

RMIT UNIVERSITY

# NGARARA WILLIM NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 4 AUGUST 2020



## Dreaming Inside

Voices from Junee Correctional Centre  
Volume 8



Edited by Aunty  
Barbara Nicholson



## Significant and important dates

28 August – Kimmie’s Comedy Standup Show

31 August - HE Census

31 August – 6 September – Mid-semester break

2 September - Indigenous Literacy Day

7 September – Classes resume

11 September – Study Tips with Liz and Shannon

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# Womin Djeka!

## Welcome to the fourth edition

We welcome you to our August edition as we move into Guling (Orchid) season. The cold weather is coming to an end and Guling (orchids) and Muyan (Silver Wattles) are flowering, it's the beginning of mating season for Gurrborra (Koalas) and the star Arcturus is seen on the northwestern horizon soon after sunset. It's the fourth brightest star in the night sky so keep a look out. And you also might hear the male Gurrborra bellowing at night too.

The past month has seen all Melbourne mob go into stage 4 lock down and the Ngarara Willim team are working hard supporting students through these challenging times, by making regular contact, hosting activities, challenging with exercise events and keeping connected.

The National Indigenous Fashion Awards were held early in August and seen our Deadly Alumni Rachael Hocking host the event. Ngarara Willim Centre congratulate all the finalists and award winners, including Keiren Karripul, winner of the Textile Design Award supported by the RMIT's School of Fashion and Textiles and the Ngarara Willim Centre.

National Science week was held on 15-23 August and Ngarara William chose to reflect on our Deadly Day of Science days held over the past three years and begin to plan our virtual Deadly Day of Science for 2020. Our Deadly Day of Science is an annual on campus event that brings secondary school students on campus and engages them in a day of science activities.

We continue to student stories and this edition we talk to Fashion Design and Textiles student Louisa Bloomer and hear about her experiences and what she recommends.

August is Family History Month and the Ngarara Willim team share images of their family and ancestors. Read the article about how you can do your own genealogical research with some fantastic links and ideas of where to look to get information about your family.

Keep reading about our Deadly Alumni, Hollie Johnson. Hollie talks about her journey through RMIT and what she is up to now. Also check out local Indigenous businesses, Pawa Catering and Mabu Mabu and see how you can support them while feeding your mob some delicious traditional foods.

We welcome our new cohort of Diploma of Community Service students starting at the Victorian Aboriginal Health Service this month. Plus, heaps more.

We are sad to announce that in September, we farewell long standing staff member of RMIT Simon Rose, who has been in a secondment role within Ngarara Willim Centre for the past year. We will miss Simon's calm and caring nature, his strong Community values and the knowledge he brought from 10 years at RMIT. He will continue to explore his passion of film and media and we hope to see him back on the other side of the office as a student again! We wish him all the best with his future endeavours and look forward to staying connected. Simon's last day is 11 September but watch out for his future projects on the big screen.

Stay safe you mob.

## On the cover



Published annually since 2012, Dreaming Inside consists of eight volumes of writing from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates at Jonee Correctional Centre.

Collected by the not-for-profit Ngana Baranagarai (Black Wallaby) project, more than 700 poems, song lyrics, biographical material

and philosophical observations have been written by more than 200 authors.

Project convenor, Wadi Wadi elder Aunty Barbara Nicholson says, 'These works should be required reading for everyone...'

The books can be purchased via:

Web: [southcoastwriters.org/shop](https://southcoastwriters.org/shop)

Email: [ngana.baranagarai@gmail.com](mailto:ngana.baranagarai@gmail.com)

# National Indigenous Fashion Awards 2020

Congratulations to all the finalists and award winners at the National Indigenous Fashion Awards the year. The NIFA include six categories and recognise and celebrate the innovation, diversity and ethical practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and fashion designers. NIFA's inaugural awards showcase collections and designs from Australia's leading and emerging Indigenous designers and artists. The event was hosted online by RMIT and Ngarara Willim's Deadly Alumni, Rachael Hocking.

RMIT's School of Fashion and Textiles and the Ngarara Willim Centre supported the Textile Design Award that was awarded to Kieren Karripul, a Ngen'gi wumirri designer from Nauiyu Nambiyu community, Daly River in the Northern Territory.

