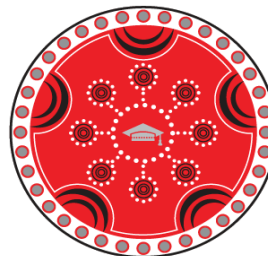


# First Peoples Health Unit

Better wellbeing | *Baugal baugulin yabruma*



## Message from the Director



*Jingeri* (greetings) and welcome back for 2019. A special welcome to the commencing and continuing First Peoples health students and congratulations to those who graduated in 2018.

I acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the First Peoples Health Unit was established and that of Traditional Custodians of Country across Australia and pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

It has already been a busy three months for the First Peoples Health Unit (FPHU) team. I am very excited and enthusiastic for the program of work mapped out in our 2019 Operational Plan that the team will deliver this year.

We have revived our newsletter and included in it some profiles of staff members in the FPHU team.

The team acknowledged the **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** and recognised **National Close the Gap Day** as part of Griffith's Harmony Week celebrations with a great event on our Gold Coast campus. We've also launched our **Griffith Health First Peoples Health Engagement Plan 2018 – 2022**.

In this edition we recognise that central to our operation is culture and it's fitting for us to reflect upon and acknowledge Eldership in our community.

I look forward to sharing updates and working with you all in 2019.

Regards  
Roianne West

## Orientation Events 2019

The First Peoples Health Unit was invited by GUMURRII Student Support Services to present to commencing First People students on the Gold Coast campus in January. This is a great initiative by GUMURRII to get these students adjusted to university life.

The Unit's Engagement Lead, Chris Levinge, provided the students with an overview of the FPHU and our focus areas including support to retain First Peoples students within Health. Importantly, he provided a take home message to all the students that they should ask for help or have a yarn with someone if they felt that they weren't adjusting or needed some assistance.

We would also like to thank the School of Nursing and Midwifery for the opportunity to address the commencing Bachelor of Midwifery students on the Logan campus as part of their orientation. It was a great way to introduce FPHU and briefly explain the importance of the work we are doing.



## First Peoples Health Unit Team

The significance of our work is highlighted by our expanding team with a number of new staff appointments from late last year and for Trimester One this year. We welcome to the First Peoples Health Unit:



**Dr Debbie Bargallie**  
**First Peoples Health Academic Program Lead**

Dr Debbie Bargallie is a descendent of the Kamilaroi and Wonnarua peoples of the North-West and Upper Hunter Valley regions of New South Wales. Debbie was born and raised in Wollongong where she continues to have strong connections.

Debbie completed her PhD in 2018 from Queensland University of Technology (QUT) where she was awarded a scholarship with the National Indigenous Research and Knowledges Network (NIRAKN). Her researched examined how everyday racism manifests experientially for Indigenous employees in the Australian Public Service. Debbie also holds a Bachelor of Social Science and Master of Social Policy and Planning.

Debbie's research areas of interest are race, racisms, racialisation, racial literacy, critical race theory and critical Indigenous research methodologies.



**Dr Vicki Saunders**  
**Research Fellow**

Dr Vicki Saunders is a Gunggari woman from the Maranoa Region in Southern Central Queensland. She has been an associate member of the Collaborative Research into Empowerment and Wellbeing (CREW) group in Far North Queensland, a PhD candidate and Team Investigator within the JCU led Building Indigenous Research Capacity (BIRC) project, School of Public Health Tropical Medicine and Rehabilitation Sciences.

Dr Saunders is currently Research Fellow within the First Peoples Health Unit and Adjunct Research Fellow within the Institute of Criminology at Griffith University and a Co-investigator on the Listening to Country Project within the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre.

Trained in psychology and public health Dr Saunders has, for over 20 years, been involved in a diverse range of research projects with Indigenous groups and health and community based organisations.

Vicki's main research interests are in the areas of Indigenist Research Methodologies and Indigenous research capacity building with a particular focus on empowerment, wellbeing and the power of deep, active listening.

