



Indigenous Chronicle

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CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS ON CAMPUS

NUMBERS GROW • STUDENTS SPEAK • ELDER'S NEW CHURCH ROLE
CULTURAL IMMERSION • ART AND PRAYER • COURSES, SUPPORT

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Our cover
Tameka Johnson is studying a Bachelor of Nursing at ACU National's Brisbane campus.

From the Vice-Chancellor

ACU National is a leader in Indigenous education. Over the past two years, the University has made significant achievements as measured by national performance indicators.

ACU National has 269 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students currently enrolled in courses including education and business programs.

Enrolment targets have been exceeded in the past two years and there are increasing enrolments in postgraduate courses.

Indigenous students are assisted by the Individual Study Support Scheme, which has resulted in outstanding retention rates.

Courses have a strong emphasis on Indigenous concepts in their content and in the teaching and learning styles.

ACU National has made a firm commitment to the reconciliation process and acknowledges that the Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of the country.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are an integral part of the University's curriculum, and the University will help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to maintain and, where necessary, recover their cultures.



Professor Peter Sheehan

'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are an integral part of the University's curriculum'



A focus on success



The successful relationship ACU National has with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community is built on strong foundations. The growing number of Indigenous graduates is a success for the Indigenous community. I'm just happy that ACU National plays a role.

ACU National's increase in Indigenous graduates is directly linked to the conjoint leadership model we use with the Indigenous community. Much of the collaboration involves learning from the Indigenous community and finding ways to better serve the students.

Since ACU National's conception, there has been a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander support units. Three units – Weemala in Queensland, Yalbalinga in New South Wales and Jim-baa-yer in Victoria – act as key support centres for staff and students.

The collaboration between the support units, the Indigenous students and the Indigenous community improves the students' success, not only in gaining undergraduate degrees, but in going on to postgraduate studies.

ACU National is fully dedicated to Indigenous students and that's making the difference.



**Pro-Vice-Chancellor
Quality & Outreach
Professor Muredach Dynan**



Donna Dennis with daughters Meagan, aged 6 (left) and Selene, aged 7

Indigenous Undergraduates

>> Donna Dennis

Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education leading to Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)

Strathfield

Donna Dennis has a vision – to go back to her home town of Walgett in northern New South Wales and teach the local children. But first, there's a degree to be earned, probably followed by some teaching in Bathurst, where she and her family currently live.

A third-year Diploma student and busy mother, Donna brought her daughters Meagan, 6, and Selene, 7, with her to the Strathfield campus residential and Indigenous Week. Donna was pleased with the reception she and her children received. "The lecturers let the girls come along to the lectures with me," she said.

"When the students were learning physical education instruction with a ball and a hoop, the girls were allowed to join in. And we were being taught by the experts," she said.

Donna says it's great studying at ACU National "Everybody is very friendly," she said. "I would encourage others to come along. I would recommend it to anybody." ■



>> Simon Moon

Bachelor of Nursing

Melbourne

It was 10 years since Simon Moon had finished school when he enrolled with ACU National, so the prospect of university study was daunting. But Simon, a married man with a five-year-old daughter, knew he could get a better job if he had a degree. Now in the first year of the three-year course, he is working as well as studying full-time.

Simon sees the humour in the situation: "Some of the other students I'm studying with were only just being born when I was in fourth grade."

Something he finds special is the friendliness of the lecturers and other students, and the help offered by the Jim-baa-yer Support Unit.

Simon has left his options open as to what he will do after graduating. While he would like to specialise in Indigenous health care, he says he would be happy in the mainstream. ■

Individual support

Indigenous students are taking advantage of ACU National's Individual Study Support Scheme.

The scheme is designed to help Indigenous students who enrol in the University's other undergraduate courses not directly related to Indigenous studies. An increasing number of Indigenous students are enrolling in a range of courses including Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Social Science and Bachelor of Arts.

