

RMIT UNIVERSITY

# NGARARA WILLIM NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 8 DECEMBER 2020



DEADLY END TO A CHALLENGING YEAR:

---

CONGRATULATIONS TO  
THREE GENERATIONS OF  
BOON WURRUNG GRADUATES



## Significant and important dates

24 December – Ngarara Willim closes

4 January 2021 – Ngarara Willim reopens

# Contents

- 2 Significant and important dates
- 3 Message from Ngarara Willim
- 4 2020 Deadly Alumni & Graduation
- 5 VC's Message to Graduates
- 6 VACCA Christmas Appeal
- 7 Jillian Weaven Human Resource Scholarship
- 8 Student Spotlight: Caley Manzie
- 9 Farewell, Charlotte
- 10 Looking ahead at 2021

# Womin Djeka!

## Welcome to the 8th edition

Womin Djeka! Goannas (Dhuling) are active, and Bats (Buliyong) are catching insects in flight. Bundjil (wedge-tailed eagle) are in breeding season. Fruits appear on the Kangaroo apple bushes and Bali (Cherry Ballart).

In this final edition for 2020 the Ngarara team want to acknowledge the success and achievements of all of our students throughout the year, particularly our 2020 Deadly Alumni.

The Ngarara Willim team held our annual Deadly Alumni Graduation event online on Monday 14th December and celebrated the achievements of our 2020 graduates. We also congratulated our High Achieving students who have completed their programs or the year with outstanding results and continued engagement with the Ngarara Willim Community. We congratulate you all for getting through your programs and doing so well in such an impactful year. You should all be really proud of yourselves.

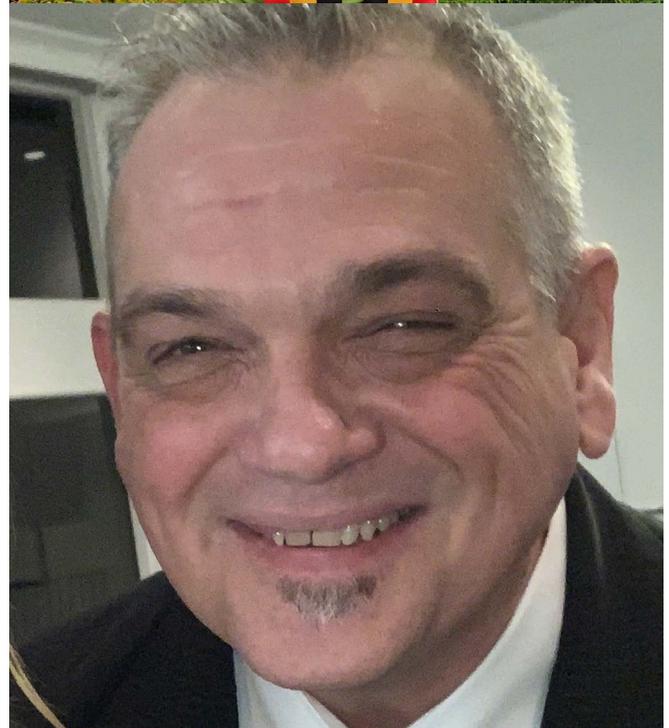
In this newsletter issue, Caley, who is studying a Bachelor of Science (Geospatial Science) also shares her stories about her pathways into RMIT, connecting with Ngarara Willim and her love of Hockey. We also farewell one of our staff, Charlotte Franks.

We are happy to share that a scholarship has been developed to honour the legacy of our colleague and friend, Jillian Weaven, a Wiradjuri woman passionate about education, creating career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the advancement of women. The Jillian Weaven Human Resources Scholarship encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Human Resources-related postgraduate disciplines to complete their studies. Applications are now open for this scholarship.

We hope to be back to campus in the new year to see all our students and to welcome our new students at our Gama-dji Orientation program. We also hope to see more of our community visit our space and connect with us.