RMIT's Fashion and Textiles and Ngarara Willim look forward to welcoming Kieren and his community to connect with us in the near future to experience further technical and design skills and to share their combined passions for textile design with our students and staff.



To find out more about Kieren, finalists and the National Indigenous Fashion Awards visit, [nifa.com.au](http://nifa.com.au)



## Pete's Journey

Hi, my name is Pete Currie, I am a proud Wurundjeri man, this is about my experience attending University as a mature aged man.

I worked in the IT/Communications sector for over 20 years. Initially as a programmer, and for the last seven years as IT Manager. The company I worked for was sold and unfortunately, I was made redundant. I attempted to find another job, but there were no IT Manager roles available. I managed to obtain a job as a programmer, but over the years, technology had changed and I was unfamiliar coding with the new software and lost my job.

I spent time looking for other work, however, I was unsuccessful. I began volunteering at a couple of places, including the Cancer Council supporting people. I realised my passion was supporting people and I decided to become a Psychologist.

I researched various courses at different institutions, however, as it had been 35 years since I studied, I decided to enrol into a Diploma course that went for one year. That way I was not locked into a three-year course, plus I would determine if I could handle studying. I also thought that I could stick it out for one year and I would have a certificate at the end that may enable me to get work in a different field. I found that I really enjoy studying, and subsequently enrolled into a bachelor's degree.

RMIT has a fantastic Indigenous centre, Ngarara Willim. The staff are extremely supportive, caring and the environment is friendly and welcoming. It is a great mob. RMIT also offer a tutoring support program for Indigenous students. I have utilised this program during my degree and strongly recommend it as it has helped me enormously.

*Pete is currently studying a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Psychology) and previously completed a Diploma of Community Services.*

# Student Spotlight:

# Louisa Bloomer

**Name:** Louisa Bloomer

**Mob:** Kamilaroi

**Course:** Associate Degree in Fashion Design & Technology

**Tell us about yourself (Your background/your journey)?**

Growing up, I have always been strong in my identity. Although when I entered High School, the curriculum was not in favour of Aboriginal history, which I found to be a real issue.

**What/who inspired you to study at RMIT?**

It was Ngarara Willim that really helped with my application, they really supported me to fast track it to get into my program. I also took an interest in RMIT as I felt they have the best Fashion program in the southern hemisphere.

**What do you enjoy most about engaging with Ngarara Willim?**

I enjoy being apart of a welcoming community and engaging with others who have similar stories to mine. It's also comforting to know of a centralised point to know where I can get support and get questions answered.

**What does "Ngarara Willim" (Gathering Place) mean to you?**

To me, Ngarara Willim means that it is a place that I can meet people of my culture. Yarning with mob who descend from other parts of the country and tell each other our stories. I feel that I've made deeper connections with Ngarara students in my program.

**What's your proudest moment/achievements since studying at RMIT?**

I'm very proud of seeing my artwork be utilised over RMIT and have had opportunities to speak about it and events. I am also proud of receiving High Distinction marks on a jacket design in my program, despite receiving negative feedback initially.



**What would be your message to community members thinking of studying at university?**

My message would be that there are plenty of pathway options that exist for University and look to study something that you're interested in. No matter how well you do in high school, you can still attend and shine at university.

Instagram: [@LouBloomer](https://www.instagram.com/LouBloomer)

# Deadly Day of Science

Since 2017, Ngarara Willim Centre and RMIT's College of Science deliver the annual Deadly Day of Science. Our Deadly Day of Science is held at RMIT's Bundoora campus and gives the opportunity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in years 7-11 a day to attend STEMM disciplines and learn more about Exercise and Sports science, Nursing, Osteopathy and Pharmacy medicine. Students also get to engage with student mentors and learn more about what it is like to study at RMIT and University life.

Last year, the Deadly Day of Science, the day was well attended with students from Wesley College, The Grange and Montmorency Secondary College. They were Welcomed to Country by Uncle Ian Hunter and demonstrated a boomerang throwing and some didgeridoo play. Uncle Ian then took them for a walk along the Keelbundoora Scar Tree Heritage Trail to see the six scar trees and talked about bush tucker with the plants that were there. He demonstrated the chemicals and biological compounds in the botanical plants there, including how to wash your hands with plants. A video call with Uncle Jason Coombs, a nurse from Oak Valley, a remote Aboriginal community in the far west of South Australia, on Maralinga Tjarutja Lands.