The help starts when it is needed – when students are adjusting to the discipline of university studies and continues through to graduation and beyond. The scheme involves a specially designed program of study and provides extra counselling and academic skills support. Support services – including social, cultural, personal and academic – are offered by the respective Indigenous Support Units, located at ACU National campuses in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

Individual support schemes are one of the most important factors contributing to ACU National's outstanding retention rate amongst Indigenous students, 85 per cent, compared with a national rate of 60.4 per cent. ■

Graduates in the Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, now studying for their Bachelor's degree, got together at Strathfield for a residential in September. Front row (from left) Jeanette Lambert, Vicky Howie. Second row (from left) Karen Andriske, Monica Lyons, Norma Collins. Third row (from left) Kristine Baker, Linda Eldridge, Irene Green. Back row (from left) Diane Randall, Noelene Laurie



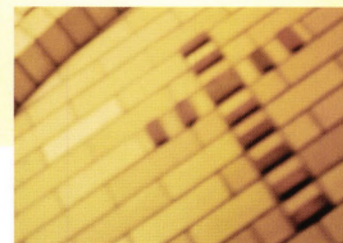
Student numbers rise

The number of Indigenous students at ACU National is rising steadily, with 269 studying in Queensland, New South Wales, the ACT and Victoria.

Brisbane has 52 students enrolled for the Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. Another 14 are studying for their degree in Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies). The Diploma in Business Administration (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) has attracted 12 students. Twenty students are doing other undergraduate courses and 12 are engaged in postgraduate studies, making a total of 110 students in Brisbane.

Melbourne and Ballarat have 18 students enrolled in Bachelor of Education, Nursing, Psychology and Exercise Science, and two studying for their Master of Arts, for a total of 20.

In Sydney, 66 are enrolled for the Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. The Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) has 39 students, while 31 are enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Secondary). Three are engaged in postgraduate work, bringing the Sydney total to 139. ■



Our commitment

ACU National's Commitment to Reconciliation is inspired by the words of Pope John Paul II.

In a message to the Indigenous peoples and the Australian Catholic Church in Alice Springs on 29 November 1986, he told the Indigenous peoples:

"For thousands of years you have lived in this land and fashioned a culture that endures to this day. Your culture which shows the lasting genius and dignity of your race must not be allowed to disappear. Your songs, your stories, your paintings, your dances, your languages must never be lost."

To all Australians, he said: "What can now be done to remedy the deeds of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow. The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognised agreements with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past. The greatest value to be achieved by such agreement, which must be implemented without causing new injustices, is respect for the dignity and growth of the human person." ■

Indigenous teachers needed

More Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers and education assistants are needed through all Australian school systems. ACU National has taken the initiative to meet this pressing need.

The University encourages both Year 12 and non-Year 12 Indigenous people to study education. It makes a special effort to accommodate those students whose responsibilities mean they need flexibility in their courses.

Students in the Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and the Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) courses can earn a diploma in three years or a degree in five and a half years. There is a strong emphasis on Indigenous concepts in the course content and in teaching and learning styles. Cultural studies is a core element of the courses. Graduates may continue their studies in the teaching and/or community education areas.

Applications can be made directly to the University and are considered from school-leavers, as well as from those with other forms of education or life experience. Admission is based on interview and assessment tasks, taking into consideration formal schooling, work experience and other achievements and interests.

In New South Wales, interviews are conducted by staff of the Yalbalunga Support Unit and course co-ordinators from the School of Education NSW.

Queensland applicants are selected on the basis of interviews with staff of the Weemala Support Unit. ■



Towards reconciliation

ACU National supports the reconciliation process and acknowledges that the Indigenous peoples are the original inhabitants of the country.

The University recognises that non-Indigenous settlement has had and continues to have a devastating impact on the lives and cultures of Indigenous peoples.

ACU National acknowledges that the effects of dispossession and loss of cultures are on-going and significant.

In view of this reality, ACU National makes a commitment to the following goals:

Each campus will endeavour to involve the Indigenous people of the region in the life of the University.

Each year, the University through its campuses will recognise Indigenous culture with activities involving the University community.

The University, through its policies and practices, will encourage greater participation of Indigenous peoples in tertiary education.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives will be integral to the curriculum of the University.

The University will join with other universities and institutions of higher education to achieve reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. ■

ACU National's policy on reconciliation was formally endorsed by its Senate on 19 March 1998.



'Many peoples of Australia are working towards the vision of an inclusive Australian society, a society ... based on justice and equity for all'

Indigenous Staff

Senior Church role for Joan Hendriks

In a life packed with achievement, the latest highlight for ACU National lecturer Joan Hendriks is her recent appointment to the Commission for Australian Catholic Women.

The commission, established by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference in December 2000, promotes women's participation in the Church.