**Ngarara Willim staff will be available by phone and email from 4 January, contact us on 03 9925 4885 or [ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au](mailto:ngarara.willim@rmit.edu.au).**

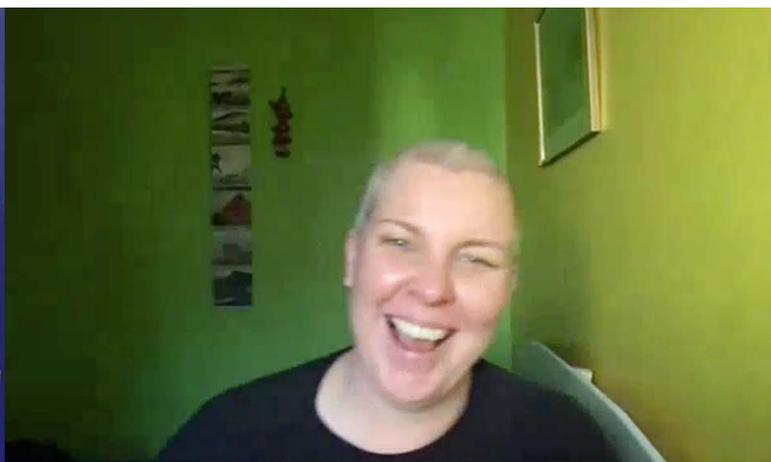
The Ngarara team wish you all a wonderful and much deserved holiday season and a very prosperous and Happy New Year. Take care of yourself and each other, we look forward to connecting with you all in 2021!



# 2020 Deadly Alumni & Graduation

The Ngarara Willim team invited our Deadly Alumni, our high achieving students, their families and community to join us for our Deadly Alumni and Graduation event that was held on Monday 14th December. The event celebrated the outstanding achievements of our 2020 Graduates and High Achievers and brought the Ngarara Willim community together.

We want to thank all who joined us for the event and once again tell all our Deadly Alumni that the Ngarara Willim and RMIT community are all so very proud of you. We wish you all the very best with your future endeavors and encourage you to stay connected with us as Deadly Alumni.



# Graduating together



**"Old knowledge, new knowledge;  
two ways of knowing,"**

"I think it's amazing," Dr Briggs says. "I don't think we ever planned it that way because I would've finished my doctorate next year, but I finished it earlier, so to come together and finish collectively, it's great."

Ms Steel, who is also Indigenous arts officer for the City of Port Phillip, says the fact that three generations of Boon Wurrung women from the same family will graduate together "just talks to our family's genuine valuing of education".

"My mum and dad have always instilled that in us," she says.

By Adam Carey  
December 15, 2020

The Age

Read the full article here: [bit.ly/34kfE1c](https://bit.ly/34kfE1c)

## VC's Message to Graduates

Womindjeka!

I'm Martin Bean, Vice Chancellor of RMIT University and I want to congratulate you on completing your program and graduating!

It's a HUGE achievement.

You've demonstrated the commitment, creativity and talent you need to succeed in your chosen career.

You've also built your resilience and ability to adapt. Both essential skills in the ever-changing world of work.

Over the course of your education, you've developed some lifelong friendships and built amazing networks.

I encourage you to join the Deadly Alumni network and stay connected with the Ngarara Willim Community. I have no doubt these will be relationships will enrich your lives for decades to come in both your life and your work.

I know some of you plan to progress your studies immediately, while others will get started in your chosen fields. So, whatever your next move, you're always welcome at RMIT.

I wish you every success as you enter this next exciting stage of your life. Make sure you take a moment to celebrate, you should feel very, very proud right now!

Congratulations once again and remember, you're part of the RMIT today and every day.

Transcript from:

[youtube.com/watch?v=ALLGWqhavBo&feature=youtu.be](https://youtube.com/watch?v=ALLGWqhavBo&feature=youtu.be)



# VACCA Christmas Appeal: Donate Now

Over \$5,000 has been raised for this initiative with contributions from Ngarara Willim of \$2,500 and additional donations of \$2,500 from RMIT staff contributions and the sale of face masks. This fundraiser will close and funds will be passed on to VACCA on the 24th December!

