



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**

Poche Centre for Indigenous Health

Healthy Minds, Healthy Lives 2020

Message from the Executive Director

The UWA Poche Centre for Indigenous Health is made possible by the generous gift of leading philanthropists Greg Poche AO and Kay Van Norton Poche AO and their continuing support, of our Poche Centre and the National Network. UWA Poche had a busy year with research and community-based projects in Perth and regional WA with our partners, networks and local Aboriginal communities.

In July 2020, the Indigenous Portfolio including the Poche Centre, as well as the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health moved into UWA's new Indigenous gateway building *Bilya Marlee* (River of the Swan). We hope to welcome and host our Poche family and colleagues at *Bilya Marlee* in the near future.

In 2020, UWA had its largest intake of Indigenous medical students with 12 Indigenous postgraduate students commencing in the Doctor of Medicine (MD). From 2019-2020, UWA graduated 5 Indigenous Doctors (MD), for a total of 23 indigenous Doctors since 2016. Many of our Indigenous Doctors are working in regional and remote WA, including 6 Indigenous Doctors in the Kimberly. UWA also graduated 4 Indigenous Dentists (DMD) over the same period for a total of 8 Indigenous Dentists from UWA.

As we move into our eighth year, UWA Poche is well placed to respond positively to the changing environment at UWA and in the sector. In July 2020 the University of WA welcomed the new Vice-Chancellor Professor Amit Chakma, who prior to joining UWA was the President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Ontario in Canada. UWA also restructured, moving from Faculties to a Schools based structure from 2021 and I have been busy meeting with the Heads of the health-based schools to discuss new strategies and relationships going forward.

After the uncertainty and restrictions of 2020 due to COVID-19, we are looking forward to being able to engage more closely with communities and our state and national partners in 2021.