Mrs Hendriks, from Brisbane, is a devoted worker for Indigenous people and brings enormous experience and wisdom to her new role. She is chairperson of Reconciliation Queensland Incorporated and is involved at local, state and national levels in a comprehensive range of committees, forums, councils, commissions, projects and workshops.

Along with her duties as a lecturer in Cultural Studies and Indigenous Spirituality and History at ACU National, Mrs Hendriks is a member of the Advisory

Committee to the Weemala Indigenous Support Unit on the Brisbane campus. A respected elder of the Ngugi people of Quandamooka (Moreton Bay), she is in constant demand as a guest speaker for church groups of various denominations, schools, conferences and community organisations.

At the foundation ceremony for ACU National's new Brisbane campus on 10 July 2002, Mrs Hendriks told more than 250 students, staff and invited dignitaries of her hopes for the future. "Many peoples of Australia are working towards the vision of an inclusive Australian society, a society that realistically values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's contribution in the partnership of building communities, based on justice and equity for all," she said.

As well as being deeply involved in social justice issues, she has organised cultural immersion courses for non-Indigenous

students and presented scores of workshops addressing reconciliation, Indigenous education and spirituality. With her multiple skills, Mrs Hendriks has been an integral part of the process put in place in the archdiocese of Brisbane by Archbishop John Bathersby after the *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus* report came out.

Mrs Hendriks said she was committed to the role of the commission. "I'm looking forward to being an active part of the process in achieving the objectives of the *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus* document," she said. "The title projects a vision of the commission working through a process of a just and equitable distribution of the workload of the journey as one in Christ." ■

Every year on every ACU National campus, Indigenous Week provides a chance to learn more about Australian Indigenous cultures. It is an opportunity to recognise Indigenous history and culture, and celebrate the place of Indigenous communities in the life of the University. All who attend can improve their knowledge and experience, and show support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This annual week illustrates the University's commitment to Indigenous communities throughout the nation, especially those communities associated with the six campuses of the University.

Celebrating Indigenous culture

>> Victoria



Deborah Mailman (second from left) met up with students (from left) Katrina Murphy, Miriam Fox and Hazel Datta, who joined with Indigenous students at the Strathfield Indigenous Week celebrations.

The challenge was clear to students in Victoria during Indigenous Week – put your words into action, listen up, speak up and become an active voice on campus for the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The way to meet the challenge was to sign up for the new Reconciliation Victoria, a recently established body which has as its focus the advancement of reconciliation in Victoria, and for a campus-based justice and action group.

As part of the week's celebrations, which were held from 29 July to 2 August, Indigenous food, including kangaroo and wattle, was presented in contemporary dishes, with recipe cards for any would-be chefs to take home.

Thought-provoking videos and discussions on the Indigenous angle to Australia's history had the desired effect of making everybody sit up and take notice. The videos included *Unfinished Business*, looking at the history of colonisation of Aboriginal peoples

across Australia, *White Australia Has a Black History* and the *Aboriginal Civil Rights* video, presenting an overview of the rights denied to Indigenous Australians since colonisation and their continued struggles.

A Koorie Mass was celebrated at both the Melbourne and Ballarat campuses. The Mass featured Indigenous song and symbolism, beginning with the Aboriginal Christian Water Blessing Ceremony and *Our Father*, sung in Aboriginal English.

Members of the local Indigenous community attended the Ballarat campus Mass. Ecumenical/inter-faith prayers were said for victims of the Stolen Generation and for Aboriginal communities fighting for native title and land rights.

A barbecue was held to raise money for the Koorie Kids Foundation, run by the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne.

On Ballarat campus, the Jim-baa-yer Support Unit held a morning tea to celebrate Indigenous Week. ■

>> Queensland

Reuniting children from the Stolen Generation was a key theme in the Indigenous Week celebrations on Brisbane campus. Mr Robert Sternham, field officer for Link Up, was guest speaker on campus. Link Up, an Indigenous organisation which helps Indigenous families find children from the Stolen Generation, plays a crucial role in bringing families back together.

Staff and students participated in a Fire Blessing Ceremony, and there were displays by Noonga Reconciliation and the Keriba Warngun Women's Group. An Indigenous dancing and didgeridu playing workshop was open to all students, along with an artwork display. A Kup Mari lunch of meat and vegetables slowly baked underground, as well as a Torres Strait Island food stall, kept the crowd well-fed. ■



>> New South Wales

It's one thing to see your heroes on TV but it's even better when they're right alongside you on campus at Indigenous Week.

