



Nulungu

Research Institute

The University of Notre Dame Australia

Nulungu News

2015 IN THIS ISSUE

- Welcome
- Research Achievement
- Staff Transition Year
- Interview: Steve Kinnane
- Interview: Bruce Goring
- Nulungu Staff
- 2015 Keynote Speakers
- Interview: Willi Lempert

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2015 newsletter of the Nulungu Research Institute. Nulungu provides an Indigenous research and academic focus for the entire University. Further information about us, is at: <http://www.nd.edu.au/research/nulungu>. This edition illustrates our ethics-based 'research with heart'.

RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENT

In many ways, 2015 has been a landmark year of achievement, celebrating the coming to fruition of previous years' planning. Perhaps the single most prestigious event has been the success of an ARC Discovery grant by Professor Patrick Sullivan, in collaboration with Dr Julie Lahn and Dr Janet Hunt. The title of Patrick's project is: *Reciprocal Accountability and Public Value in Aboriginal Organisations*. The next newsletter will feature an interview with Patrick.

Another highly significant Nulungu achievement is the conclusion of an Office of Learning and Teaching project led by Notre Dame Adjunct Professor Neil Drew (now with Edith Cowan University) and Dr Judith Wilks of the University of Southern Cross (USC), entitled: *Developing a Culturally Appropriate Data Quality Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Higher Education Statistics*. The research team included Dr Katie Wilson (SCU), Ms Carolyn Crook (Notre Dame), Adjunct Professor Lyn Henderson Yates (Notre Dame), and Steve Kinnane and Bruce Goring of Nulungu. The group plans to publish journal articles, and apply for further funds in late 2016. You can see the project's current publications at: <http://www.nd.edu.au/research/nulungu>.

STAFF TRANSITION YEAR

As well as achievement, 2015 has been a transition year from the leadership of Bruce Goring and Steve Kinnane, to Associate Professor Sandra Wooltorton and a team of new researchers including Dr Kathryn Thorburn and Melissa Marshall. In 2016, Bruce will take up the CEO position at Marrageku Aboriginal Dance Theatre, and Steve will conduct full-time PhD studies at ANU. Bruce and Steve will remain with Nulungu as adjunct researchers. In other staff news, Dr Maya Haviland left Nulungu for international work but remains an active adjunct researcher. Professor Patrick Sullivan left Nulungu in June, but will return in 2016 to undertake his ARC research. Anna Dwyer will remain at Nulungu into the future. Administrative Officer, Cathie Martin, had a baby girl, Isobella, and we thank Shulyn Hunter and Maria Mann who helped out in Cathie's absence. Three new staff members will soon be appointed to Nulungu.

Contact: nulungu@nd.edu.au. Phone: +61 9192 3670 University of Notre Dame Australia: 88 Guy Street, Broome WA

INTERVIEW WITH STEVE KINNANE

Associate Professor Sandra Woollorton interviewed Steve Kinnane to find out some of his Nulungu ideas and motivations.



Bruce Goring, Anna Dwyer, Steve Kinnane, Professor Patrick Sullivan and Dr Maya Haviland at the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre 2014 Festival at Jarlmadangah Buru.

Sandra: What are the five most significant aspects of your time as a Nulungu researcher?

Steve: When Adjunct Professor Lyn Henderson-Yates (the first Director of Nulungu) and Sr Sonja Wagner (then Deputy Vice Chancellor of the Broome Campus) first approached me to help set up a research institute in the Kimberley in 2007, our goal was to create a regional research institute that would be of benefit to Kimberley Aboriginal Organisations and the people and communities they support and represent. Since Nulungu's official Launch in 2008 (by Professor Patrick Dodson), we've focused on doing research with and for community based organisations that responded to their needs for evidence-based research into the issues of the day, often initiated by community organisations and representative groups we work with. In the seven plus years that I've worked with Nulungu we've completed some very significant research outcomes that have had definite impact for the people and communities we've worked with. So I feel we have achieved something of what Adjunct Professor Yates first envisaged when developing the idea of Nulungu, and also something of what Professor Dodson posed to us when first launching Nulungu as a centre that respected and supported Indigenous knowledge for the benefit of the community.

I don't tend to think in 'top fives' but I would say the following principles have been significant:

Relationships – Nulungu’s strength is derived by the sum of its parts, and that comes down to its relationships across the Kimberley, nationally and internationally, and within the University across all three Campuses (Broome, Fremantle and Sydney), but especially the staff of the Broome Campus. Nulungu could not achieve anything without respecting its relationships, which have been ongoing and have grown significantly in the last eight years. Nulungu was never a neutral space, but it has always been a space where many collective groups collaborated from different perspectives and responsibilities toward shared goals of social justice and benefit to Aboriginal communities.