RMIT University, through the Ngarara Willim Centre have decided to register to support VACCA Christmas Appeal to raise money for a cause that is close to our heart. Please support our efforts by making a secure

online donation and by posting a message of support. VACCA supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are in foster care, kinship and residential care and vulnerable families in our community. Funds raised will help support VACCA's ongoing efforts to support families during the festive season. Your donation will make sure a child receives a gift this Christmas. Thank you!

A tax deductible receipt will automatically provided.

Donate now: [bit.ly/2JSSgR7](https://bit.ly/2JSSgR7)

Help raise funds for  
Aboriginal children in  
care this Christmas



**Donate now to give  
a special gift for an  
Aboriginal child in care.**

# Jillian Weaven Human Resource Scholarship

The Jillian Weaven Human Resources Scholarship honours the legacy of our RMIT colleague, community member and friend, Jillian Weaven, a Wiradjuri woman passionate about education, creating career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the advancement of women. Jillian's will and determination for change and her passion and advocacy in the rights of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people was a driver in her role at RMIT.

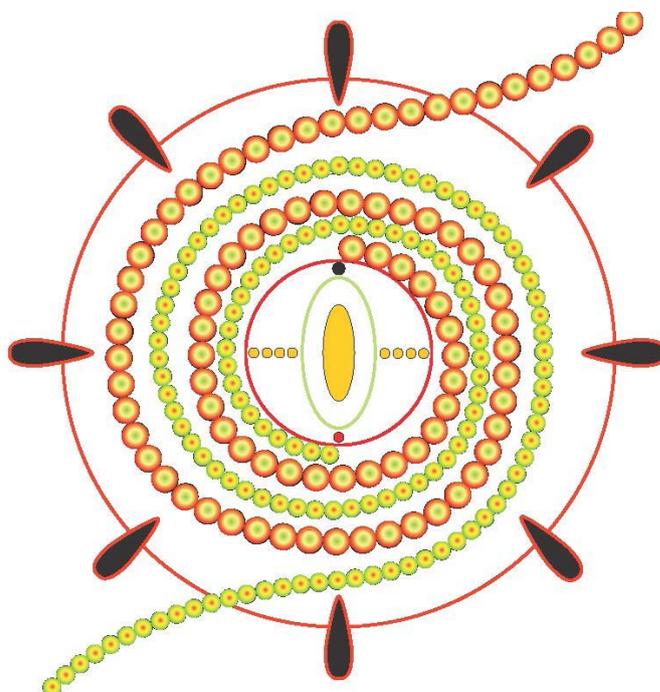
The scholarship will encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in Human Resources-related postgraduate disciplines to complete their studies, obtain a mentor within RMIT and gain employment experience at RMIT. It also provides a connection to the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI) who have come on board to provide a membership and other opportunities for our students to engage in within their organisation.

The scholarship has been established as a tribute to the late Jillian Weaven's outstanding contribution to Indigenous people at RMIT, her role in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Committee and her commitment to supporting the growth and development of women at RMIT in her role as Senior People Business Partner. It is envisaged that the scholarship will also allow RMIT to build talent for the future within the People team.

The RMIT Community, along with our Indigenous staff network had the pleasure of working with Jillian over the years. In Jillian's honour, and in consultation with her family, we hope that this Scholarship will provide opportunities for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who have a passion for supporting our community through education and career advancement.

The working team on this scholarship sourced a piece of art to promote the scholarship that commemorates Jillian. The working group put a call out to current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander RMIT students to design a piece that could be utilised.

The winner of the work is Kamilaroi woman and Ngarara Willim student Louisa Bloomer. Louisa is studying an Associate Degree in Fashion, Design and Textiles and has engaged with many projects and opportunities across Ngarara Willim and RMIT. The winning piece is titled 'The Spark of Woman'.



