

Health Sciences are at the top of the agenda for Indigenous students

Around 100 year 5 and 6 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from 10 schools in the south-western Sydney region attended 'Heartbeat: Signals and Signs' at UWS Hawkesbury campus in July.

It was the first time a 'Heartbeat' event had been held at Hawkesbury, since the program's inception in 2010. The aim of 'Heartbeat' is to increase young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students' awareness of health issues and to encourage them to aspire to careers in health, medicine and related sciences. The program was developed by UWS and is supported by Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service, the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) and St John (NSW).

Students join at ages 8 or 9 and there are new activities each year so they can benefit from a range of linked learning experiences. Participants in the Hawkesbury event were the very first cohort back in 2010 and this was their third visit to UWS.

Following a whole-of-group opening ceremony with a Welcome to Country delivered by Aunty Edna Watson, students were split into four groups and rotated through the following workshops:

- Basic First Aid: students were given training on basic first aid techniques including burns, cuts, and falls. The workshop was run by St John (NSW).
- Food Marketing: students were shown footage of commercials relating to food and beverages and

a discussion took place to help them understand that marketing for food can be deceiving. Products displaying the heart tick approval were also explored and information was presented on why this sign might be misleading.

- Food Science: this interactive workshop demonstrated the sugar and fat content of everyday food and beverage items. Students were taught the correct amounts for a healthy diet. The students then participated in food analysis at three different workstations.
- Water Quality: students learnt where drinking water comes from, and about the importance of water quality. They were provided with the opportunity to view samples through microscopes in a laboratory and to also catch their own tiny marine creature to investigate.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander UWS students from health, medicine and related sciences acted as guides and role models on the day.

Indigenous Project Officer of Schools Engagement at UWS, Jo Galea, said the children thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

'Kids are always engaged at Heartbeat and I am pleased with where the program is going. I think



'It is important that we inform young Indigenous Australians of the importance of a healthy lifestyle,' says Jo Galea.

it is important that we inform young Indigenous Australians of the importance of a healthy lifestyle' Since 2010 'Heartbeat' has grown and become popular amongst schools across the south-west and western Sydney region.

'In 2010, we had 100 primary school students participate from 14 schools. Now the program has grown to include 35 schools with over 500 students participating.'



INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS THAT INSPIRE SUCCESS AT UWS



BACHELOR OF EDUCATION (PRIMARY) (AREP) BACHELOR OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMA OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- » Make a difference in your community
- » Study in the comfort of your own home
- » Scheduled on-campus visits for courses delivered in Block Mode*
- » Complete your degree in 3-5 years full-time

APPLY NOW! HERE'S HOW ...

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have not completed the HSC or equivalent, or who obtained an ATAR score lower than required for their chosen course, can apply to study at UWS through the Badanami Alternative Entry Program. This program has expanded to include the Badanami Tertiary Entry Program (BTEP), a 16 week literacy program students undertake prior to commencing their degree.

Testing dates: January 21 and 22

*ABSTUDY recipients may be eligible for additional funding to meet the costs of travel, accommodation and meals.

To find out more, contact the
Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education on
1800 032 923 or visit www.uws.edu.au/badanami

Message from the Dean



Welcome to another edition of KooriLife, your regular guide to issues, news and views that impact the UWS community.

Firstly I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of Greater Western Sydney, the Darug, Gandangarra and Tharawal peoples, whose land the University of Western Sydney's six campuses span.

This year has been an extremely busy year for Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education with over 125 new students entering undergraduate and postgraduate study. The Badanami Indigenous programs include the Bachelor of Social and Community Development and the Bachelor of Education (Primary-AREP) courses. Over 100 students are now enrolled in the two degrees.

Following on from the success of the final report lodged to DEEWR for 'Embedding an Indigenous Graduate Attribute', Badanami hosted a visit from the Governor-General, Her Excellency, Quentin Bryce, AC, CVO. Staff and students as well as many of our Elders took part in a round table discussion on education, employment and research initiatives being undertaken at UWS.

I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate our talented students who took part in the National Indigenous University Games in Cairns where they were awarded second place overall and won the right to host next year's Games at the University of Western Sydney.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our students who are completing their medicine degrees this semester, in particular, Rachel Farrelly, Anysia Den and Paul Saunders who will be taking on the challenges of being doctors in their local communities.

Have a safe and peaceful break and see you in 2013.

Associate Professor Berice Anning
Dean, Indigenous Education and Director,
Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education.

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Views expressed in articles are contributors' own and not necessarily those of UWS. Statements of fact are believed to be true but no legal responsibility is accepted for them.

KooriLife is produced by the Student Recruitment Unit, University of Western Sydney.

Governor-General visit to Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education

The University of Western Sydney was honoured to recently host a visit by Her Excellency, Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO, Governor-General of Australia, to its Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education.



