

# KooriLife

THE SIX-MONTHLY REVIEW OF NEWS AND EVENTS AT UWS

Autumn 2011

## Rural and Remote Indigenous Students attend UWS Day Penrith

The University of Western Sydney, Indigenous Outreach unit provided Indigenous high school students from rural and remote areas of NSW with the opportunity to attend UWS Day. UWS Day offers a range of workshops, lectures and interactive activities that have been designed to help senior high school students prepare for their course and career journey.

The UWS Day Rural Indigenous Student visit was held over a 3 day period in November 2010. High schools from 10 rural and remote areas of NSW and their Indigenous students were invited to apply for the visit to UWS and attend the UWS Day activities on Penrith campus. A total of 57 students and support staff visited. Accommodation was provided on Hawkesbury campus, an ideal location to co-host this activity, with access to residential accommodation and a rural setting with wide open areas that created a comfortable atmosphere for the visiting students.

*'My vision was to expose the students to an environment not normally visited and to make them feel comfortable and welcome as well as provide them with the knowledge of, and aspiration for, higher education.'*

Jo Galea – UWS, Indigenous Outreach Marketing Officer

Jo Galea, Indigenous Outreach Marketing Officer explains:

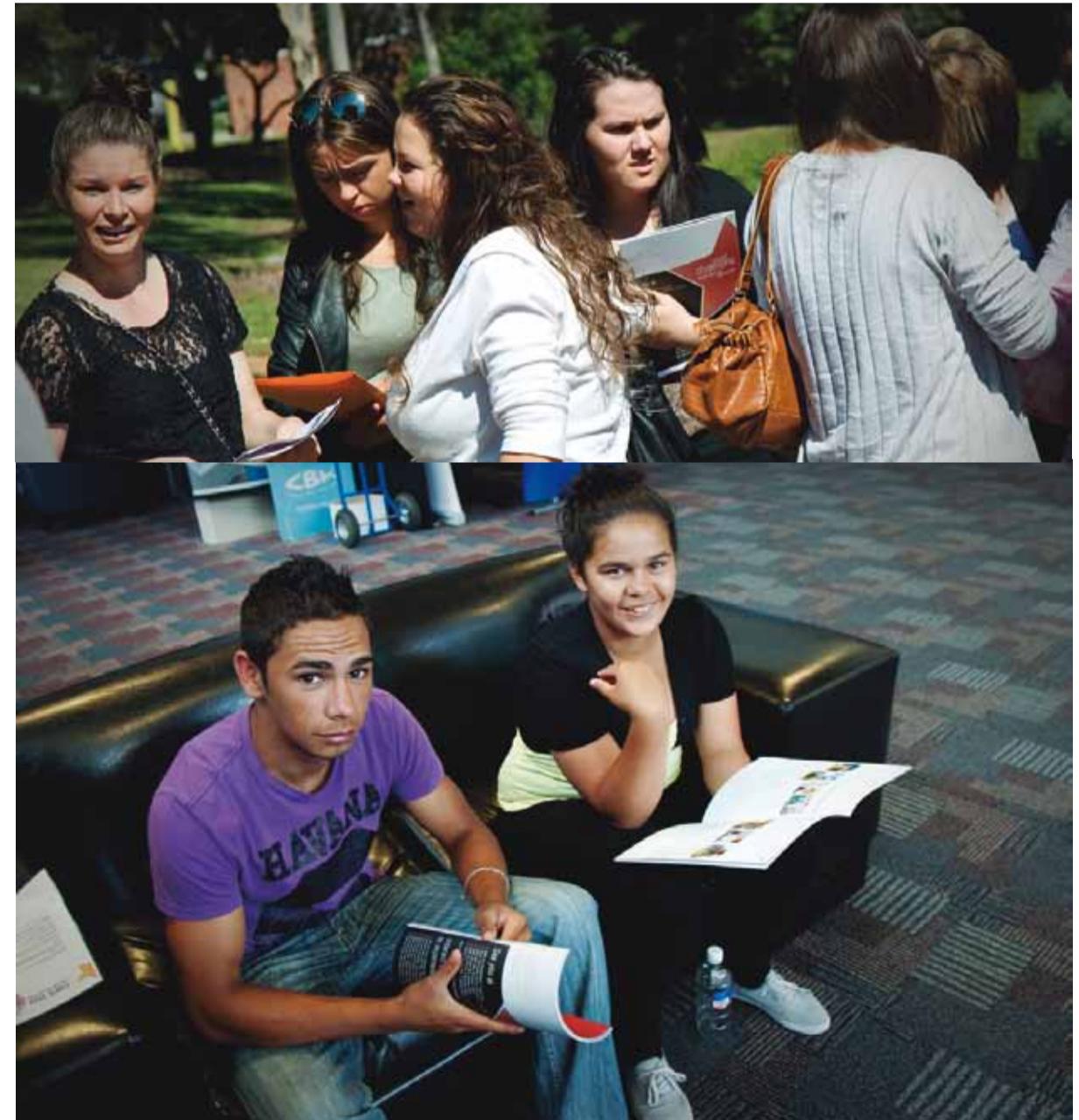
'It was fantastic to be able to provide these students with an opportunity not normally available to them. Students in rural and remote areas don't always have access to career information days and the like and UWS Day is a great event for high school students exploring their education and career options. My vision was to expose the students to an environment not normally visited and to make them feel comfortable and welcome as well as provide them with the knowledge of, and aspiration for, higher education.'