Country and city-based students – and Strathfield's Yalbalinga staff members – were thrilled to share a barbecue and music with AFL award-winning actress Deborah Mailman, from the hit TV show *The Secret Life Of Us*, and Adam Goodes and Ricky O'Loughlin from the Sydney Swans AFL team.

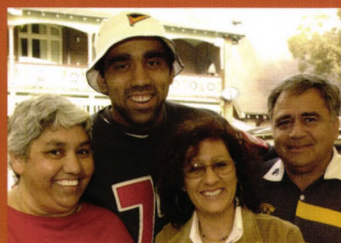
Deborah was too busy being mobbed by fans to get a word in, while Adam was serving at the barbecue, answering questions and trying to get a bite to eat.

Nothing was going to stop Ricky, though, not even a painful broken sternum (chest bone) which he suffered in a recent match.

Speaking on behalf of Adam, Ricky said: "When we were invited to come here, we said 'For sure!' It is an honour to be invited here and to see what our people are doing,

to see what they are achieving. When you see that, it makes you feel so proud to be Aboriginal."

Guest speaker at Strathfield's Indigenous Week was Joe Ross, Community Chairman for the Bunuba people from Junjuwa community, Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia. He also heads a national Indigenous leadership program and is involved at local and national levels with issues affecting Aboriginal people. ■



Sydney Swans AFL star Adam Goodes with third-year Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education students Denise Kelly (left), Michelle Andrews and John Nolan

An exhibition by artist Richard Patrick Campbell impressed visitors to Indigenous Week on Strathfield campus.

One of the most powerful works, an Aboriginal elder of high status and respect, is a tribute to his late father and great uncle.

Eight paintings, mainly acrylic on canvas, depict the Annunciation, the Crucifixion and the promise of new life, the intricate Circle of Life and traditional Aboriginal stories.

Dolphins are a recurrent theme, as they are linked to the artist's own spirituality.

The artist's message is that we all come from the spiritual world and will all return to it. ■



Marge Campbell, of the Yalbalinga Support Unit, joined the boys in the band – (from left) Col Hardy, Greg Simms, Ian Hildebrand and Michael Donovan – when they entertained students, staff and visitors at Strathfield campus during Indigenous Week



Indigenous Alumni

>> Chris Hunt

**Teacher, Walgett Public School
Bachelor of Teaching (Primary –
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Studies)
Strathfield**

Chris Hunt has a message for all students: stick at it. He graduated from ACU National Strathfield campus in 1998, after five-years of hard work and study. Working as an Aboriginal education assistant all day, Chris would go home and hit the textbooks to finish his assignments.

But it was all worth it. "I don't know how I did it, but I did it," he said. "Sometimes I felt like giving up. But I had a lot of assistance and encouragement from the University. They're a top staff."

Chris is Walgett-born and bred and that was where he wanted to teach. He is now in his second year as a permanent, teaching grades four, five and six. ■

>> Victoria Schreiber

**Support Teacher, Koorie Open Door Education School, Swan Hill
Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)
(4th Year Upgrade)
Melbourne**

Young people who were missing out on an education in the mainstream system are catching up through Koorie Open Door Education (KODE) schools.

And ACU National graduate Victoria Schreiber is part of the team making a difference. Victoria is a support teacher for classes from Prep to Year 2 at the KODE school in Swan Hill, 344 kilometres north-west of Melbourne.

The school, which opened this year, is funded by the Victorian state government in conjunction with the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc, as are KODE schools which opened in Morwell and Glenroy seven years ago, and in Mildura four years ago.

Victoria sees the role of the schools as giving students ownership of their education. "In mainstream education, our people were not achieving a high retention rate," she said. "It wasn't working for them. This way, they're getting the encouragement to go on with their education." The schools are open to non-Aboriginal students and teachers alike.

Victoria gives high praise to ACU National for the way it conducts its courses for Indigenous students. "Going through the Catholic system was fantastic," she said. "If I didn't have the support they offered – and gave – I wouldn't have got through."

"There was no interruption to my work and everyone was so supportive. From the Koorie support workers to the lecturers, everyone was fantastic. I would recommend it to anyone." ■

ACU National Diploma of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander Education student,
Barry Lea.