The students also had some in-class sessions in the laboratories where they conducted experiments on how to detract DNA and essential oil and had a Bundoora Campus and facilities overview of the lecture and courses done by RMIT.

The Deadly Day of Science will be held again this year in October, but online, so register your interest by emailing [ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au) with the subject "Deadly Day of Science".

Further information will also be sent out in coming newsletters, so keep a look out.



# Our Students, Our Priority

Studying in isolation has had a real impact on many of our students and staff, as well as RMIT University as a whole.

As our students are our number one priority, we have ensured that we make regular contact and check in with students. Especially students who have relocated to Melbourne and are living independently without the support from family and community. Ngarara Willim have been able to regularly check in with these students in accommodation to make sure they are feeling supported and know where to seek supports if needed.

We have been lucky enough to be able to provide students in financial hardship some support with access to IT and living support during these times when students and their families are under immense pressure. It's all about keeping everyone well and well connected and feeling supported.

Ngarara Willim provided an opportunity for staff and students to participate in online learning modules provided by St Johns Ambulance Service

## Farewell Simon

Hey everyone,

It is with some sadness, but also some excitement that I have to tell everyone that I'm moving on from RMIT.

I've been at RMIT for 10 years and before that as a student. It has been such an amazing time for me. I have worked with so many wonderfully passionate people, made amazing connections across the whole University and during my time seen many changes and developments for Indigenous students and staff.

I'm looking at the possibility of studying again so you might see me in the corridors of Ngarara Willim one day asking Carlie and Catherine for a tutor haha.

I would say to all our current students, you are in such a good place. Keep your connections with

to help students with their own struggles and to help students be better prepared to help others. Some of the sessions that proved to be popular were:

- Your Mental Health & Working from Home
- Youth Mental Health COVID-19
- First Aid for the Mind
- Stress and Building Resilience during COVID-19
- Learning skills in Aboriginal Mental Health with Girraway Ganyi

Students were also given the opportunity to participate in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid. Students took part in a two-session program that is accredited through Mental Health First Aid Australia, again focusing on how to assist someone suffering a mental health condition.

The scheduling of regular social events to allow students to connect and feel engaged with fellow students and staff have been popular also, with many more scheduled for the remainder of the year. Activities have included student cooking demonstrations, games nights, student lead fitness classes as well as a student comedy night.

We hope to be back on campus as soon as we are able, but until then we will continue with the important work around keeping everyone as connected as possible and making study to be as easy as it can be online.



the Ngarara Willim team strong, they are there to support you.

Through all of these troubling times, I wish you all the very best with your studies and career goals for the future.

Stay safe and well everyone - Cheers, Simon.



# Family History Month

August is National Family History Month and there is no better time than explore your family origins while in lockdown with COVID-19.

There are many reasons why you or someone in your family does a family history. It has helped people know where they came from, give you a better understanding of your family members, give you a great sense of identity and it shows how it makes your family and you so strong. Think about what it is that you want to know.

While there are many great reasons do delve into your genealogy, it can open some surprising or shameful facts about your family that you or family members weren't aware of. It's a good idea to talk about what you find and debrief about anything that upsets you. But remember, this is what makes you, you.

You contribute to keeping the oldest civilisation alive with the blood of your ancestors.

Some resources to start with:

- AIATSIS Toolkits and how to - [aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family](https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/finding-your-family)
- Centre for Indigenous Family History Studies [www.cifhs.com](http://www.cifhs.com)
- Newspaper articles [www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au)
- Link up organisations and local town or city genealogy groups
- State and National Records and Archives
- Australian War Memorial [www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au)

There are many places help you get information, but the best place to start is with yourself. Write down what you know about yourself. And then go back through the generations of your ancestors. Write down all the information about your parents, and then their parents, so on and so on.

And then you can add to what you know with photographs, newspaper articles and birth, death and marriage certificates.

AIATSIS have some great resources but there are many of places you can research and find interesting information. But depending on what state you live; you can find other resources there.

But the best source is your family – talk to your parents, your uncles, your aunts, your grandparents – there is always one family member who knows a lot who love talking about it.