'As well as attending UWS Day, a series of other activities was also included. The students had the opportunity to meet with current UWS Indigenous students. A cultural talk from local Indigenous elders, Uncle Greg Sims and Uncle Wez Marne, was a hit. Time for physical activities and getting to know one another proved popular, some students visited the gym while others played games of soccer or footy.'

'The feedback received from the staff and students that attended was very positive.'

Letiah Stanley (Indigenous Student Support staff), Wellington High School, commented:

'I want to thank you for inviting Wellington High School to take part in UWS Day and for opening the opportunity to our students. There was nothing but great feedback from the students. The overnight program you have organised is terrific, it gives rural students a chance to meet new people and to get first-hand knowledge and experience of what university may be like if they are to travel down that path after completing their secondary studies. From this program I hope it encourages a lot more Indigenous students to continue onto tertiary studies from rural areas and I hope you see more of Wellington High school students participating in UWS Day in years to come.'



Anna McCorkle (Career Adviser and Head Teacher, Science), Bourke High School commented:

'A very big thank you to you Jo for making this possible for our students, having spoken to them only yesterday about it – they enjoyed it a great deal and found it very informative and a real eye and mind opener for them; so many thanks from BHS and myself for all your efforts.'

Julee Hunt (Head Teacher Secondary School), Collarenebri Central School commented:

'Thank you so much for your support of our students. The students returned home tired but excited about the prospect of future study. They were all inspired enough to plan an academic study pattern for 2011 – indicating that the door is still open to the possibility of going to university. In a community that is battling health and poverty issues your support is a contributing factor in changing futures for our kids. Year 9 students are already looking forward to their opportunity to visit UWS in 2011. I think we can tick the box to say that the program is successful in widening student outlooks for an academic future.'

'The UWS Day Rural Indigenous Student visit was a rewarding, enjoyable and valuable experience for the visiting students and staff, UWS staff and students and the Indigenous community elders.'

*'In a community that is battling health and poverty issues, your support is a contributing factor in changing futures for our kids.'*

Julie Hunt  
Collarenebri Central School

## Welcome to 2011



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

The beginning of the 2011 academic year evidences the increased number of Indigenous people choosing University of Western Sydney (UWS) as their preferred place to study. UWS's engagement with Indigenous people in the Greater Western Sydney region has been productive in creating greater awareness about the opportunities UWS offers. UWS continues to present opportunities for the Indigenous community for education, research, employment and engagement.

Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education has worked with UWS to increase its capacity to engage Indigenous people. Over 200 Indigenous people applied through the Badanami Alternative Entry Program for direct entry into a variety of courses. This has also resulted in Indigenous people enrolling in the newly offered Bachelor of Community and Social Development degree, which is offered as a block program on the Bankstown campus. The Diploma of Community and Social Development has also seen Indigenous student enrolments in 2011. The Diploma course is being offered as a day program on the Penrith campus, Kingswood for Indigenous people who reside in the vicinity of the campus.

Badanami Centre is also offering the newly developed Indigenous Australian Studies Major (IASM) in 2011. The major is one strategy to implement the Indigenous graduate attribute through students' courses of study at UWS. The major was developed to be rewarding – intellectually, socially and culturally. The graduate attribute provides non-Indigenous people with a greater awareness of Indigenous Australian knowledge and culture and the opportunity to become involved in productive partnerships with Indigenous people and communities.

With the commencement of the new courses and the IASM there will also be opportunities for employing Indigenous staff as academics, student support officers or in general administration as identified.

Badanami Centre's student services have been established to service and resource the support of Indigenous students through their studies on five of the University of Western Sydney's campuses. Badanami Centre aims to increase opportunities to Indigenous people in the vicinity of their campuses, and create opportunities where there are no higher education opportunities.

The University of Western Sydney, through Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, looks forward to supporting Indigenous students to access, participate and be successful in their choice of studies at foundation, undergraduate or postgraduate levels in 2011 and in the future.

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

### Disclaimer

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KooriLife is produced by Office of Public Affairs, University of Western Sydney.

# UWS Chancellor meets with Aboriginal Elders

**The University of Western Sydney Chancellor Peter Shergold recently met with Indigenous Elders from Gilgai Respite Care in Western Sydney.**

The Elders were invited to attend a morning tea at the University's Werrington North campus to meet with the new Chancellor.

Chancellor Shergold provided a brief history of himself and then each of the elders spoke of their heritage, sharing details of where they were from and their family connections.

The Chancellor commented: 'This is the first official meeting I have attended at UWS. That is of tremendous symbolic importance. I am delighted to begin my time at UWS in this manner.'

'There is so much history in one room. Your stories and history are important to our sense as a nation. We can gain valuable knowledge from these. They need to be recorded for future generations.'

'I also want to emphasise how important you are to our ambition to make UWS Australia's leading university in terms of Indigenous students. Young people need your support and encouragement in order to succeed.'

The Elders thoroughly enjoyed their time with Chancellor Shergold and look forward to further opportunities to meet, share their knowledge and discuss their vision for Indigenous Education at UWS.