Her recent work explores the value of acoustic ecology and arts informed research within corrective services and the community-controlled health sectors for promoting practices aimed at acknowledging and privileging Indigenous knowledge systems, especially those that relate to caring for children on country.



**Chris Levinge**  
**Engagement Lead**

Chris Levinge is a Kombumerri man from the Saltwater People of the Gold Coast which forms part of the Yugambeh Language region.

Chris has extensive experience in State Government and in First Peoples engagement across a number of sectors highlighted by a recent role with the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Organising Committee (GOLDOC) as Diversity Recruitment Partner where he was a major contributor to the award winning GC2018 Reconciliation Action Plan.

In his role at Griffith University, Chris leads the First Peoples Health Unit (FPHU) engagement implementing the inaugural FPHU Engagement Plan 2018-2020. As a local Traditional Owner he enjoys working on Country where it brings a deeper connection to his community and working with them on behalf of the Griffith University First Peoples Health Unit.

## Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Child Protection Practice Standards (7050HSV)

Starting back in late 2017, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak (QATSICPP) approached Professor Roianne West and Professor Clare Tilbury to collaborate and facilitate a pathway for staff from their member service into the Graduate Certificate in Human Services.

QATSICPP has 28 member services across the state and provides leadership in advocacy and the development of policies, strategies and programs to resource, support and strengthen the capacity and capability of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community controlled child protection agencies in the interests of our children, families and communities.

Fast forward to December 2018 and the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Child Protection Practice Standards (7050HSV) course was officially launched at the South Bank campus with Michael Hogan Director-General Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women in attendance.

Lecturer Glenn Woods (PhD Candidate) from the School of Human Services and Social Work delivered the course to 17 students who belong to the member services of QATSICPP from across Queensland with a 5-day residential school.

see <http://qatsicpp.com.au/>



### Camp Mibun 2018



First Peoples Health Unit proudly supported the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships (DATSIP) with Camp Mibun in November 2018. Mibun (Eagle) is one of the totems for the Yugambeh language peoples. The aim of the camp was to engage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth participants achieve career pathways and outcomes. The camp motto *'Bagojei nga yarole dugan'* (Rise up and fly) was displayed across the back of the Camp Mibun 2018 shirts proudly worn by participants.

Camp Mibun provided the 13 youth with a culturally appropriate environment that allowed them to co-design their own futures and connect with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth aged 17-24 years. The camp was facilitated by the Preston Campbell Foundation who are recognised cultural mentors with proven expertise in training and employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

As at 1 February 2019, the following outcomes were reported for the 13 Camp Mibun participants:

Confirmed full-time employment 7

Participants commenced training/study/apprenticeship 3

Participants still looking for employment or undecided about employment offers 3.



## Health Group First Peoples Students



In 2019, the First Peoples Health Unit remains focused and committed to increasing First Peoples student success towards a more highly skilled and educated First Peoples health professional workforce.

The student census was completed on 24 March 2019 for Trimester One 2019. The census indicated there were 144 commencing and 200 continuing First Peoples students enrolled. It is exciting to have a strong First Peoples student cohort across all schools within the Health Group.

It is promising to note that there are 59 continuing First Peoples students in each of the School of Nursing and Midwifery and the School of Human Services and Social Work. It is also promising that in Trimester One 2019 for the School of Medicine, there are 7 commencing enrolments and a total of 16 Doctor of Medicine students across all years.

### Total First Peoples Health Students:

144 Commencing First Peoples Health Students

200 Continuing First Peoples Health Students

## Kungullanji Research Program

The FHPU were invited to attend the Kungullanji Indigenous Research Conference where two First Peoples undergraduate students showcased their research projects. This program places First Peoples students with academic mentors and supervisors in a range of research centres, institutions and schools to work on their eight-week research project over the summer break.