## The Spark of Woman

This design encapsulates the spark of one woman. Her growth and journey of education, spouting off to create pathways for others.

The centre is a womb which is often used to symbolise woman in aboriginal art. The woman sitting on the horizon, her paths spiral around her, every step is filled with more knowledge and experience than the last. Drawing pathways from her journey.

The centre also represents the sun in the aboriginal flag, with the dot above in black and the dot below in red, and the spirals filled with the colours of passion and growth.

To find out more about this scholarship visit the RMIT Scholarships office at:

[rmit.edu.au/students/work-study-opportunities/scholarships](https://rmit.edu.au/students/work-study-opportunities/scholarships)



# Student Spotlight: Caley Manzie

**Name:** Caley Manzie

**Mob:** Ballardong, Noongar”

**Studying:** Bachelor of Science (Geospatial Science) (Honours)

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

I was born and raised in Melbourne, and grew up as an only child. Throughout my primary and secondary education, I hardly knew anything about my Indigenous background. It wasn't until I joined Ngarara Willim Centre at RMIT where I started to learn about my history and people. I also have been playing field hockey for the past 17 years and rely heavily on sport as an outlet/escape from everything else.

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

Growing up in secondary school our teachers would always tell us to continue further study at university. I was a student that didn't know what to do and therefore didn't really bother to research my possibilities. That was until year 12 had approached and my mum told me it to go to RMIT's open day where she took me visit some students part of Geospatial Science. There I met a former lecturer who told me all about the opportunities with Geoscience and how they need women. That was the moment that inspired me to join RMIT, all thanks to my mum for pushing to go to the open day.

**What was it like transitioning to university?**

My transition from high school straight into uni was really smooth. As I stated, I wasn't a great student in high school, and I didn't enjoy the atmosphere at school, so when I came to uni it was like taking a deep breath of fresh air. No uniforms, no one on my

back 24/7, no more 8:30am - 4:30pm schedules from Monday to Friday. I had no friends from my school going into the same industry as I was at RMIT, so I had to make new friends which was fine because all the other Geospatial and Surveying students were in the same boat. University it definitely my kind of learning.

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

Ngarara Willim has allowed me to connect with mob and staff, and to understand my identity better. I have really enjoyed the opportunities they have provided me, such engaging with community in Melbourne, overseas experiences, and the social events to regularly bring the community together. Every time I go into RMIT I always visit Ngarara Willim Centre because it is my safe zone in the city. I get along with all staff and students, and it makes me feel like I am at home when I am there. But the most enjoyable thing about Ngarara Willim Centre is the space itself because you know you have a space where you'll be accepted as you are and people who care about your needs.

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

Ngarara Willim "Gathering Place" is my safe place and my second home. My university experience would not have been the same or as enjoyable if it wasn't for Ngarara Willim Centre. This means I am able to be myself and know that I am accepted for who I am. I don't need to explain myself when I tell people I am Indigenous, and everyone acknowledges each other's mob. Ngarara Willim also provide a lot of emotional and mental support. When I was going through a tough time during my course, I was about to quit because I left lost in what I was doing but Ngarara Willim was

there to support me in taking a leave of absence and see a careers counsellor, so I was able to decide what I wanted to do. This has now given me the confidence to complete the rest of my studies.

### **What's your proudest moment/achievement while studying at RMIT?**

My proudest moment would have to be when I got an High Distinction for the first time which was for Aboriginal Studies. I'm not the smartest person in the world and am horrible at studying so for me to get above a credit was an amazing achievement. I really felt like all my effort was worth it and it also helped me realise where my priorities/ interests were. Since then I knew I wanted to work with a company that partnered with Indigenous communities. This is why I am currently interning with the Cultural Heritage and Ecology team at Jacobs who work with Indigenous people in protecting sacred areas and artifacts.