Professor Jill Milroy

Poche Executive Director

Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous Education

Our New Home

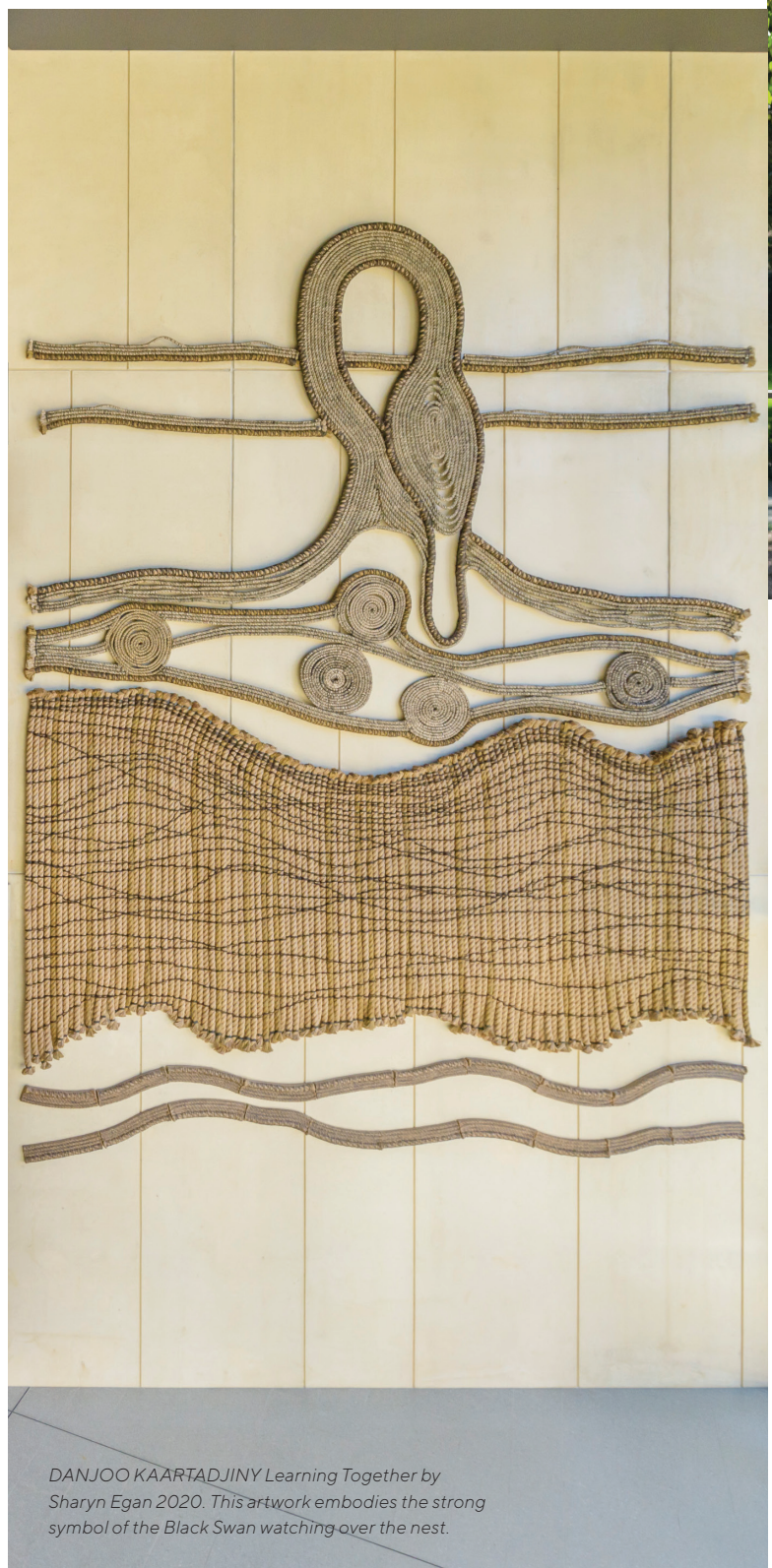


Bilya Marlee

Fully funded by UWA, *Bilya Marlee* is the visible embodiment of UWA's strategic vision, celebrates Aboriginal culture and provides culturally designed facilities and spaces for Indigenous staff, students and communities. The building and landscape was designed and positioned with the guidance of Whadjuk Noongar Elder Dr Richard Walley OAM, who is the Senior Cultural Advisor at UWA.

The design recognises the cultural significance of the site, the stories of the Whadjuk Noongar people, the local flora, fauna and the relationship with the river (Derbal Yerrigan). The gardens are inspired by the Noongar six seasons, Birak, Bunuru, Djeran, Makuru, Djilba, and Kambarang, with trees and plants selected to ensure year round coverage and vibrancy. The circular seating and grassed area at the front is a place to relax, and to gather for stories, learning and ceremony. It includes a 'fire pit' which has already been used for smoking ceremonies.

The colours of the Swan River (Derbal Yerrigan) form the bases of the colour palette and the Black Marlee (Swan) was an important reference for the internal colour scheme. This also provided a subject for *Danjoo Kaartdijin* (Learning Together), by Noongar artist Sharyn Egan. The building design was inspired by the swan's nest, a place of fertility, birth, parenting and teaching that offered a safe haven until an individual was ready to go out and create their own nest.





Research Program and Development

The Poche Centre for Indigenous Health brings together the University's expertise, program and resources in Aboriginal health and education around a central theme Healthy Minds Healthy Lives.

The Centre aims to drive transformative intergenerational Aboriginal health research agenda, which delivers tangible, measurable health outcomes and services directly to Aboriginal people and communities. The Poche Centre at UWA undertakes research, teaching and community engagement across a broad spectrum of Aboriginal health and education.

Cultural wellbeing and Mental Health

Recognising Aboriginal knowledge and cultural understanding in health and promoting wellbeing and positive mental health for Aboriginal young people.