Indigenous Event

The art of prayer

The outstanding exhibition, *Dreaming in the City: Praying the Rosary the Aboriginal Way*, was one of the highlights of Indigenous Week on the Melbourne campus.

Presented by the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in Melbourne (ACMM), the exhibition used paintings by Aboriginal artists to illustrate the Rosary.

The paintings represent the various key events in the life of Jesus, from His conception to the Resurrection and the Ascension, and to Mary's Assumption into Heaven.

The Gospel stories upon which the Rosary is based are linked to the stories and experiences of urban Aboriginal people.

ACMM has been striving since it began in 1988 to bring the Aboriginal way and the Catholic/Christian way together. ■

Above: The painting by Doug Smith, a descendant of the Mutthi Mutthi people of the Lake Mungo area of south-west New South Wales, is part of the *Dreaming in the City: Praying the Rosary the Aboriginal Way* exhibition. It is reproduced with the permission of the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne

Indigenous Postgraduate

>> Mary Senj

**Master of Education
(Teaching and Learning)
Strathfield**

ACU National student Mary Senj has found the key to opening doors that she thought were closed forever. Mary, who has graduated with her Diploma of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Education/Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies), is now studying for her Master of Education (Teaching and Learning).

"It was really significant for me to complete study at tertiary level as I left school when I was 14 and thought that was it," she said. "What I know now is that I can do anything I wish as long as I am prepared to put in the work."

Having tertiary qualifications has enabled her to teach Cultural Studies to mainstream students (primary and secondary) as well as Aboriginal students.

But there is more to it than just having letters after your name, says Mary. "It has been more about having doors open or having opportunities that I may not have had before," she said.

As the Aboriginal Education Officer for the Catholic Schools Office, Broken Bay Diocese, Mary is supporting the educational needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families. The Diocese begins at Naremburn, in Sydney's northern suburbs, taking in the Manly Peninsula



'What I know now is that I can do anything I wish as long as I am prepared to put in the work'

region and extending to Toukley and Wyong on the Central Coast, with a Catholic population of about 191,300.

As well, she works with teachers on developing appropriate Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum, planning and delivering professional development on a range of Aboriginal education issues.

Mary says studying at ACU National is "great". "The teaching staff have been most supportive and helpful," she said. "Mostly, though, it has been the staff at Yalbalunga who have always been there, offering encouragement and support."

And Mary's next step? "To continue in the area I am currently working in, but improve my skills and knowledge." ■



Indigenous Alumni

>> Dean Duncan

Master of Education (Research)
Brisbane

Dean Duncan is using the benefits of his study at ACU National to help young Indigenous people. Originally from Moree, Dean has called Brisbane home for the past 18 years and was in the first intake of students in the Associate Diploma of Education in 1994.

After completing that course, he enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies) at ACU National's Strathfield campus, flying down from Brisbane to attend residence. Dean followed this with a Graduate Diploma of Education, also at Strathfield. And all this while he was working full-time and raising two children with his wife, Leisa.

Now Dean is a district community education counsellor, managing all Indigenous education services in 36 high schools and 123 primary schools stretching from Brisbane to Maroochydore in the north and west to Kilcoy. He is in charge of seven full-time and 43 part-time staff.

"It was easy coming into the course," Dean said of his studies with ACU National. "There was no pressure. Because of the flexibility and the way courses are offered, it means I didn't have to be away from home often." ■

New perspectives for non-Indigenous students

Arts and science students are gaining Aboriginal perspectives from the *Making it Work* project at the Melbourne campus.

Dr Caroline Smith and Diane White are lecturers in art and science at the School of Education at ACU National's Melbourne campus. The students are studying to be teachers and most are not Indigenous. They developed the project in conjunction with Jim-baa-yer Aboriginal Liaison Officer Naomi Wolfe.

Ms White said they realised that not enough time was being spent on multicultural issues in their courses. "We're now moving away from a Euro-centric style of teaching and looking more closely at Indigenous as well as other cultures," she said.

Ms White believes the course will bring a new focus on Aborigines and women in the fields of art and science. "Caroline and I hope to raise the profile of the University's mission and raise the profile of social justice," she said.

Ms White and Dr Smith created the course after attending a workshop on the University's relationship with the Aboriginal community, run by Naomi Wolfe and Vicki Walker, coordinator of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Melbourne.