This year there were 14 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students who completed the program and presented at the Kungullanji Indigenous Research Conference. There were 8 of the summer scholars from the Health group with two of these health students also awarded prizes at the conference - Shantara Noyes for most outstanding Poster presentation (highly commended) and Brock Little for most outstanding Seminar Presentation (Highly Commended).



Congratulations to all of the 2018-19 Kungullanji Summer Research Program participants for the investment of their time and effort for their respective research projects.

See: [Kungullanji Undergraduate Research Program](#)

## Safer Healthcare for Australia's First Peoples



The First Peoples Health Unit offered a new FREE Massive Open Online Course (MOOC): Safer Healthcare for Australia's First Peoples on 5 November 2018 running over a four week period. A second run of the course opened on 25 March, 2019. We are planning to offer a third run in July 2019. So, look out for it and join us!

As a forum based course designed to initiate discussion around questions and tasks, we offer participants from around the globe an opportunity for social learning. The course provides participants with an understanding of how to work in a culturally safe way with Australia's First Peoples in the health and human services.

Through the FutureLearn portal, enrolled participants are able to their share experiences, knowledges and learnings about providing health and care services for First Peoples. The course has similarly attracted participants from around the globe who have no experience working in healthcare services but are interested in learning more about Australia's First Peoples.

The participants are ably supported by the expertise of Professor Roianne West and Dr Debbie Bargallie. Demonstrating its global appeal, the first round of this course attracted a great uptake with **407** enrolled participants from **44** countries with early signs indicating that the second run is attracting similar numbers of participants.

## National Close The Gap Day

Thursday 21 March 2019 was National Close the Gap Day this year.

National Close the Gap Day (NCTGD) is an important date on the Indigenous calendar as we bring into focus the inequality of health outcomes for Australia's First Peoples compared to the rest of the population. FPHU aims to bring greater awareness to the University community through information provision and encouraging staff and students to sign the Close the Gap pledge calling to action a greater commitment from government to achieve health, education and employment equality for Indigenous Australians.

The Close the Gap Day event held on the Gold Coast campus was a great success with more than 430 pledges for support received across the University. Visitors to the Close the Gap stall enjoyed complimentary fresh fruit, healthy snack options and other giveaways. A big thank you to all the staff and students who provided tremendous assistance on the day, especially the wonderful volunteers from Hope4Health and AIME Mentoring.

In another first this year, we are proud to announce that we reduced our environmental footprint and went digital with an electronic form used on the day and a pledge form available on the Student Services Harmony Week website.

With the NCTGD coinciding with the Harmony Day event on the Gold Coast campus this year, we very much appreciated working with the Student Guild and Student Services Events teams and are grateful for the support they provided for our NCTGD event.

The support of the Health Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (HEDI) committee enabled a 'Sea of Hands' installation at 5 campuses this year and gave students a choice to pledge support and nominate for a hand placed on that campus. The 'Sea of Hands' is used as a symbol that engages Australians with Reconciliation.

With the assistance of Student Partners and support of the GUMURRII team, a Close the Gap stall was held at the Logan campus on Wednesday 20 March 2019. We look forward to attracting even more support next year and continue to shine a light on the need for health equality for Australia's First Peoples.

See: [Close The Gap](#)

# CLOSE THE GAP





## Launch of the Griffith Health First Peoples Engagement Plan 2018-2022



The Engagement Plan is an important document that sets the direction for the FPHU. The plan presents an approach to engaging with First Peoples about their health and wellbeing that respects and values the uniqueness of Australia’s First Peoples and their cultures. The plan helps us to improve the performance of Griffith Health’s learning, teaching and resource activities.

In her address to the attendees at the launch, First Peoples Health Unit’s inaugural Director Professor Roianne West stated “This plan provides a way for us to ensure our commitment to the health and wellbeing of our nation’s First Peoples”.