Aboriginal Children's Health and Development

Improving health, disability and development outcomes for Aboriginal children by improving access to, and quality of care delivered by Aboriginal and mainstream health service providers.

Better Preventions and Management of Chronic Disease

Providing health services intervention for better prevention and management of cancer and cardiovascular in Aboriginal people in rural areas.

Key Highlights 2020-21

Cultural Wellbeing and Mental Health

The Centre for Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Suicide Prevention (CBPATSISP)

In 2020, we were advised that funding from the Commonwealth Government's National Suicide Prevention Leadership and Support Program would be extended for an additional year (for 2021-2022). CBPATSISP, led by Poche Fellow Professor Pat Dudgeon is Australia's leading authority on Indigenous suicide.

UWA Poche leads the CBPATSISP with our partners, the Healing Foundation, Telethon Kids Institute, Menzies Institute for Medical Research and Health InfoNet, and a National governance Committee providing expert guidance.

CBPATSISP produces reports on key topics related to Indigenous suicide prevention and includes a Clearing House that shares promising and best practice programs, services, guidelines, resources and research, recognising the important work of communities and organisations and supporting others to further develop their own Indigenous suicide prevention initiatives.

In May 2020 Professor Patricia Dudgeon and Dr Kate Derry from CBPATSISP worked with a group of over one hundred of the country's leading academics from the Group of Eight (Go8) universities on *COVID-19 Roadmap to Recovery* Go8, including a critical chapter on the care of Indigenous Australians. Key reports, articles and work undertaken by researchers in 2020 is available on the website at: <https://cbpatsisp.com.au/>

Transforming Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing (TIMHW)

The UWA Poche Centre led a successful research bid in 2019, receiving \$4.9 million over 5 years (2019-2024) for its research, *Transforming Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing*, from the Federal Government's *Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF) Million Minds Mission*, through the NHMRC. TIMHW website is at: <https://timhwb.org.au/>

The project works collaboratively with Indigenous service users, families and communities, to develop clinically and culturally capable Indigenous mental health service models to support access to, and effectiveness of clinical treatment and cultural healers; support mainstream services to work better across cultural and experiential differences; and integrate mental health, wellbeing, alcohol and drug, suicide and social and cultural support service responses through multidisciplinary teams.

Professor Pat Dudgeon leads this research together with stream leaders Professor Jill Milroy and Professor Helen Milroy. The research is supported by a research team of predominantly Aboriginal leaders and mental health professionals, including Professor Tom Calma, Professor Shaun Ewen, Professor Michael Wright, Dr Graham Gee, Rob McPhee, Thomas Brideson, Michael Mitchell, Angela Ryder, Edward Wilkes, and Kevin Taylor. Non-Aboriginal leadership includes: Professor Sean Hood, Professor Michael Small, Professor Jeneva Ohan, and Associate Professor Roz Walker. Aboriginal Partner Organisations include: NACCHO, KAMS, GDPSA, LAA, AIPA, THF, IAHA, and the Curtin University Looking Forward Project.





SEWB Gathering at The University of Western Australia, March 2021

Social and Emotional Wellbeing Gathering

In March 2021, Professor Pat Dudgeon, NACCHO and Gayaa Dhuwi (Proud Spirit) held the *Social and Emotional Wellbeing Gathering*, bringing together community leaders, services, front line workers and experts to create a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB blueprint for our future. Empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

and peoples to develop our own solutions to health, mental health and wellbeing. The Gathering heard from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander SEWB researchers and policy experts on the SEWB framework, funding and policy support to understand how to empower SEWB services, workforces, systems and community governance. The Report is available on the website.



Professor Pat Dudgeon is from the Bardi people of the Kimberly area of Western Australia. She is a psychologist and Research Fellow at UWA Poche Centre. She is also Director of the Centre of Best Practice in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Suicide Prevention and National Empowerment Project.



Kate Derry is a research assistant at the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health at the School of Indigenous Studies in The University of Western Australia. Her research areas include child development, self-psychology, and suicide prevention.



