

# RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

## Healing the Wounds of the Heart

**Mr Gawaian Bodkin-Andrews, Professor Rhonda Craven and Dr Alexander Yeung from the Centre for Educational Research are implementing an innovative new intervention to address racial stereotyping of Indigenous Australians in secondary schools through a two year Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development Grant.**

'Indigenous students are not achieving academic outcomes commensurate with non-Indigenous peers, and research has found that negative stereotypes can impact upon minority group members' academic outcomes' says Mr Bodkin-Andrews. Stereotype-threat is where a minority group member is affected by, or even internalises, negative social stereotypes or racist generalisations held against their group as a whole. Such internalisation may then cause the individual to believe the stereotype is true, and behave in accordance with the stereotypical view, thus restricting their ability to reach their full potential. This project aims to study stereotyping of Indigenous secondary school students to evaluate the impact on mental health and academic functioning, and counteract negative stereotyping and racism.

In collaboration with the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the NSW Department of Education and Training Aboriginal Education Unit, and participating schools, the project team will run a series of interviews with Indigenous Australians about their experiences of racism and stereotyping, and attempt to identify more adaptive coping strategies that could potentially aid in dealing with such negative stressors. The results from these interviews will then assist in the development and



evaluation of an intervention program designed to combat negative and racist attitudes and behaviours of students and staff within secondary schools.

This research offers important educational and social and economic benefits by enriching the mental resilience and life potential of Indigenous Australians. The intervention will foster schools free from racism and stereotyping which will contribute to individual, community and national wellbeing.

**Project Title:** Bubalamai Bawa Gumada – Healing the Wounds of the Heart: A Research-based intervention diminishing the impact of racism and stereotype threat

**Funding has been set at:** \$180,000

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