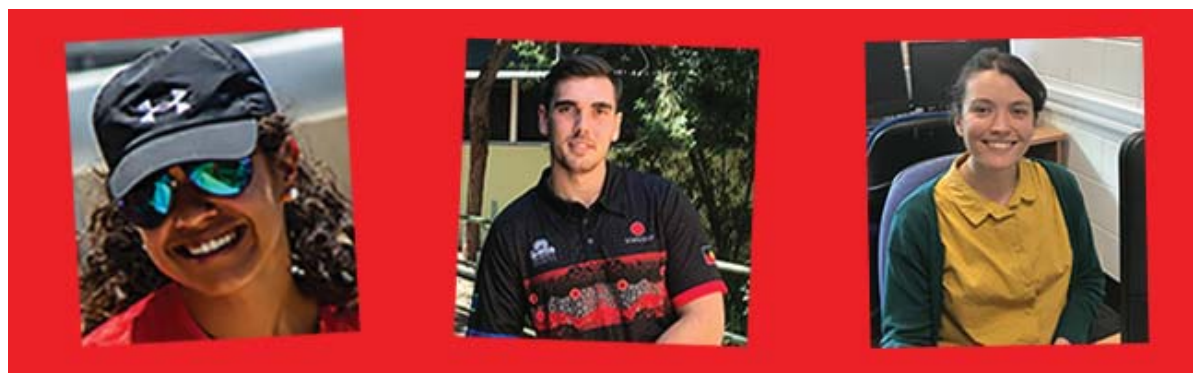
The [Griffith Health First Peoples Health Engagement Plan 2018-2022](#) is available online from the First Peoples Health Unit, Griffith University website.

### The Aurora Project Intern Placements

First Peoples Health Unit has proudly supported the Aurora Project Intern Placement Program for Indigenous and non-Indigenous postgraduates. The postgraduates placed in the FPHU are gaining significant experience in First Peoples health research.

The Aurora Internship Program has been operating for over 13 years with a successful history of contributing to capacity building for Indigenous and Indigenous-sector organisations through placements.

Thank you to Brenna, Matthew, Cieon and Robert for being part of the FPHU team and their valuable contributions to our research projects over the last six months.



See: [The Aurora Project Intern Placements](#)

## Acknowledging Eldership in Community



### **Aunty Pamela Mam, DUniv**

Griffith University (GU) was proud to recognise the life achievements of a remarkable humanitarian, Aunty Pamela Mam, a First Peoples' Elder, role model, patron and matriarch. For over 60 years, Aunty Pamela provided tireless service to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, particularly in the fields of health care and education. GU has conferred a Doctor of Griffith University to Aunty Pamela for her service to First Peoples health services and to the community.

Aunty Pamela once said, "When working in direct service with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, it is important to offer humility and leadership, knowledge and learning, respect and culturally responsive care for people. We also must never neglect the everyday support and guidance required by all health care professionals to provide proper health care."

A descendent of the Kuku Yalanji peoples in the Cooktown area, Aunty Pamela was born in the western Queensland town of Richmond in 1938. Aunty Pamela Mam's qualities of character and commitment remain undimmed. In her 80th year, Aunty Pamela remains a positive influence on the way health care is delivered across the community. This has extended to education and includes the Aunty Pamela Mam Indigenous Nursing Scholarship at Griffith University. Established in 2015 with ATSiCHS Brisbane, the scholarship supports nursing and midwifery students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

See: [Aunty Pamela Mam Scholarship/](#)

### **Vale Aunty Anne Leisha**

#### **Elder-In-Residence, Council of Elders**

The Griffith University community was shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden passing of Aunty Anne Leisha in January 2019.

A long-term member of the Griffith University Council of Elders and an Elder-In-Residence, Aunty Anne will be sadly missed. She was a strong advocate for community engagement and in encouraging potential First Peoples students to realise their full potential and study at university.





Thank you for taking the time to read the First Peoples Health Unit newsletter. We welcome your feedback.

Email us at [fphu@griffith.edu.au](mailto:fphu@griffith.edu.au)

Nya Nyabu! (See you soon!).

# First Peoples Health Unit

Better wellbeing | *Baugal baugulin yabruma*



We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land and communities we live and work.