The Aboriginal community recognised ACU National as being committed to Indigenous issues, Ms White said, but some students were still leaving the campus with a lack of knowledge of the Indigenous community.

After the workshop, Ms White realised that the Aboriginal core classes weren't enough. "We needed a concerted effort to pool our resources together," she said. Ms White teaches art and Dr Smith teaches science to the same group of students.

They decided to combine their curriculum to give a more concentrated focus to Aboriginal issues. They used funding from the Dean of Education's New Initiatives budget.

Ms White hopes her students will leave this class with a commitment to Aboriginal issues and that the course can be extended to other campuses. ■

one country, two histories

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One of the biggest challenges facing Delsie Lillyst, Indigenous Education Officer at Melbourne's Catholic Education Office, is how to educate the wider community accurately and sensitively about Aboriginal history, and yet deal with the realities of Australia's history.

Delsie, a part-time, mature age student, is in the first year of her Bachelor of Education studies at ACU National's Melbourne campus (St Patrick's) and lectures on Aboriginal history, culture and spirituality at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

"It is important that all learning be inclusive, reflective and comparative in order for non-Indigenous Australians to comprehend the simplicities and complexities of Indigenous Australians, our beliefs and our culture," she said.

"A lot of people think all Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders are the same, but we're not. There's diversity amongst Aboriginal people here in Victoria and across Australia."

"Aboriginal history? They (non-Indigenous Australians) haven't heard about it. To some people, it's unbelievable, startling."

"There is some hostility from non-Indigenous people that they had not been told the truth. The reality is that many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were

never told the truth either, and we were living it."

Delsie says she tries to educate people "in a way that doesn't create more barriers".

"I try to knock down the barriers that are already there," she said.

One of her methods to help students and teachers understand the story of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is to give them the opportunity to reflect on their own story and what is important to them.

Delsie also makes strong links to Catholic ethos. "There are a lot of similarities, and there are a lot of differences", she said.

"I always focus on the positives. Yes, I do challenge others' perceptions of Indigenous Australia's history, but I also let people know that they can have a pivotal role in bringing about change, simply by listening to the voice of Indigenous Australia. Listen to our story. We're educating for the future, so we have to at least have a go at getting it right."

Delsie says she can see a gradual change in young people's grasp of issues affecting Aboriginal people. "Not this year, but maybe next year, we will see students with more understanding of the issues that impact on Indigenous Australians today," she said.

Delsie believes that the Catholic system sometimes needs to "revisit the Gospel's values" and relates strongly to the speech Pope John Paul II gave in Alice Springs on 29 November 1986 and "what our own Church is telling us".

"It is a matter of respecting and celebrating our differences, knowing that we all have a contribution to make to the nurturing of this land, our country," she said. "Seek the knowledge and you'll find the truth."

Delsie says her studies with ACU National will provide her with a personal sense of achievement.

"Hopefully, if doors appear before me in the future, I'll be able to open them," she said. "I'm taking it one step at a time, but postgraduate studies are not beyond the realms of possibility."

"I'd like to think that I can make a difference to the lives of the young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students I work with, by giving them a sense of right direction, future hope and most importantly, a sense of security in their right to be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students."

"That is the ultimate gift from the Creator, the right to be free, be safe and be happy."

"It may not be a true reality today for my people, but it's definitely a future possibility." ■

Indigenous Undergraduate

>> Delsie Lillyst

Bachelor of Education (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies)

Melbourne



'Hopefully, if doors appear before me in the future, I'll be able to open them'



A new awareness for non-Indigenous students

Cultural immersion programs play a crucial role in the education of ACU National non-Indigenous students.

The programs help students expand their understanding of Indigenous people and their culture, and encourage them to take an active role in shaping a peaceful and cohesive society.

Preparation for the immersion programs starts with workshops, seminars and lectures before groups go into the new environment. Typically, a day is devoted to discussions covering cultural misconceptions and sensitivity, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and customs and protocols. After their return, there is debriefing and a program of continuing action. By arrangement, participants may gain credit towards a Graduate Certificate, a Diploma or towards undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications.

While on the camps, students are encouraged to learn from the local Aboriginal people, experience customs and lifestyles and to incorporate this knowledge into their training. Areas covered include the connection of Indigenous peoples to the land, the effects of settlement and dispossession, the benefits of

regaining the land and Indigenous health issues.

