Indigenous Knowledges in Research Symposium

21 April 2017

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

Dr Nicholas Reid, Linguist

Nicholas Reid is a linguist who has undertaken descriptive and documentary linguistics projects especially in the Daly River region of the Northern Territory since 1981. Nick is an Assoc Prof in the School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences, at the University of New England, where an interest in the innovative use of new technologies evolved into an active leadership role in teaching and the development of Australia's first online Applied Linguistics Masters degree. Nick's multimedia curriculum developments in Phonetics and Aboriginal languages have led to their widespread adoption by universities throughout Australia and across the world, and recognition of these teaching achievements has resulted in several major teaching awards, including a Carrick Award for 'Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning'.

Aboriginal memories of inundation of the Australian coast dating from more than 7000 years ago

Presented by Nicholas Reid, researched jointly with Patrick Nunn

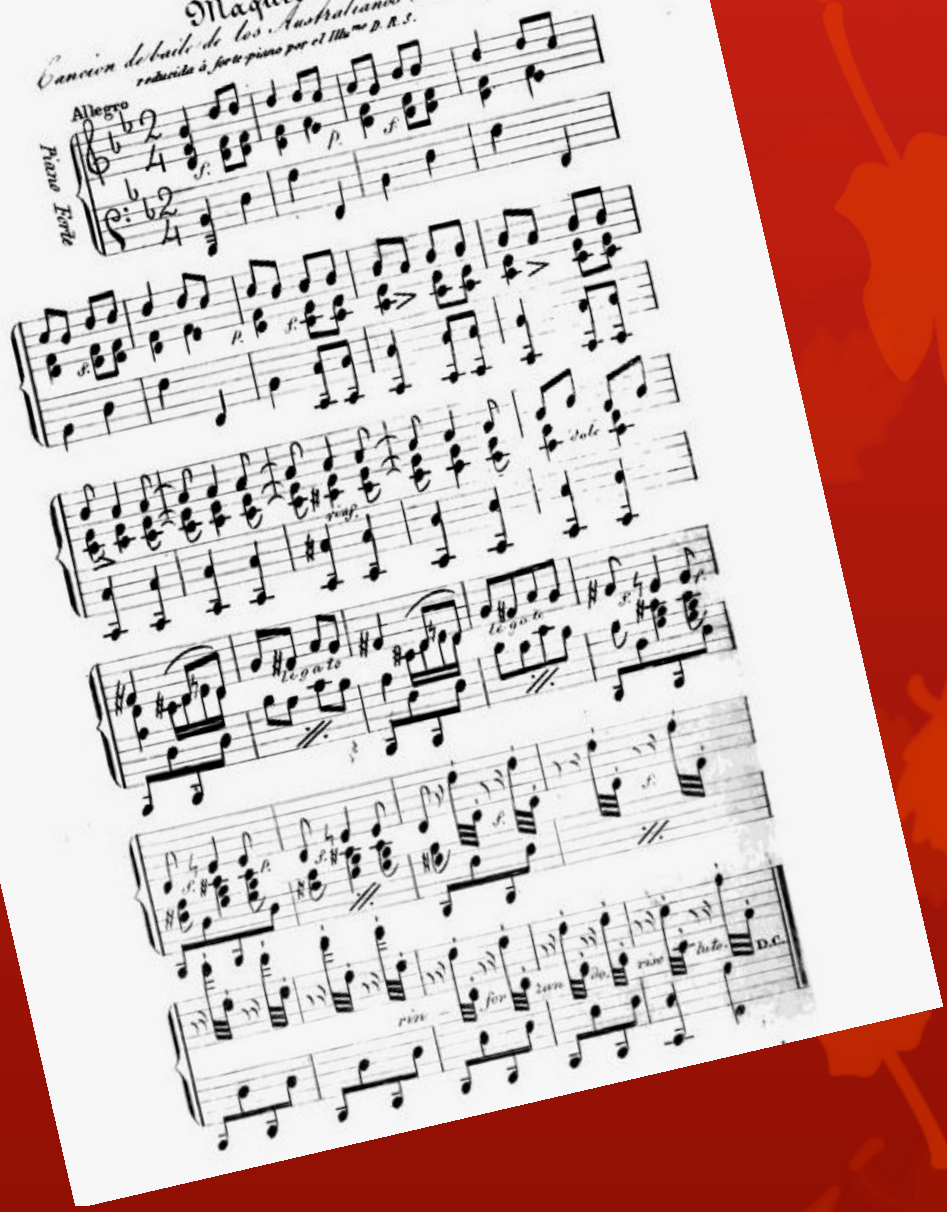
18,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age, when sea level was about 120 metres below its present level, land ice started melting and sea level began rising, a process that ended some 6000 years ago around Australia. Postglacial sea-level rise transformed the coastline of this island continent, permanently inundating vast expanses of the continental shelf and severing the mainland from New Guinea, Tasmania and countless of today's offshore islands. The drowning of Australia's coast affected the ways in which its inhabitants – the Aboriginal peoples who arrived there 50-60,000 years ago – lived, principally by submerging lands on which they had previously lived.