UWS Vice-Chancellor, Professor Janice Reid, and Associate Professor Berice Anning, Dean of Indigenous Education and Director of the Badanami Centre, welcomed the Governor-General to the Bankstown campus where she met with UWS staff and students as well as Elders from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Greater Western Sydney.

Following a tour of the Badanami Centre and a Welcome to Country, the Governor-General took part in a roundtable discussion about the range of Indigenous education, employment, engagement and research initiatives that are offered at UWS.

The informal discussion provided the Governor-General with an overview of:

- the Badanami Centre, which provides academic, personal, cultural, and Elder-in-residence support to more than 440 undergraduate and postgraduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at the University,
- Badanami academic programs including the Bachelor of Education (Primary) Aboriginal Rural Education Program (AREP) and the Bachelor of Community and Social Development, which are designed to suit the family, community, career, cultural and social responsibilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students,
- the range of scholarships, including the Indigenous Achievement Scholarship, which are designed to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and encourage them to get involved and make a difference in the University community,
- the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ARC Discovery Grant researchers within the University's Centre for Positive Psychology and Education (CPPE),

School of Education, and School of Science and Health,

- the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement and the UWS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement Advisory Board,

acting as a mentor in the Indigenous School Student Mentoring Program (ISSMP).

'It was great to have the opportunity to meet the Governor-General, and to allow her to be a part of our journey as Indigenous students at UWS,' says Blake.

'I was able to have some brief one-on-one

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- the Badanami Elder-in-Residence and Elders on Campus initiatives.

Dr Laura Parker, a UWS PhD graduate who has recently been appointed as the University's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postdoctoral Fellow, offered the first introduction to the Governor-General.

'It was wonderful to have the Governor-General on campus. She took the time and made the effort to listen to everyone, and she seemed genuinely interested to hear about what UWS and Badanami are doing,' says Dr Parker.

Also present at the event was Blake Tatafu, a UWS Indigenous Achievement Scholarship recipient who is completing his Bachelor of Community and Social Development degree in the AREP block mode.

In the roundtable, Blake shared with the Governor-General his success in the recent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student games – where UWS placed second overall – as well as his experiences in establishing an Indigenous Student Collective at UWS and

time with the Governor-General as she was leaving. She told me to be proud of myself and to continue to inspire others. It was very thoughtful and was a reaffirmation of my own personal motto, which is "aspire to inspire".

The University of Western Sydney is uniquely situated with a large population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Through its wide range of Indigenous programs and initiatives, the University is committed to closing the opportunity gap and providing more opportunities for Indigenous people to access higher education.

The Governor-General's tour of the Badanami Centre marked her third visit to UWS in recent months. In September, the Governor-General was a special guest at one of the University's Spring Graduation ceremonies where she delivered the Occasional Address to graduating students and was conferred an Honorary Doctorate of Letters, honoris causa.

UWS wins silver at 17th Annual National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games

Indigenous students from UWS competed in the 17th Annual National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games and came second.

Fourteen universities from around Australia gathered together at James Cook University in Cairns for the 17th Annual National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games in September. Eleven students from the University of Western Sydney attended the event.

Hosted by James Cook University, the games were launched with a 'Welcome to Country' and a game of puloga – an Aboriginal game of mock battle.

From 23 to 28 of September, 15 Indigenous university teams battled it out against each other in four sports: netball, touch football, beach volleyball and basketball. The University of Western Sydney competed strongly and finished second overall, behind hosts James Cook University.

Overall, UWS came:

- 1st in netball
- 2nd in volleyball and touch football
- 3rd in basketball.

UWS Team member, Blake Tatafu, said he is extremely proud of his team's achievements.

'Overall, we triumphed at an amazing 2nd placing overall, being the only team out of 15 teams to achieve a ranking of either first, second or third for every sport. This is an accomplishment that should not be forgotten about! It was in 2010 that UWS were the "easy team" but ascending in 2012, UWS were "the team to beat"!' Also, it was great as we worked together both on and off the field. That's also another amazing thing about being a part of this experience!'

The 17th Annual National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games are also considered a culturally significant event for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students across Australia.

UWS team member, Christian Lotter said: 'These games represent a modern corroboree; Indigenous people from across Australia competing, sharing knowledge and enjoying what everyone has to offer. These games

increase the strength of our people across the country, while bringing us closer together through sport and the occasional shake a leg.'

UWS team member Aaron Gow said the event helped promote the immersion of both local Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal culture.

'James Cook University were amazing hosts and did well to promote the culture and the customs of the local tribes. The week was also a good opportunity to meet some remarkable young Indigenous students from across Australia; it was good to have a yarn, hear their stories and learn about their people. An incredible week made all the better by the team support and closeness shared by the outstanding UWS mob.'

As UWS came second, James Cook University has now asked if UWS would like to host the 18th Annual National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games in 2013.