One recent camp involved 160 first-year nursing students from the Ballarat campus. The School of Nursing in Victoria has made Aboriginal cultural awareness and experiences an important part of the Bachelor of Nursing degree. All students must complete clinical practice and the first unit of Australian Indigenous Cultural Awareness training.

"The students learned about the dreaming stories and the social structure of the community," said Murray Bardwell, School of Nursing lecturer at Ballarat campus. "It was important for them to learn about the interface between the local non-Aboriginal culture and the Aboriginal culture. The students were dealing with issues they had never thought about before. I think they really appreciated the experience." ■

Indigenous Undergraduate

>>John Nolan

Diploma of Education leading to Bachelor of Education (Primary) (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)
Strathfield



Education is probably the most important part of our lives, says John Nolan, who is in his third year of study. John, from Dubbo, was on Strathfield campus for the week-long residential during Indigenous Week.

Having worked for some years at a senior level in a government department, John at first thought going "back to school" might be a step down. "But instead of coming down, I felt elevated to a better environment," he said.

John plans to finish his degree course and go on to teach. "This gives me an opportunity to be a role model for the children," he said.

He believes that governments should "focus on putting money into education first and foremost, rather than into other areas". And as for studying with ACU National? "Great. A really, really good experience." ■

Illustration insights



Associate Professor Margot Hillel and artwork by Dennis Nona from *Dabu the Baby Dugong Kazi dhangal*, published by Magabala Books, displayed at the exhibition

When Gamillaroi woman Elaine Russell was a child, her parents were prevented from telling her their traditional stories. But now, Elaine is bringing stories alive for other children – and adults – in her work as a storybook illustrator.

"I don't illustrate stories in my own language, because back in the 1950s most of our parents were told not to talk in our lingo, so it wasn't passed down to us, which was sad because it was lost to us forever," she said.

Ms Russell is one of the artists whose work went on show in the *In Dreams, Ancestral Stories Are Told To Us* exhibition of Indigenous children's book illustrations at the Melbourne campus.

Professor Margot Hillel, Head of the School of Arts & Sciences at the campus, brought the exhibition there last September after attending a showing. "I thought the exhibition fitted well with the mission of the University and that many of the students would be very interested in the artwork," she said.

Storytelling plays an important role in displaying Indigenous culture and, traditionally, stories were passed from one generation to the next.

One of the illustrators, Jennifer Inkamala, Pitjatantjarra, Arrernte, said: "My grandmother has been telling us our traditional stories for

years. *Rainbow Serpent* (shown in the exhibition) tells one of these."

Another of the artists, Bronwyn Bancroft, of the Bundjalung Nation, said: "When I grew up, there were no books about Indigenous culture illustrated by Gooris, so that is why I wanted to do books and fill the gap. Now there's lots."

Olive Boddington, of the Wajarri, one of the Yammaji people, said: "My children love my painting. Some do art and carve eggs. My images come from what I know myself. They are not handed down."

Samantha Cook, of the Nyikina people, said: "*The Best Little Knitter* was an important book for me to illustrate and have published, as it defies stereotypes of what Indigenous art and stories should be. It is a contemporary Indigenous children's story and is party to the living, evolving culture of Indigenous Australia."

Arone Meeks, a Kookmidjji man, regards his art as rewarding, fulfilling, demanding, and a responsible, ongoing process of sharing culture.

Dennis Nona, a Torres Strait Islander of the Tabu people, said: "Dancing was the only way to express our culture, so I thought of different ways. In art, I express my culture through lino-prints and paintings."

Francine Ngardarb Riches, Bardi/Jawa, explained: "Where I come from, Bardi people at One Arm Point, our culture is very much intact. The language is spoken as a first language. I am so lucky that our culture was not taken from us. We are able to put our stories in books and videos and CDs."

Patt Mamanyjun Torres, Jabirr Jabirr, Nyul Nyul and Yawuru, said: "Being a writer/illustrator means I can create pictures or images of the positive aspects of Indigenous Australian peoples and our culture."

For Associate Professor Hillel the exhibition facilitated a greater understanding of Indigenous cultures: "I wanted people to gain a wider understanding of the importance of illustration in picture books and a wider understanding of Indigenous artwork."