Reid and Nunn have collected extant stories of coastal drowning from 21 locations around the coast of Australia. Using information about where sea level stood (relative to today) in the past, it is possible to assign age ranges to each story, and all stories are believed to date from at least 7000 years ago. The oral transmission of the accurate descriptions of known historical events across such time depths not only demands a rethink of the ways in which such traditions have previously been dismissed, but it also stands out as unprecedented anywhere else in the world. This invites a number of questions about cultural continuity and those features of Australian Aboriginal societies which may have facilitated such stable transmission

Maquiel'o

Cancion de baile de los Australianos Occidentales

reducida á forte piano por el Illmo D. R. S.



Dr Clint Bracknell, Ethnomusicologist

Dr Clint Bracknell is a Wirlomin Noongar from the south coast of Western Australia and a senior lecturer in Ethnomusicology and Contemporary Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. His research explores the links between Aboriginal Australian song and languages, emerging technologies, and Indigenous creative futures. A musician and composer, Clint creates music heard internationally across a range of media platforms.

'Insider' music researchers and distinctly Indigenous approaches to research

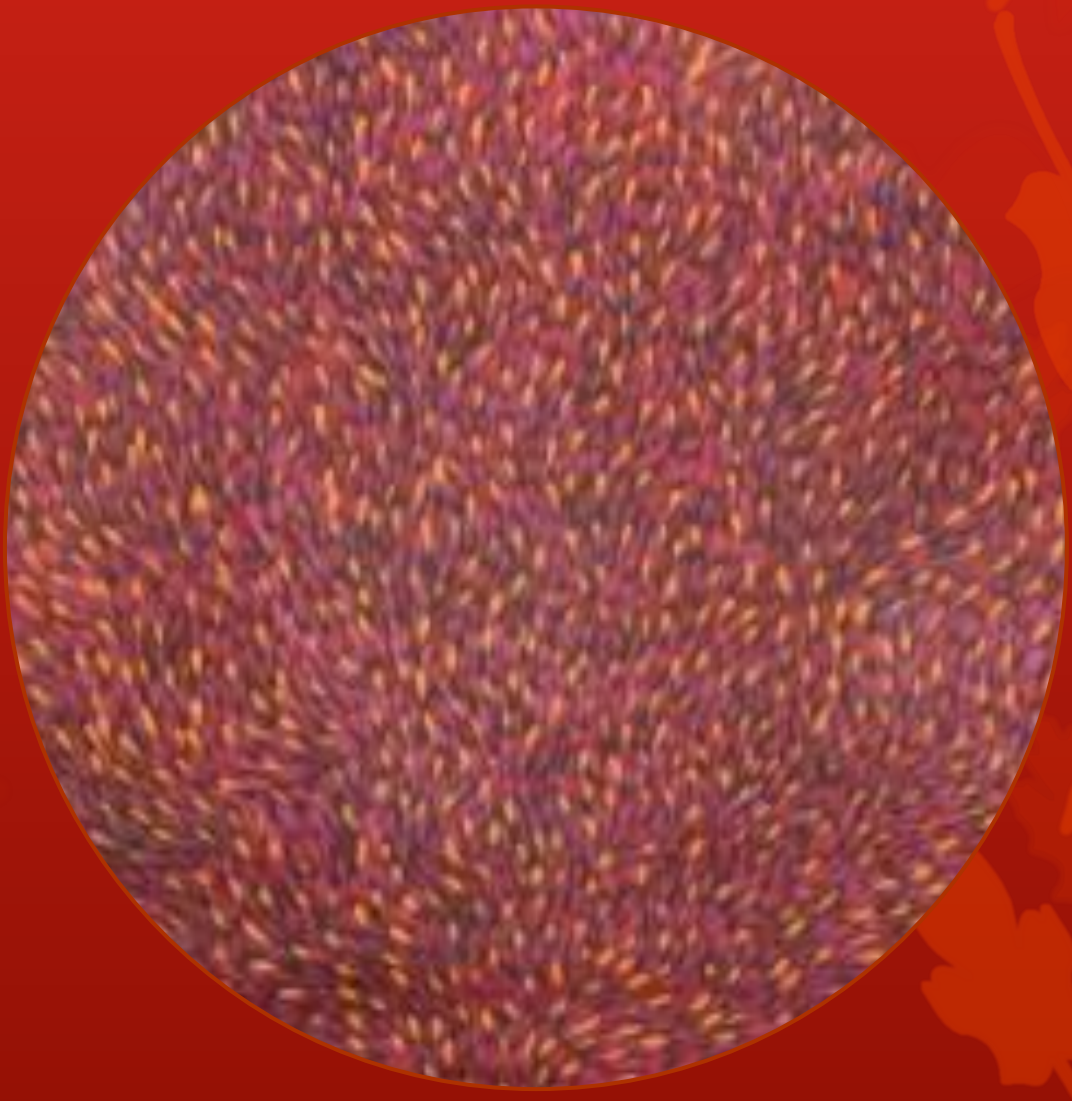
Based on my work as an Aboriginal Australian researcher studying song traditions in the Southwest of Western Australia, this paper interrogates notions of 'insider' music researchers and distinctly Indigenous approaches to research. An Indigenous scholar's identity, acceptance, and the advantages or constraints they experience are subject to constant negotiation as they attempt to balance responsibilities to the academic and Indigenous communities they belong to. In light of these responsibilities, Indigenous music researchers may be motivated to nourish their own, thus far under-researched, local music traditions, serving to increase the diversity of music studied and sustained worldwide.