**•There is so much history in one room. •**

Chancellor Shergold

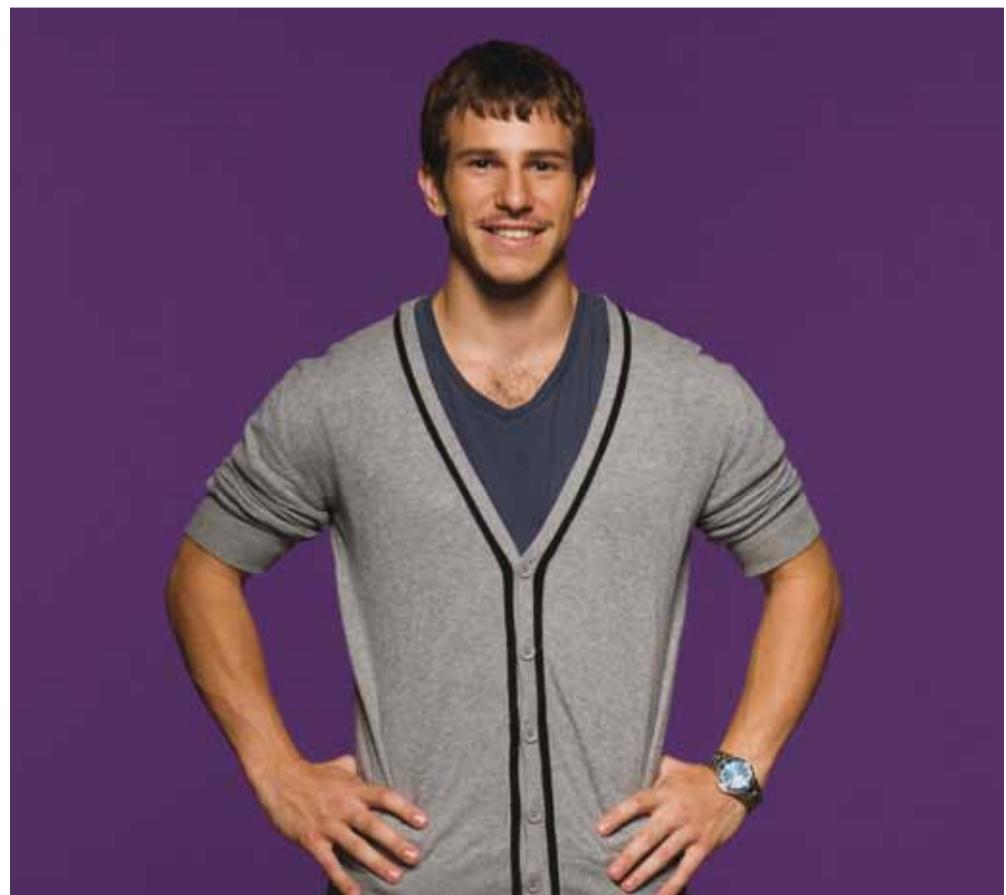
## 'A GOAL ACHIEVED' Forensic Science Student, Mitchell Gibbs has achieved his goal to study at UWS.

### Mitch tells of his journey.

I started year 12 with a clear direction on applying for the Forensic Science course at UWS, this was the best option for me. I spoke with my careers adviser and attended a University Careers roadshow at Camden Haven. I met Jo Galea and I was provided with the information on the possibility of achieving my goal to study the Bachelor of Science (Forensic Science) at UWS. I worked hard at school to obtain good grades and applied to study at UWS via the Badanami Alternative Entry Program. The alternative entry program included testing of literacy and numeracy and an interview. I received the news that I passed and that I had gained an offer into my course, my goal had been reached. During the months leading up to the testing I applied for several scholarships and I was awarded the UWS Achievement Scholarship and the Commonwealth Accommodation Scholarship that also entitled me to the Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship. This was great as I had to move away from home to live on campus and the financial support assisted to make this move possible.

**•I believe everybody has the same potential to make a difference and be successful in life. •**

I believe everybody has the same potential to make a difference and be successful in life. How you use your potential determines whether you



will achieve more than someone else. In life you experience many things and meet a vast amount of people. I have a new avenue of experiences since starting my degree and I have made a lot of new friends.

Recently I gained an opportunity to work with the NSW Police. My brother met a man from the NSW police force who was interested to know that he had a brother studying Forensic Science. As a result I contacted the man who was very

interested in what I was doing and he worked extremely hard to provide an opportunity for me to work with the police. The Office of Indigenous Employment and Engagement at the University made all the arrangements for my cadetship with the NSW Police Force. I am now working with a small team, known as SLR, which works both on the crime scene and in the lab. I will be helping in recovering evidence. My advice is to use the contacts you make to help you along the way.

# UWS Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education and Milperra Public School win NAB Schools First Impact Award

The University of Western Sydney Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education in partnership with Milperra Public School was recently awarded a Schools First National Bank Impact grant.



**‘The school has been running its own economy and government for 12 years, enabling the children to become more aware of the risks and rewards of handling their own money.’**

Jan White

The community partnership involves Indigenous students from rural communities studying teaching at UWS being offered more face to face time with primary aged children at Milperra Public School. The award, valued at \$50,000, is to assist in expanding the schools Financial Literacy Program in partnership with the Badanami Centre Bachelor of Education (Primary) AREP program. The grant will provide the means to expand the program into new and exciting areas.