### **What is your message to community members considering studying at RMIT?**

RMIT has so many opportunities and will continue to grow with its students. I really like RMIT because of the location in the CBD and the Indigenous engagement. RMIT is also a dual sector, meaning it brings TAFE and higher education together which I think is a great connection to have especially for students who can't quite make the bachelor's entry requirements. RMIT has arrange of clubs and sports for any and everyone. I highly recommend RMIT if possible as you will always have something to do on campus, the people are super friendly, and the Ngarara Willim Centre is a family that keeps growing.

# Farewell, Charlotte



We are sad to say farewell and best wishes to Ngarara staff member Charlotte Franks.

Charlotte moved into her role within Ngarara Willim team straight after graduating from her Bachelor of Design (Communication Design) at RMIT supporting our team and students with administration, communications tasks and everything in between. We would like to thank Charlotte for all that she has contributed to our space, working closely with our team and students and building the communications and marketing work of Ngarara Willim.

We wish Charlotte all the very best with her future endeavours. We will all miss her immensely but look forward to keeping in touch through the Ngarara Willim Community.

#### **From Charlotte:**

This year has put a lot of things in perspective for me and my future. I made the decision earlier this year to move back home to rural Victoria to be closer to my family and partner. It will also give me the opportunity to come back to my community with a tertiary degree and relevant professional experience to put to good use.

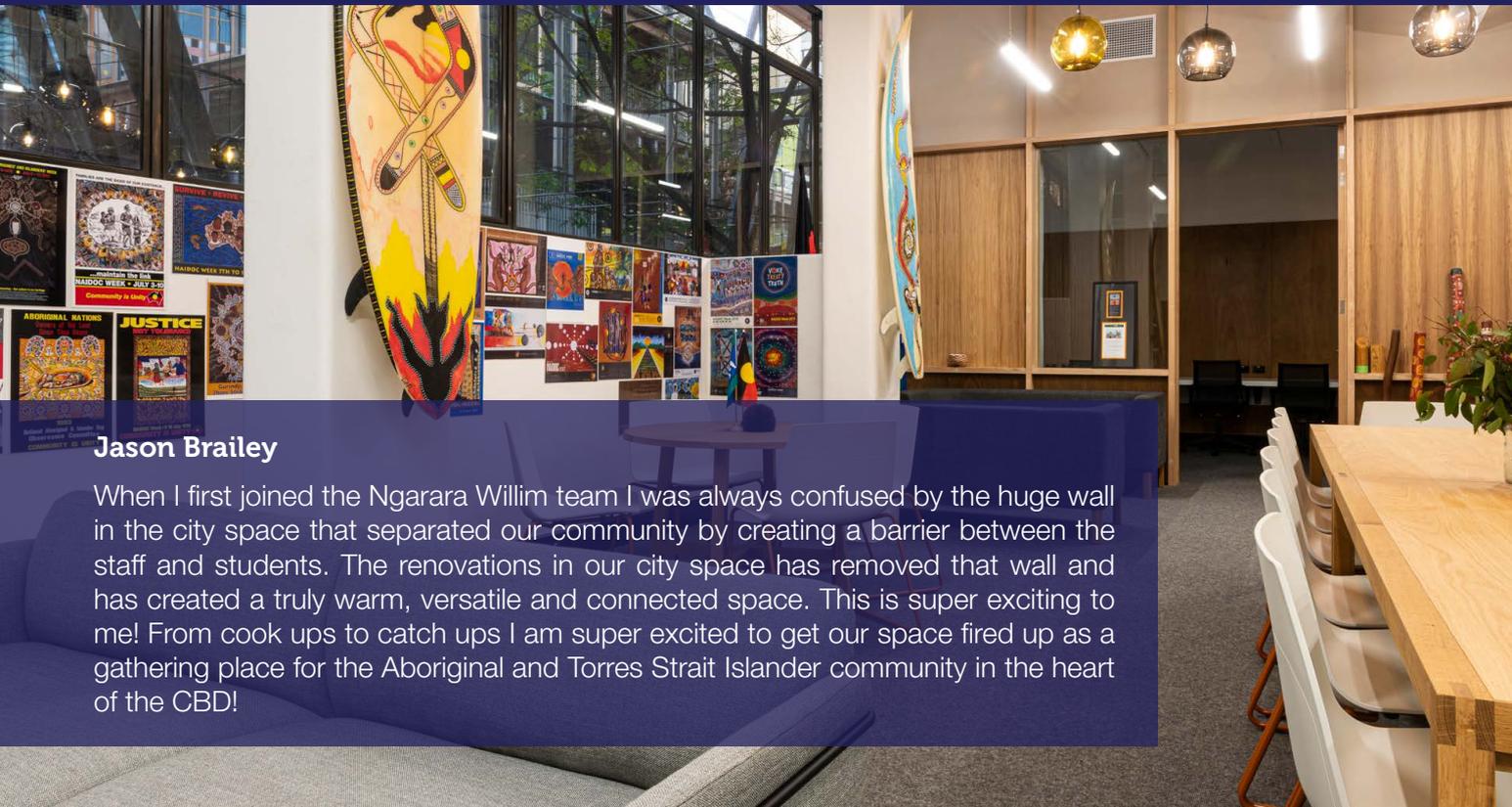
A reoccurring theme of 'home away from home' and 'family' often crops up around discussion of Ngarara Willim; and that's because it's true, really really.