People – Nulungu could not have achieved what it has without attracting very professional, knowledgeable and committed people. Adjunct Professor Lyn Henderson-Yates’s passion for the Kimberley and doing work that was of value to community was pivotal. Anna Dwyer’s employment in 2009 was an absolute gift to Nulungu’s development, as was Bruce Gorrington’s appointment in 2010 as Research Coordinator (and later Acting Director), which elevated Nulungu from being an effective small outfit to a regionally and nationally recognised Indigenous research unit. Beyond our core research staff, there are a host of local, regional and national researchers we have collaborated with over the years that have contributed significantly to Nulungu’s growth and impact. All of us who have been involved in Nulungu have brought the strength of our own long-standing community connections and experience of working in regional and remote Australia.

Respect for cultural governance – The Kimberley is a region where knowledge is uniquely bound and upheld by Aboriginal culture and governance. Respecting and understanding this, through the people and communities that we are collectively involved with or through our own language groups (as on average, at least 50 per cent of Nulungu’s researchers have been Aboriginal), has been a very significant element of Nulungu’s existence and value.

Practical approach bound in experience – Nulungu has always been a place where we work in a very practical manner that aims to be appropriate to the people, communities and organisations that we work with. This approach was born from our collective experiences either growing up in community, or having worked in and for community based organisations. Just as Nulungu is the sum of its parts in terms of people and relationships, each of us also brought years of working for and with senior cultural bosses, elders, traditional owners and community cultural governance. In this way, Nulungu not only has the strength of people with skills in sustainability, linguistics, community development, governance, health, heritage, history and education, but we are also all very much part of these longer traditions by which knowledge is held, managed, practiced, respected and passed on.

The Nulungu way – In some ways, this has been quite hard to define to people outside the organisation, but it is something bound in all of our experiences and links all of the other significant elements to Nulungu’s success. This was bound in how we approached each project, relationship, activity or problem, and also how we generated and respected knowledge professionally and often also culturally. It is made up of all of the above mentioned elements, and was very much linked to being for the people of the Kimberley, operating in the Kimberley, but also working beyond the Kimberley – respecting the value of on-ground Knowledge as the foundation of effecting change on any scale.

I’ve greatly enjoyed working with all of the people that have made Nulungu what it is, and I look forward to seeing what else the people of Nulungu, and those who work with it, will achieve into the future.

Sandra: Thanks very much Steve. I’ve greatly appreciated the opportunity to learn from you.

INTERVIEW WITH BRUCE GORRING

Associate Professor Sandra Wooltorton interviewed Bruce Gorrington to record some of his Nulungu highlights.

Sandra: What attracted you to this campus?

Bruce: Within the community and the university it takes a certain vision, courage, buy-in, engagement and support to run a remote university campus. What attracted me here was the opportunity in the Kimberley context for life-long learning that is framed by Aboriginal intellectual traditions, and that promotes research as a significant component of learning. The latter is a yet-to-be fulfilled aspiration in terms of the full potential of the campus. The second one relates to people. I've been fortunate to have had the opportunity to expand a shared vision/worldview with people I've known for a long time, and new people who worked and studied here on campus; some of whom are still here. There are also the people who come to the campus and the Kimberley region to visit and stay. I'm happy to say that this has certainly increased through Nulungu's endeavours, not just through the annual Nulungu Reconciliation Lecture but also through the Talking Heads Seminar series. I've found these activities to be a wonderful inspiration, and they fostered opportunities that ordinarily wouldn't have presented themselves. Probably more importantly, in our context and the way Nulungu has worked, it has led to research that aims to facilitate change with the longer term goal of making a recognisable difference and making sure there is a social benefit at the end. It's really about enhancing the social and cultural capital of the community and the society that we live in. So the people are highly important.

Sandra: In terms of the many Nulungu endeavours, which has had the biggest impact on society?

At one level, Mick Gooda's 2014 Nulungu Reconciliation Lecture was a very significant event. We were able to extend an invitation to someone who is held in very high esteem to start with: who has been on the national agenda for many years. He had no hesitation in coming to Broome and Nulungu because of our reputation and also how welcome he feels when he comes to Broome. He genuinely enjoys it. The scope of the lecture that evening contributed to elevating the issue of constitutional amendments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia at a time when there were a number of national priorities that could have de-railed the issue. The lecture discussed the issue of constitutional recognition and gave it the level of primacy that it deserves. That lecture was followed this year by a Native Title RoundTable, facilitated by Tim Wilson and Mick through the Australian Human Rights Commission, and attracted 60 of key Indigenous leaders from around Australia. They discussed property rights, native title and economic development. They were then joined by the Commonwealth Attorney General George Brandis and linked those issues with constitutional recognition. During Patrick Dodson's speech a month ago on this campus, it occurred to me that Mick's lecture and the RoundTable were central to informing the community and shaping the discourse on the matter of constitutional recognition. The issues around property rights and land tenure have risen because the current Torrens Title System functions to exclude Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from fully participating in the economy, so the issue of land tenure reform must be part of an overall settlement. I am happy that we assisted in the facilitation of a national debate that is potentially life-changing not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but all Australians because it demonstrates that in the long term, we are participating in a process that ultimately should lead to the maturing of the Australian nation.



