email to be added to our mailing list

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

### City Campus

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

### Bundoora Campus

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

### Brunswick Campus

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

Post: GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, VIC 3001

### Our Artists

Trees — Louisa Bloomer

Leaves (watermark) — Alanna Sandy

Ngarara Willim logo — Mandy Nicholson



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