Dr Duane Hamacher, Astronomer

Dr Duane Hamacher is an astronomer and Senior ARC DECRA Fellow at the Monash University Indigenous Studies Centre in Melbourne. He specialises in Indigenous astronomical and geological knowledge in Australia and the Pacific.

The Complexity of Australian Indigenous Astronomical Knowledges

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people developed a number of practical ways to observe the Sun, Moon and stars to inform navigation, calendars, predict weather, and inform Law and social structure. This knowledge contains a significant scientific component, which is encoded in oral traditions and material culture. This talk will explore the many ways in which Indigenous Australians encode scientific information in their traditions and some of the ways in which they pass this knowledge to successive generations.



Gerry Turpin, Ethnobotanist

Working with Indigenous Biocultural Knowledge in Natural Resource Management

For thousands of years Australian Indigenous peoples have lived on and managed this country, shaping the landscapes and environments, and adapting to changing climates. The knowledge that has been accumulated through intimate and sustained connections to the land had been passed down orally through generations, existing in stories, paintings, song and dance. While a lot of knowledge has been lost due to colonisation and in some places resulted in disconnection to country, many Indigenous groups continue to practice culture.

A more recent term recognising this knowledge is Indigenous Biocultural Knowledge (IBK). IBK is 'knowledge that encompasses people, language and culture, and their relationship to the environment' (Ens et al, 2014). Indigenous strong and diverse presence on country presents a great opportunity for western science to work with Indigenous knowledge systems. While incorporating IBK into research brings many potential opportunities and benefits, there are also major challenges.

In this presentation I would like to highlight the view that IBK has an important role in modern society and in times of fast and uncertain times of environmental change. Through two case examples I will demonstrate some of the potential opportunities but also important considerations in cross-cultural research.

Dr Gretchen M Stolte, Anthropologist

Dr Gretchen Stolte identifies as a Nimi'ipuu (Nez Perce) American Indian and is currently a Research Fellow at the Australian National University. Dr Stolte has degrees in art history and anthropology and focuses on material culture research among Cape York Aboriginal communities, the Torres Strait Islands and her own cultural heritage from the Plateau Region of the American Northwest. She has curated art exhibitions across Australia and North American including *Old Masters: Australia's Great Bark Artists* at the National Museum of Australia, in Canberra. Dr Stolte has also taught material culture studies at the University of Canberra, merging approaches in anthropology, art history, and museum studies in order to develop nuanced and varied presentations of collection objects and object histories.

The Nez Perce Qémes Flower: Cultural Ecology and Indigenous Knowledge

This paper explores the ecological history of the Nez Perce American Indians of the western Plateau region and historical accounts of the camas (or in the native language qémes) flower. The genesis for this project was an accidental discovery during museum collections research at the Portland Art Museum in Portland, Oregon and an examination of beaded bags. This presentation will explore a Native perspective on ecology, sustainable harvesting practices and the cultural importance of a resource and contrast such understandings against artistic representations of those same resources. In this way, more nuanced perspectives of how we should approach Native ecological issues will be presented.