Bruce Goring, Tim Wilson, Anna Dwyer, Associate Professor Sandra Wooltorton and Mick Gooda at the Australian Human Rights Commission's Native Title RoundTable, held at Notre Dame's Broome Campus in May.

Of great significance is the development of the program called: *Cultural Competency Training for the WA Judiciary*. Nulungu was approached – again by virtue of our reputation and the integrity of our people involved – by the Hon. Wayne Martin, Chief Justice of Western Australia, with a request to develop a training program in this state for the Judiciary of WA. This is especially significant given the findings of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, in which the first part of the last recommendation relates directly to training of the Judiciary. It gladdens my heart to see that we have been invited to take the running on training of this nature in WA. My hope is that this training will have a direct impact on the criminal justice system not just at the point of a court hearing and sentencing but will influence the Commissioner for Police to recognise that a similar training program for police officers in WA should be developed to ensure that the front end of the criminal justice process is addressed. So cultural competence training is significant and my hope is it will have trickle down effects in the future.

Sandra: Which one Nulungu project has been or in your opinion, will have the most impact in the future?

Bruce: There is not just one, they all have. Everything we've done has had a direct impact and benefit and that's why we've done them. The first one I'll mention is the review we did on evaluating the impact of drug and alcohol restrictions in Fitzroy Crossing and Halls Creek at 3, 12 and 24 month intervals. It certainly contributed to - for instance, the opportunity for research on FASD to be fully realised and the research and diagnosis of a whole range of mental illnesses that alcohol had suppressed. The research found that the restrictions lowered rates of domestic violence and reduced threats to women and children particularly. There are a range of outcomes of the research, but the direct outcome is the Drug and Alcohol Office continued to invest in the research, which meant the longer the time went by the greater the time people had to take stock of the landscape and be able to respond in a fully-fledged social reconstruction framework that is oriented towards the future.

The second one I'll mention is the Kimberley Caring for Country plan. Our project contributed to the business case prepared by the Kimberley Land Council for a \$50 million investment by the Australian Government to establish the Kimberley ranger program. It is a fabulous program that has been overwhelmingly successful by anyone's standards and it is wonderful to hear that Aboriginal people are on waiting lists to become rangers - as well as the excellent outcomes the ranger program achieves.

The third one I'll comment on is the Collaborative Research Network (CRN). The fruits of the CRN are yet to be fully realised: although Patrick Sullivan has just been awarded the first UNDA-led Australian Research Council (ARC) grant. The CRN was the first university-wide initiative to enhance research development and capacity across the institution including Higher Degree by Research students, within the context of a university that had historically been a very good teaching institution. Yes, I'm delighted that the first ARC grant to this university was through that endeavour. It means a lot to me and many other people involved in the CRN.

Not far behind would be the Office of Learning and Teaching *Transition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students into Higher Education* project. That was our first national and fully collaborative project, followed closely by our second national, collaborative project that devised a *Renewed National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social Emotional Wellbeing*. Even though I've referred to only these five projects, any of our research projects could be mentioned because they were all designed to conduct research in the way it should be conducted in the Kimberley. That is, to enhance Aboriginal involvement in research, develop greater research capacity within Kimberley Aboriginal communities and organisations, and to design and develop evidence-based research methodologies. This can then lead to fundamental changes in government policy, programs and their delivery but more importantly it gives Aboriginal people the data, the evidence, to reinforce the arguments that they have put up time and time again. A lot of our work has created the space to articulate things that hasn't existed in the past.

Sandra: Thanks very much Bruce. I've greatly appreciated the opportunity to learn from you.

NULUNGU 2015 STAFF

Associate Professor Sandra Wooltorton, Director. Interests: education, cultural geography, sustainability transition.
 Bruce Goring, Research Coordinator. Interests: sustainability of complex cultural and natural landscapes.
 Stephen Kinnane, Senior Research Fellow. Interests: sustainability transition, social capital, community development.
 Melissa Marshall, Research Fellow: caring for country, Indigenous archaeology, remote community sustainability.
 Anna Dwyer, Research Assistant. Interests: caring for country, cultural impact, linguistics, sustainable energy.
 Gillian Kennedy, Researcher. Interests: Indigenous studies, education, caring for country, community development.
 Dr Kathryn Thorburn, Research Fellow. Interests: policy, governance, regional history.
 Professor Patrick Sullivan, Senior Research Fellow. Interests: policy, governance, community services.
 Cathie Martin, Administrative Officer. Interests: public policy, community development and community arts.