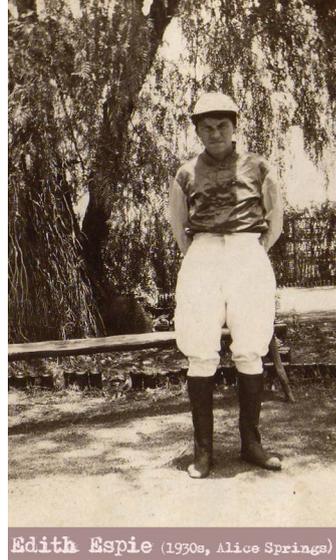
In the near future, we will engage our students with AIATSIS for some genealogical workshops.

- State and National Libraries
- State Birth Death and Marriage Registries and records
- Cemeteries [www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com) [www.austcemindex.com](http://www.austcemindex.com)
- Obituaries and Death Notice - [www.ryersonindex.org](http://www.ryersonindex.org) [www.obits.com.au](http://www.obits.com.au)
- Specific website – eg. [www.cherbourgmemory.org](http://www.cherbourgmemory.org) or the Strehlow Research Centre

2



3



Edith Espie (1930s, Alice Springs)

4



5



6



7



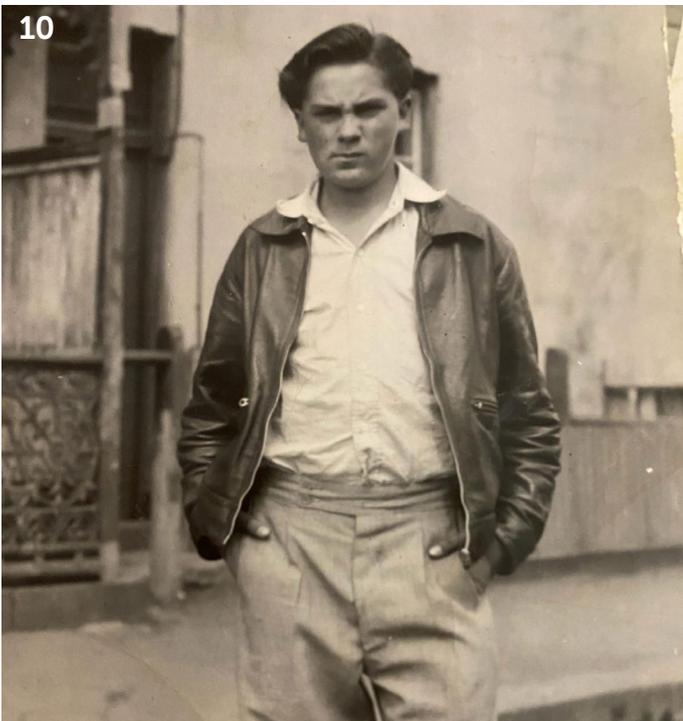
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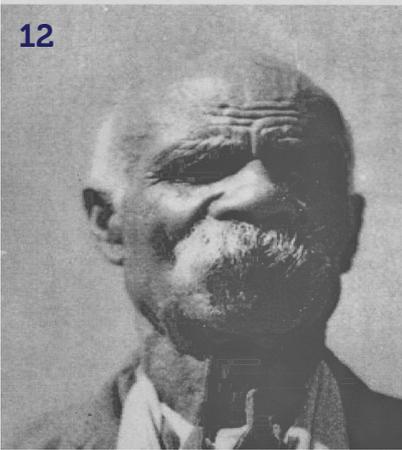
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12



13



14



15



16



- 1: The Lake family (Catherine Lake)
- 2: Maude and Percy Lake (Catherine Lake)
- 3: Edith Espie, a female jockey 1930s, grandmother (Catherine Lake)
- 4: Espie family reunion (Catherine Lake)
- 5: Nana Hetti (Catherine Lake)
- 6: Brailey family (Jason Brailey)
- 7: Myra Hull-Hodgson, Great grandmother (Dads side) (Nicole Shanahan)
- 8: Iris Atkinson, great grandmother (front row) (Lewis Brown)
- 9: Nicole's grandmothers Mavis Waddell, Shirley Arbon (Nicole Shanahan)