I feel unbelievably lucky and privileged to have worked with all of the amazing people at Ngarara Willim - and it's set incredibly high expectations for team dynamics in any of my future roles. I'm going to miss working at Ngarara Willim, but I'll miss my Ngarara family more.

# LOOKING AHEAD AT 2021

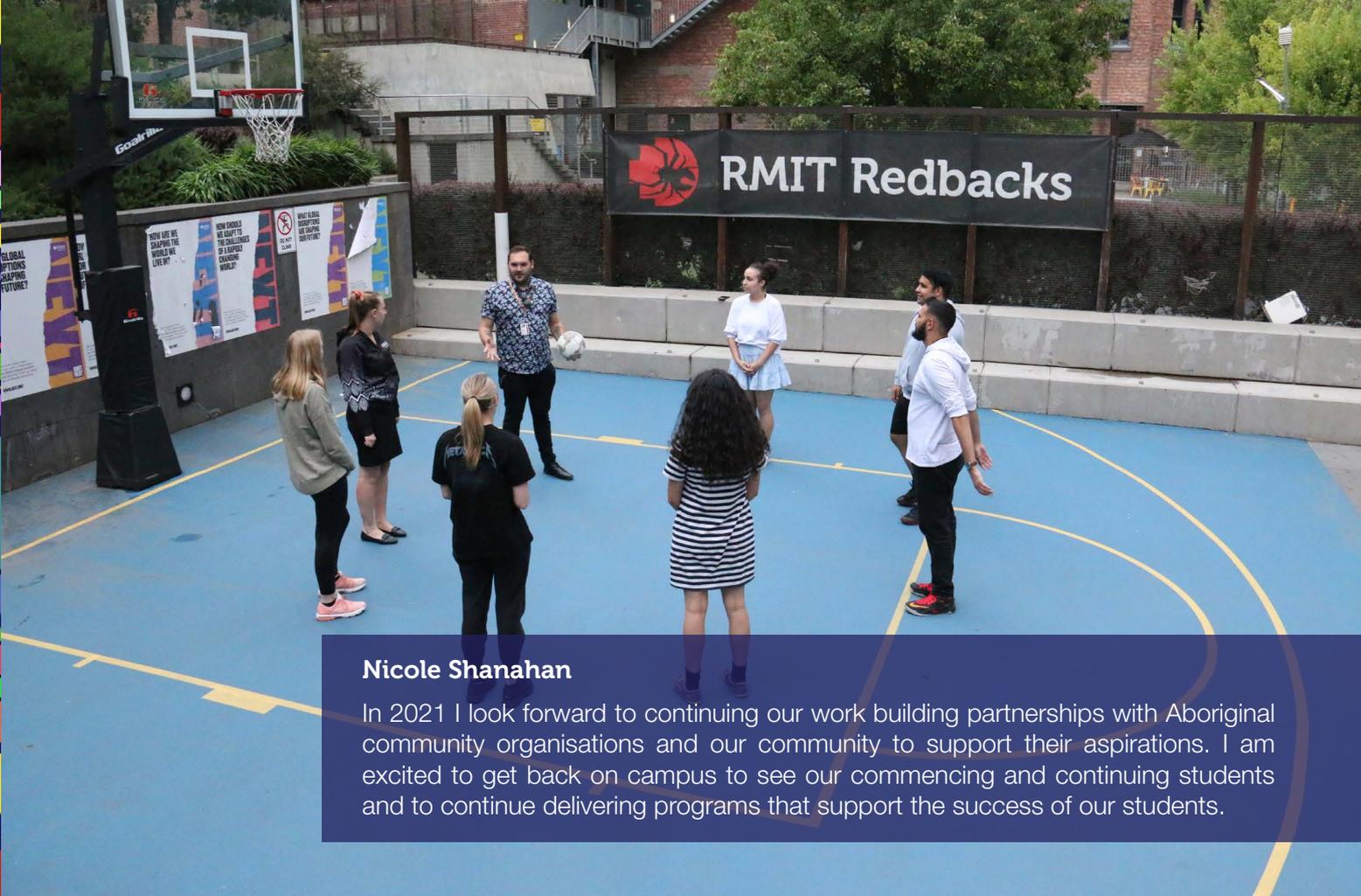
New year, new space and new beginnings

---



**Jason Brailey**

When I first joined the Ngarara Willim team I was always confused by the huge wall in the city space that separated our community by creating a barrier between the staff and students. The renovations in our city space has removed that wall and has created a truly warm, versatile and connected space. This is super exciting to me! From cook ups to catch ups I am super excited to get our space fired up as a gathering place for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the heart of the CBD!



**Nicole Shanahan**  
In 2021 I look forward to continuing our work building partnerships with Aboriginal community organisations and our community to support their aspirations. I am excited to get back on campus to see our commencing and continuing students and to continue delivering programs that support the success of our students.



**Cathy Doe**

I am really looking forward to meeting all the new students who'll be commencing with us in 2021. They will bring a vibrant new feel to our NWC community at RMIT. It gives me a feeling of pride as I see them settle in, acclimatising to tertiary education, making new friends, and studying in our space. It is a real pleasure to see them beginning their journey, knowing that we're here to support them along the way and into the future.

**Carlie Groves**

In 2021 I'm looking forward to further developing support for our Vocational Education students, ensuring they have access to a range of opportunities that both meet their needs and add value to their experience. Particularly I'm looking forward to welcoming everyone back on campus and again enjoying the community of Ngarara Willim.

**Catherine Lake**

I look forward to having the student engage in our Dhumbali sessions over the months where they have an opportunity to immerse themselves and learn more about their culture. Not only will the students have hands-on experience with creating cultural items but also learn about country and place, their family history and connecting directly with the Koori Community.

**Lewis Brown**

In 2021 I look forward to working closely with Ngarara Willim staff and RMIT programs to deliver engaging experiences for Aboriginal secondary school students, our community, community organisations and schools.



# 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 Student Education



**Cathy L.**

**Arerrnte, Luritja**  
**Officer**  
Indigenous Student Education



**Charlotte**

**Gubbi Gubbi**  
**Assistant**  
Indigenous Student  
Engagement Projects



## Connect with us

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



### 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

## 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)

### Our Artists

Trees — Louisa Bloomer  
Leaves (watermark) — Alanna Sandy  
Ngarara Willim logo — Mandy Nicholson

This newsletter is a collective effort that is written and created by the Ngarara Willim Centre team (see previous page)