Dr Kate Smith and the Elders Governance Group which guides all CAMDH Aboriginal ageing well research

Good Spirit Good Life

The Good Spirit Good Life (GSGL) assessment package was launched by the Hon Ken Wyatt AM, Minister for Indigenous Australians on the 21 July 2020. The GSGL quality of life assessment is for use with older Aboriginal Australians, aged 45 years and over, living in urban or regional areas. The development and validation of the assessment package in Victoria was funded by a *Poche Indigenous Health Network* Grant. Dr Kate Smith, at the Centre for Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health (CAMDH) which is led by Professor Dawn Bessarab.



The WACRH-GSAC partnership has also been nominated for the Rural Health West 2021 Award in the Building Health County Communities Category. The winner will be announced in March 2021.

Better Preventions and Management of Chronic Disease

UWA Poche funding assists the WA Centre for Rural Health(WACHR), led by Professor Sandy Thompson, to support a wide range of research activities and interventions with key input of five Aboriginal staff based in Geraldton, Mullewa and Mt Magnet. A number of papers have been published which acknowledge the support received from the Poche Centre.

Staff based in Geraldton have continued to support research translation on *Whisper No More*, *Clinical Yarning* and projects based on Aboriginal pain, mental health and trauma. These include Lenny Papertalk, Charmaine Green, Wanda Flanagan, Ivan Lin, Lisa Lockyer, Heath Greville, Emma Taylor and Sandra Thompson.

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Whisper No More is a learning package that contains video stories from Aboriginal people about their experience of cancer. Understanding more about people's views of cancer and experience of health care is essential to developing better cancer care and health outcomes. See: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWT4LXnsN6OaBGMhrZsN34Xi_Gigqvo85

The Clinical Yarning Education Project

Clinical Yarning workshops that build upon in-place cultural learning and provide clinicians and students with skills that translate cultural learning into healthcare practice. <https://www.clinicalyarning.org.au/>

Improvement of Cancer Service Delivery for Aboriginal people

In 2021 the WACRH Poche team will undertake research on Aboriginal perspectives about barriers they face when attending for cancer care in Perth, whether they are metropolitan, rural or remote residents. This will inform planning by the WA Cancer and Palliative Care Network, which has committed funding to establish two Perth-based Aboriginal Navigators positions to assist Aboriginal patients with cancer to overcome barriers in accessing care.

Stronger Together

WACRH staff Jay O'Brien located in Mt Magnet and Carol Whitby located in Mullewa are current working on the project *Stronger Together* with the support from Research Fellow Heath Greville. The *Stronger Together* – Building Young Health Promotion Leaders Program is a three year project to develop health promotion skills and community engagement for a group of young Aboriginal adults in the communities of Mt Magnet and Mullewa.

Insight into Children's Inner World

In April 2021 the WACHR released an educational animation in collaboration with local Aboriginal figures which aims to educate parents, families, children, local communities, service providers on trauma and how it affects developing brains of children. Funded by Rio Tinto and the Poche Centre for Indigenous Health and Healthways WA, the video will also be used as a teaching resource in a wide range of university courses where students learn about family violence. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3cAhyHeXEK>

Staff Achievements



Lenny Papertalk has completed her first year of Masters of Social Work and will commence her second year clinical placement in Geraldton in February 2021. Charmaine Green is in the final year of her PhD. A chapter of her thesis was published as a book and awarded the Australian Literature Society's Gold Medal for 2020.



In 2020 the WACRH/GSAC partnership took out the Australia Day Citizenship Award for the Community Group category. The photo shows Carole Whitby (employed by WACRH) and Cecilia Kelly (employed by GSAC) receiving the award.

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The University of Western Australia acknowledges that its campuses are situated on Noongar land, and that Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural custodians of their land, and continue to practise their values, languages, beliefs and knowledge.

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