2015 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

2015 Nulungu Reconciliation Presenter: Mr Ben Wyatt, MLA.

2015 Nulungu Talking Heads Presenters: Professor Patrick Sullivan; Sharon Davis; Sarah Yu, Bart Pigram and Maya Shioji; Dean Mathews; Adrian Dodson-Shaw; Associate Professor John Guenther; Ayesha Moss; Bobbie Chew Bigby; Martin Sibosado; Mel Marshall; Renata Cetinich; Wayne Barker; Chad Creighton; Professor Patrick Dodson; Willi Lempert with US Consul Cynthia Griffin; June Oscar and Professor Elizabeth Elliott.

FAREWELL WILLI LEMPERT – FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

Willi Lempert, from the University of Colorado, has been located at Nulungu as his Kimberley academic base on and off since 2012, while working towards his PhD in Cultural Anthropology. His topic is: *The Social Life of Indigenous Media*. Willi is currently winding down the data collection phase of his project. Next, he will spend three months at ANU followed by a final few weeks in the Kimberley on his way back to Colorado to complete his write-up. Associate Professor Sandra Wooltorton took the opportunity to have a conversation with Willi about his research and his reflections on being in Australia.



Willi Lempert, David Young and Alison Gill filming at the Balgo Lookout.

Sandra: Can you tell me about your research?

The overarching goal of my research has been to follow the social life of the production of video programs. I want to understand what's involved in self-representation; especially for different organisations with their different constraints, goals and strengths. I have worked a lot with people from Balgo in particular.

Sandra: What is a Fulbright Award and, broadly, what have you learned by doing it in Australia?

It is a unique award that has no particular research agenda. It was set up by Senator Fulbright with the goal of fostering mutual understandings between US citizens and the rest of the world. To me, the research project is part of what I'm doing here, but it's not the main thing. I'm here to develop that mutual understanding and contribute in small and practical ways, as well as to tell a larger story. I've had opportunities to help to make films and radio programs, but at a deeper level I've learned that at any point in time there are many things happening on different

levels. For example you can have people with diverse points of view that are contradictory, but from a bigger point of view they tell a larger story.

From remote communities, I have learned about the art of subtlety. There are often powerful things happening at a granular level. You can see a lot but miss everything. I think the more you see, the more you realise how much you are not seeing. For example, there are a myriad of little things about people who are interacting. You start to realise there are endless layers of social worlds that people live in. It's quite an honour just to move into the first layer.

Sandra: You impressed me at your Talking Heads lecture with your analysis of the way people work using the metaphors of fire, tyres and paper. Desert people fire the landscape so you've used the symbolism of fire as creativity and as the productive rhythm; tyres and vehicles are needed in the desert as mobility and you've used them to represent infrastructure and 'stuff'; and you've used paper to symbolise bureaucratic considerations such as time sheets, waivers and of course driver licences. Can you tell me more about that?

My feeling is that people often want to ask questions which follow academic trends, but often the most interesting things go unaddressed, including fundamental questions about how things become successful. To be able to translate and to distil things down into their basic elements seems to be the most important contribution an academic could make. You can never understand things as well as the people in the community do, but the one thing academics can do is to create a language of common communication between worlds that don't communicate very well.

Sandra: Do you have any parting comments you'd like to leave with Nulungu?

It's hard to properly value a place like Nulungu. It's such a fragile thing to have, a research institute specifically for Indigenous wellbeing. I think the field is inherently fraught with a million contradictions. The fact is that Nulungu is going so well, and has a good feeling about it. It's hard to appreciate – and miracle is the wrong word – just how amazing that achievement is.

Sandra: Maybe that's what's different about Nulungu as a research institute; that we want researchers to work from the heart.

Yes, I think that the academic world is such a thinking, analytic space, but here the heart is the main thing. When I first came here I noticed something different that I could feel. It sets a tone. It is 'research with heart'. Here there are academics who have higher priorities for their work. I think in celebration of Steve and Bruce, they also have a critical eye and a sharp intuition about things they don't support. I mean they are the right kinds of gatekeepers. This place really works as a reconciliation between academia and Aboriginal communities. There is not necessarily a good feeling out there about academics, but Nulungu works well in that space.

I look forward to returning regularly in the future.

Willi with Mark Moora receiving the NITV Spirit Award to PAKAM to extend their short film on handsigns into a half-hour prime-time production. <https://open.abc.net.au/explore/97424>