Dean of Indigenous Education, Berice Anning, says hosting the games would help

promote UWS and be great for tourism in Greater Western Sydney.

'It would highlight the diversity of Indigenous students from across Australia studying higher degrees across all disciplines; profile UWS facilities, programs and services; and boost the local economy of Greater Western Sydney with an influx of students and staff participating in the games.'

Next year, UWS students with Badanami Centre will host the 18th Annual National Indigenous Tertiary Education Student Games, and are positive they can take out gold.



'The week was also a good opportunity to meet some remarkable young Indigenous students from across Australia; it was good to have a yarn, hear their stories and learn about their people,' says Aaron Gow.



Young Aboriginal student wins prestigious Dean's Medal

Young Aboriginal student, Lauren Oldfield, was invited to the College of Arts Dean's Medal Ceremony at the Bankstown campus in July to receive the prestigious Dean's Medal.

Outstanding students from across UWS were invited to attend The College of Arts Dean's Medal Ceremony at the Bankstown Campus in July. One of those students was Lauren Oldfield, the only known Aboriginal student to receive a Dean's Medal at the ceremony.

The Bachelor of Arts/Master of Teaching student was awarded the Dean's Medal for achieving above a Distinction average in her undergraduate degree.

When Lauren was told she had won the Dean's Medal, she was surprised.

'It's a rare award and not one that I expected to earn when I was completing my Bachelor of Arts degree. It's a very nice award to have won, especially for my family who have supported me through university'

Each year, the UWS Dean's Medal is awarded to undergraduate and postgraduate students that have achieved a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 6 or

greater. Students that receive this prestigious medal are also in the top 2 percent of their course.

Lauren said she didn't expect to win the Dean's Medal, as she enjoyed the subjects and felt that she didn't have to struggle to achieve high marks.

'I suppose I worked hard. It didn't feel like hard work at the time though, since I enjoyed the units I studied and found most of my assignments genuinely interesting,' said Lauren.

Starting a Bachelor of Arts/Master of Teaching in 2009, it was Lauren's dream to become an English and History teacher. In 2012, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and is currently completing a Master of Teaching (Secondary) at UWS Kingswood.

Lauren said, 'I'm excited to become an English and History teacher. One of my main interests is Indigenous Education. Ultimately, I want to help raise Aboriginal

education standards so that we can maintain strong, empowered Aboriginal communities.'

Lauren was inspired by her high school teacher to become a secondary teacher. When asked about her heroes, the young student replied:

'There are a lot of people I admire for their strength, resilience and intelligence. Among them are political activists like Charlie Perkins and astute writers like Toni Morrison. Heroes are people who withstand and overcome difficulties and strive to improve the lives of others. There are plenty of heroes in my own family and in my community.'

After winning the Dean's Medal, Lauren wants to finish her Master of Teaching, and find full-time employment as an English and History teacher. Once in the teaching profession, Lauren wants to make a difference in the lives of Aboriginal people by focusing on issues within Indigenous Education.

'It's a rare award and not one that I expected to earn when I was completing my Bachelor of Arts degree.'

Cadetship paves the way for an exciting career



When Mitchell Gibbs first started university in 2009, he never knew that he would one day be undertaking an honours program at university. Originally from Tamworth in northern New South Wales, Mitchell made the move to Sydney to follow his dreams of becoming a Forensic Scientist.

Mitchell's university undergraduate study has prepared him well for his honours degree where he has been successful in gaining a cadetship with the NSW Police at the Forensics Services Group in Penrith. Mitchell says, 'The University's Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment and Engagement team provided me the necessary support in gaining the cadetship.'

Mitchell's cadetship project and honours thesis focuses on the use of the presumptive test reagent, fluorescein, for revealing bloodstains at a crime scene. 'Fluorescein is first sprayed onto a surface, and when you apply a certain light, it will fluoresce when it reacts with blood,' says Mitchell. 'So if you've got bloody hands, and you put your hands onto a surface, then I spray on there, I'd be able to see your fingerprints in blood on the surface.'

Having been given the opportunity to work alongside the experts at the FSG, Mitchell says his 'fantastic' experience as a cadet has 'given me many skills that I've been able to use at university and in day-to-day

life.' Though his degree provided practical training, the cadetship has also been eye-opening in terms of the way techniques are applied in real-world environments and the level of care that must be taken when working with exhibits. 'Working in an actual forensic laboratory, the way exhibits are used and processed, and the procedures and techniques used in the field are very different,' he says. 'Everything to do with the actual exhibit requires more care – whenever you go into a laboratory you have to put on the gown, the hair net, the face mask, the gloves, just so you don't get any DNA in the laboratory.'

Mitchell, who is currently completing his Honours in Forensic Science, hopes to one day fulfil his dreams by obtaining a PhD. He hopes to pursue a career in which he can blend his passion for researching forensic techniques with the thrill of working on real crime scenes.