And how does she rate the success of the exhibition? "Everyone had favourite pieces of artwork and the Vice-Chancellor even bought two pieces for the University," she said. ■

The ACU National Gallery at 26 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, also held an important exhibition of limited edition prints from artists of the Mualgau Minaral Artists' Collective on Mua Island, Torres Strait, in association with the Alcaston Gallery, from 25 October to 8 November.

Indigenous Alumni

>>Blanche Gordon

Teacher, Brewarrina Central School
Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)
Strathfield

Blanche Gordon enjoys being able to put something back into the community by being a classroom teacher. The ACU National graduate started her teaching career early in 2002 with a first-year class at Brewarrina Central School.

Blanche is from Brewarrina, so her work is directly helping her own people. "It has always been my goal to become a teacher," she said.

She had high praise for the Yalbalanga Support Unit on Strathfield campus and for her fellow students in general. "Everybody was really friendly and helpful," she said. "And the support was fantastic." ■

Indigenous Courses

- **Diploma in Business Administration
(Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)
Brisbane Campus**

>> Duration 1.5 years full-time or equivalent Offered by a combination of external mode (distance education) and on-campus residentials.

>> Industry Experience Students are required to undertake a Business Industry Link Program (BIL) in each semester. This is very similar to work experience. Some credit for the BIL may be granted to students who are involved in paid or voluntary work within relevant organisations.

>> Career Opportunities The course is aimed at enhancing job opportunities within both public and private business administration and community service areas.

- **Bachelor of Education
(Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies)
Brisbane Campus
Strathfield Campus**

>> Duration 2.5 years full-time following successful completion of the Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education. Offered by a combination of external mode (distance education) and on-campus residentials. The degree is for students who may wish to teach in schools or work with communities where there are significant numbers of Aboriginal students, and in schools offering Aboriginal Studies to all students.

>> Career Opportunities Teaching graduates are sought by Catholic, independent and state schools, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training, the Commonwealth Department of Human Services and the Overseas Service Bureau.

- **Bachelor of Education
(Secondary – Indigenous Studies)
Strathfield Campus**

>> Duration 4 years full-time. Offered by a combination of external mode (distance education) and on-campus residentials.

>> Professional Recognition Graduates are eligible for teacher registration and accreditation to teach in Catholic, independent and state schools.

>> Career Opportunities Teaching graduates are sought by Catholic, independent and state schools, government departments and the Overseas Service Bureau.

- **Diploma in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education
Brisbane Campus
Strathfield Campus**

>> Duration 3 years full-time. Offered by a combination of external mode (distance education) and on-campus residentials. Graduates of the Diploma are eligible for entry into the Bachelor of Education (Primary – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies), which is an additional 2.5 years of full-time study.

>> Residential Students are required to attend two compulsory residential schools in Brisbane/Sydney each semester and one compulsory field experience in the local area each year.

>> Professional Experience In each of the three years of the course, students will be placed in a local school. It is expected that all students will take on the full role of an assistant teacher by the end of the third year.

>> Career Opportunities Graduates are sought by employers in Catholic, independent and government schools in roles such as Assistant Teacher and Home-School Liaison Officer, and in leadership roles in local communities.

- **Bachelor of Nursing/Bachelor of Applied Health Sciences
(Indigenous Primary Health Care)
Brisbane Campus**

>> Duration 4.5 years full-time. About 17 to 30 class hours per week, including clinical practicum. This dual degree has been developed as a collaborative initiative between ACU National and the University of Queensland.

>> Career Opportunities Positions will be available for graduates as nurses, and especially employment in many positions in Indigenous communities and associated health care services.

- **Postgraduate Certificate in Indigenous and Cross-Cultural Education
Strathfield Campus**

>> Duration 6 months full-time or equivalent part-time. On campus.

Indigenous Support

Support units on campus are a focal point for Indigenous students at ACU National. The units provide social, cultural, personal and academic support to the growing numbers of Indigenous people studying at the University.

In turn, this contributes to an environment which promotes a positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identity. Applicants are strongly encouraged to make personal contact with their liaison officers for information about admission and support services.

- **ACT and New South Wales**

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For enrolment details contact the ACU National Indigenous Support Unit in your state to receive a Direct Entry Information pack, or contact your local university admission centre.

Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre www.qtac.edu.au Telephone 1900 971 100

New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory University Admissions Centre www.uac.edu.au Telephone 02 9752 0200

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre www.vtac.edu.au Telephone 1300 364 133