Jan White, Lecturer, Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education, explains:

‘Badanami has been involved with Milperra Public school in a variety of ways, including placement of our residential students for Professional Experience blocks. This was seen as a great opportunity to be able to allow the tertiary students more face to face experience

with the primary students, and the younger children more one on one learning, to develop an Indigenous arm to the financial literacy program that was already in place.

‘The school has been running its own economy and government for 12 years, enabling the children to become more aware of the risks and rewards of handling their own money. The children partake in a number of ways of earning their ‘Milpy’ dollars – bank jobs, environmental work, small businesses and government ministers, for example. They then have a variety of ways of spending their money – auctions, trade fairs, science days and charitable causes.

‘After consultations between Badanami lecturers, teachers from Milperra public school, Fran Bodkin, Indigenous Education Officer and Allen Powell, Education Officer, for Mt Annan Botanical Gardens, it was decided that one

of the major projects would be to develop an Indigenous cultural garden on the premises of Milperra Public School. In this way the Badanami students could become involved in a number of different ways – they could help the primary students set up the garden, and primary and tertiary students alike would be able to learn of the uses of the many plants and herbs presently grown in the Mt Annan garden.

**‘This action learning program allows both primary and tertiary students to develop and build self confidence.’**

Jan White

‘They could also share other cultural aspects of Indigenous life – some UWS students are involved in Aboriginal dance and art, and are going to teach the children some of these skills and explain how it fits into traditional and modern life.

‘This action learning program allows both primary and tertiary students to develop and build self confidence. Aboriginal teachers are often expected to share their knowledge of Aboriginal culture when they are placed in schools whether they have experience in doing this or not. This partnership allows them to explore these concepts in a safe environment with support from Indigenous academics. The University receives another opportunity for its students to have access to quality teaching and learning at a close distance to its campus, and a way to promote itself in its own local area.’

## UWS Office of Indigenous Employment and Engagement creating opportunities

The University of Western Sydney Indigenous Employment and Engagement Office has enabled a number of UWS students to obtain cadetships in various areas of employment including the Office of State Revenue, Landcom, Accor Hotels and the NSW Police.



Dr John Macleay (left) and Jarred Mack

Director of Indigenous Employment and Engagement, Melissa Williams explains:

‘I wanted to develop corporate partnerships that would extend the skills of our Indigenous Australian students. Cadetships provide students with an amazing opportunity to gain industry experience relevant to their area of study. Work placement happens during term break so as not to interfere with studies. The cadetships also come with generous incentives.’

The UWS cadetship program is now poised to roll out to a select number of organisations as well as expanding with Landcom and will offer an increasing number of Indigenous Australian students at UWS the chance to gain practical on the ground experience, and exposure to a business environment that will expand on their education and expedite their learning.

The success stories so far: Jarred Mack, a UWS Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology student was placed with the Office of State Revenue (OSR). The position is Trainee Analyst Programmer within the Web Content Team under Dr John Macleay, Deputy Director Applications. Since the placement commenced in November 2009, Jarred has been recognised by his work unit as

a rising star and has been singled out as a top performer amongst all of the OSR mainstream cadets from a number of Universities. He commenced a second work placement with OSR who have further committed to offer him employment at the end of the program.

Matthew Kirk, a UWS Bachelor of Business and Commerce student majoring in Marketing was placed as a Marketing Assistant under Danielle Stewart, Marketing Manager with Landcom. Since the placement commenced in March 2010, Matthew has been praised by Landcom’s HR Manager Cassie Tuckwell and his supervisor who have labelled the experience as positive and rewarding.

Kristy Stanton, a Bachelor of Business and Commerce student was placed as a Guest Service Agent at the Pullman Hotel at Sydney Olympic Park. Kristy is just entering her second year cadetship and has become an invaluable member of the Guest Services team. Kristy is enjoying the opportunity to learn and work in such a varied and interesting environment.