- 10: Alan Brown, grandfather (Lewis Brown)
- 11: Frank Fisher, great great grandfather (mums side) 11th light horse regiment (Simon Rose)
- 12: Willie Goodchap, great great grandfather (Charlotte Franks)
- 13: Hettie, great grandmother (Catherine Lake)
- 14: My mum, sister and I after I was adopted (Cathy Doe)
- 15: King Billy Jager (Cathy Doe)
- 16: Daisy Horace, great grandmother (mums side) (Nicole Shanahan)

# Community Partnerships



## Weenthunga Health Network

### Weenthunga Women's Health Network

Ngarara Willim have recently secured a partnership with Weenthunga Women's Health Network. Weenthunga is a Aboriginal led organisation encouraging collaboration between Australian and Indigenous peoples to contribute to better health in Victoria. Ngarara Willim will be supporting great initiatives from Weenthunga, including their "Nyarrn-Gakgo Mangkie" Program. Weenthunga staff will also be delivering exciting workshops for Ngarara Willim Students and RMIT staff, so watch this space!

More info about Weenthunga Health Network:  
[weenthunga.com.au/#weenthunga-about](http://weenthunga.com.au/#weenthunga-about)

### 3KND

3KND, Melbourne's first Indigenous owned and managed AM radio station, hit the airwaves in June 2003. 3KND 1503AM Kool N Deadly is proudly Melbourne's only Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Radio Station.

3KND is an Independent and not-for-profit Indigenous Radio and Media Broadcasting Service. 3KND Kool N Deadly Radio Station broadcasts media services on the airwaves 24 hours, 7 days a week in Melbourne.

Ngarara Willim have recently engaged with 3KND to host advertisements voiced by Ngarara Willim Staff and Students! Ngarara Willim will also be looking to engage with 3KND for some exciting projects in the future, so watch this space!

For more information and to donate or subscribe, visit: [www.3knd.org.au](http://www.3knd.org.au)



ganbina

Ganbina is Australia's most successful Indigenous school to work transition program.

Based in Shepparton, Ganbina mentors young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, from the ages of six to 25 years old, to make sure they gain the education, skills and life experiences they need to unlock their full potential.

The program includes learning support, life skills training, cultural appreciation, career guidance and financial assistance.

Ngarara Willim through the years have supported Ganbina's programs and often engage in events hosted by Ganbina. Last week, Lewis from the Ngarara Willim team will spoke to high school students about exciting opportunities at RMIT at the Ganbina Virtual Careers day!

For more information about Ganbina, visit:  
[www.ganbina.com.au](http://www.ganbina.com.au)

## We welcome the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service to RMIT

RMIT Welcomes the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS) as our newest community partners. RMIT will see 11 students enroll in a Diploma of Community Services later in the month.

The partnership with VALS and the delivery of the Diploma of Community Services addresses the skills and knowledge needed to work with Aboriginal community members facing family violence and child protection issues. The Diploma addresses key recommendations from the Royal Commission into Family Violence for a qualified workforce. VALS workers are undertaking the Diploma of Community Services as the nationally recognised qualification to work in child welfare, and address family issues, including family violence.

The VALS students in the program work within a range of roles from the Custody Notification Team, Family Violence Client Support, Women's Prison Transition Program to Regional Client Support Officers. The students work between Melbourne and regional Victoria.



The Ngarara Willim Centre enjoyed meeting the students and provided an online Gamadji orientation where students were provided introductions to staff and information about the various supports that will be available to them while on their journey as RMIT Students.

The students learned how they can connect with Ngarara Willim and other students by participating in the many online activities that will be provided throughout the remainder of the academic year.

We look forward to catching up with the students again during Ngarara Williams regular online class visits scheduled just after enrolment.

## Supporting Indigenous Business

### Mabu Mabu

Mabu Mabu is a Torres Strait Islander owned and run business here in Melbourne with an emphasis on using fresh, seasonal and native ingredients to create beautiful dishes that bring people together. Mabu Mabu is a term from the Torres Strait that translates to 'help yourself'. Traditionally, a Mabu Mabu is a banquet, shared table or big family meal. It's how we like to enjoy food on the islands: surrounded by the people we love.