For further details please visit our website: [www.uws.edu.au/indigenous\\_opportunities/indigenous\\_employment\\_and\\_engagement](http://www.uws.edu.au/indigenous_opportunities/indigenous_employment_and_engagement)

# Students get their hearts beating at UWS

Indigenous students in years 3 and 4 were given the opportunity to explore health and medicine in a fun and engaging way at the University of Western Sydney's Campbelltown campus in 2010.



Primary schools in the local area were invited to participate in 'Heartbeat', an event created to raise awareness of health issues and to inspire some students to aim for a future career in medicine and health-related fields. 'Heartbeat' was organised in collaboration with the Australian Indigenous Doctors' Association (AIDA) and the Tharawal Aboriginal Medical Service.

The day commenced with a traditional Welcome to Country by Aunty Fran Bodkin and an address by Professor Alison Jones, Dean of Medicine at UWS. The attending students were then divided into groups, each of which took part in five different activities. These included healthy food choices, how the human body works, limb plastering, strength and agility testing, health checks (pulse and temperature) and interaction with a life sized robotic patient. Indigenous UWS students from Medicine, Nursing and other Health Science degrees helped out on the day. They acted as guides for the visiting students and also provided personal insights into studying at university.

Manager of Schools Engagement at UWS, Anne McLean, explained:

'The schools were enthusiastic about the concept and saw it as a great opportunity for their students to learn more about human health and the role of health care professionals, whilst getting a taste of life on a university campus.'

'We are keen to contribute to better long-term health outcomes for Indigenous Australians, through increased knowledge and by encouraging young Indigenous students

to see university as an option, particularly in medicine, health and related sciences.'

'The event was a great success and we look forward to providing more students with the opportunity to be part of 'Heartbeat' events as well as inviting the original group to return to campus for further activities.'

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## UWS Phd student – Fabri Blacklock awarded prestigious art prize

A Postgraduate student from the University of Western Sydney was recently awarded a prestigious art prize from the New South Wales Parliament.

Fabri Blacklock, a PhD candidate from the Centre for Educational Research (CER) at UWS, was 'Highly Commended' in the major \$20,000 prize and announced the overall winner of the 'College of Fine Arts (COFA) Professional Development Award'.

Each year, the Professional Development Award is presented to an emerging Aboriginal artist with great artistic

potential, to encourage the continuation of their work. Ms Blacklock, a descendant of the Biripi and Ngarabal people, secured the win for her artwork 'Gupi Yungera'.

'Gupi Yungera' is a possum skin cloak which Ms Blacklock incised with totemic designs to represent her family and Indigenous heritage. 'Possum skin cloaks have been made by Aboriginal people for thousands of years and are culturally significant. Not only are they used for warmth as blankets, they are also designed to represent the wearer and where they come from,' says Ms Blacklock.

'This coat is important as it represents the birth of my two sons, my partner and the blood lines that connect our family together and our significance and importance as Koori people from New South Wales.'

In the judge's official comments, Dan Browning of 'Awaye!' on ABC Radio National describes 'Gupi Yungera' as a 'majestic robe' which represents both 'the revitalisation of a lost tradition and the power of the artist's individual story to motherhood'.

Just as Ms Blacklock's winning artwork was inspired by her cultural heritage, so too are her studies at UWS.

**•Possum skin cloaks have been made by Aboriginal people for thousands of years and are culturally significant.•**

Fabri Blacklock

**•The revitalisation of a lost tradition and the power of the artist's individual story to motherhood.•**

Dan Browning, Awaye

As part of her Doctor of Philosophy degree, Ms Blacklock has recorded the oral histories of her Elders as a means of investigating how life for Indigenous people in Australia has changed over the past few decades.

The finalist artworks in the 'Parliament of New South Wales Aboriginal Art Prize' take part in a regional tour of galleries throughout NSW, with the aim of extending the reach of the exhibition to remote communities across the state.