Check out their website here:

[www.mabumabu.com.au](http://www.mabumabu.com.au)



### Pawa Catering

Pawa Catering are based in West Footscray, Melbourne Victoria. Pawa means 'to cook' in the language of the Gunditjmarra people from South West Victoria. Co Founded by Aboriginal woman Niyoka Bundle and Husband/head chef Vincent Manning from the Isle of Man, they create food with Indigenous Fusions of Native foods and western foods. Drawing inspiration and ideas from everyday foods that people loved and infusing them together often creates a great new flavour.

Check them out here:

[@pawacatering](https://www.instagram.com/pawacatering)



# Deadly Alumni: Hollie Johnson

## Who are you? Who's your mob? What did you study at RMIT?

My name is Hollie Johnson, I'm a proud Ginnai Kurnai and Monero Ngarigo woman from Gippsland Victoria. I graduated from a Bachelor of Arts in Photography at the City Campus in 2016.

## Can you tell us about your journey into University?

I relocated for University being one of the only ones in my family to do so and always wanting to live in Melbourne and be a city girl, I wanted to make it happen. Though I had no backups and it took me three years to actually follow through on the application because I was too scared thinking that I wouldn't actually get in given that my ATAR wasn't that good. Thanks to the Ngarara Willim Centre I got the support I needed to get into my dream course.

I have always wanted to do Photography since high school, to be able to photograph the resilience, beauty, strength and so much more of First Nations people. To share that with others to assist with creating more of an understanding and advocating for our people and being one of the longest and most established running courses I knew it had to be good.

## What are you up to now? Work and life?

Currently I am running the Gippsland Site for the AIME Mentoring Program, working with Indigenous High School kids and connecting with schools and community whenever I can.

So thankful to be back at home on Country and I love working with the kids. I'm working on my business, taking on Photography gigs whenever I can given the current situation and learning new skills such as roller skating, macramé and watercolor painting. I'm starting to get back into my jewellery making, sewing and screen-printing. Among these I am working on a couple projects within the community which helps my health and wellbeing during this time. I'm starting to organise and am looking forward to my next adventure to study Linguistics and Teaching to eventually run cultural programs at schools and teach Indigenous language.



**Hollie Johnson**  
Deadly Alumni

**Having a place with friends that have now become family and a huge staff support at the Centre is what got me through.**

## What did you enjoy most about engaging with Ngarara Willim?

The first year was pretty exciting having my own place, meeting new people, being in the city and being grown. As the years went on and being away from home and not having much family in Melbourne it did get hard. Though it took me an extra year to complete my degree, having a place with friends that have now become family and a huge staff support at the Centre is what got me through.

Everyone looks after each other, it's a community in itself. A place to call home among the big city and to be able to call in there, though the room may have changed, the space still feels the same.

## What would your message be to our mob who may be considering studying at RMIT?

Do it, there is so much that this University can offer you, not only in degrees but the places it can take you and the people you'll meet. The mob from Ngarara Willim will ensure that you have the support you need to get you through and it is true what they say that you'll have friends for life.



# Meet our Staff



## Nicole

### Arabana

Manager, Indigenous Student Education



## Jason

### Tharawal

Senior Manager, Indigenous Education



## Cathy D.

### Irukandji

Senior Advisor, Indigenous Access and Engagement



## Lewis

### Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta, Dja Dja Wurrung

Coordinator, Indigenous Outreach



## Carlie

Coordinator, Indigenous Vocational Education



## Cathy L.

### Arrente, Luritja

Indigenous Student Education Officer



## Simon

### Birriah / Gurreng Gurreng

Coordinator, Indigenous Student Engagement



## Charlotte

### Gubbi Gubbi

Indigenous Student Engagement Projects Assistant



## Connect with us

[ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au)  
(03)9925 4885



## Join our mailing list

Send us an email to be added to our mailing list

[ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au)

### City Campus

Building 5, Level 1, Room 5  
Bowen Street, Melbourne, VIC, 3001

### Bundoora Campus

Building 202, Level 3, Room 21  
225- 245 Plenty Road, Bundoora, VIC, 3083

### Brunswick Campus

Building 514, Level 1, Room 3  
25 Dawson Street, Brunswick, VIC, 3056

Post: GPO Box 2476, Melbourne, VIC 3001

### Our Artists

Trees — Louisa Bloomer  
Leaves (watermark) — Alanna Sandy  
Ngarara Willim logo — Mandy Nicholson  
Graphic/layout design — Charlotte Franks



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