

Newsletter

April-May 2022

Cairns
Singapore
Townsville



Welcome!

The Cairns Institute supports JCU's strategic intent to create a brighter future for life in the tropics world-wide through graduates and discoveries that make a difference. www.jcu.edu.au/about/strategic-intent.

The Cairns Institute's location in tropical north Queensland and proximity to neighbouring countries in the Pacific and South East Asia offers unique opportunities to enhance human life in the tropics and contribute to a brighter, more equitable and enriching future for its peoples. The Institute is committed to understanding and informing critical processes of social and environmental transformation in the tropics.

As the world's tropical zones face immense social, economic and environmental challenges, the Institute aims to provide innovative research with local, national and global applications. The Institute's core business of research, training and dialogue is embedded in commitments of excellence, social justice and engagement with the societies in which we work. Our unique profile is built on the following key concerns:

- Creativity and innovation
- Cultural and linguistical transformations
- Indigenous futures
- Social and environmental justice
- Sustainable development

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Dr Emma Lee



Dr Emma Lee at IRSA2022

Dr Emma Lee is a *rawlwulwuy* woman of *tebrakunna* country, north-east Tasmania, Australia. She is an Associate Professor, Indigenous Leadership, RegionxLink program, at the Centre for Social Impact, Swinburne University of Technology.

Her research fields over the last 25 years have focused on Indigenous affairs, land and sea management, policy and governance of Australian regulatory environments. Emma's work in Tasmania has assisted in constitutional reform, the first joint management plan of a protected area and establishing a market for cultural fisheries. In 2021, she became the first Indigenous Australian editor of a Best Practice Guideline for the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and in 2020 was the inaugural recipient of the William Jonas Award,

Institute of Australian Geographers. In 2019, she accepted a Federal Government role on the National Co-Design Group, Indigenous Voice, for developing models and processes for Indigenous advice to parliament and government. Emma was a finalist for 2022 Australian of the Year (Tasmania) for her body of work in Indigenous rights.

Emma will be the first keynote speaker at the upcoming XV World Congress of Rural Sociology held in Cairns.. Additional keynotes are Dr Monica White and Prof Nora McKeon.

Congress will be held at The Pullman Cairns International Hotel and Conference Centre July 19-22. For more information, go to www.irs2022.com



Rural Sustainability in the Urban Century

XV World Congress of Rural Sociology

19-22 July 2022, Cairns, Australia



Dr Kearrin Sims



JCU RED is Founded

JCU's Research for Ethical Development group – JCU RED – was established in late 2021 to promote ethical development research and ethical development practice. The work of the JCU RED group is both conceptual and applied, aiming to contribute to scholarly and policy debates regarding the ethics of development work, as well as to inform practice through research partnerships. The group is multi-disciplinary and works across a wide range of development settings and sectors.

JCU RED is also fast growing, with 46 current members. If you are interested in joining the RED team contact founder and chair; Dr Kearrin Sims or co-Chair Claire Holland.

Inaugural Symposium

JCU RED will host its inaugural research symposium on 13-14 July 2022, at the Cairns Institute. The symposium's primary aim is to bring together existing RED members to foster new research collaborations. The two-day event will include team or individual research presentations, 'free chat' time during coffee and lunch breaks, and a closing strategic roundtable. The call for external papers theme was: *Beyond bullshit as usual: Re-centring power and politics in the SDGs*. Dr Sims has been received an overwhelming response to researchers wanting to share their work and advised that the program is comprehensive.





Claire Holland



The need to move 'beyond business as usual' has become a catchcry for increasing private sector contributions to the SDGs. This phrase reflects a broader trend towards privatization in global development that includes: a redirection of aid funding away from not-for-profit civil society and towards for-profit aid contractors; a return to economic growth as the principal objective of aid; and an enduring faith in using technofixes to address complex social challenges. Proponents of increased privatization assert that the private sector has specific strengths for advancing the SDGs, including innovation, responsiveness, and efficiency. While the private sector does have an important role to play in responding to poverty and other development challenges, technocratic and depoliticised interventions often ignore and perpetuate root structural causes of inequality and disadvantage.

Harry Frankfurt's (2005) engaging essay *On Bullshit* begins with the sentence 'One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit.' Yet, as Frankfurt continues, 'we have no clear understanding of what bullshit is, why there is so much of it, or what function it serves.' This symposium brings an analysis of bullshit into arenas of development, including but extending beyond the SDGs. We welcome papers that expose and critique public relations stunts and unfulfilled pledges, toothless commitments and harmful state subsidies, tokenistic inclusivity efforts, unethical business practices, and strategies of deflection, misinformation, and the pursuit of personal gain in the name of public good.

*Images: Page 4 Kearrin Sims (top left inset) and Cambodian fields.
Page 5 Claire Holland (top left inset).*



SUNBELT 2022 AUSTRALIA

12-16 JULY

CAIRNS CONVENTION CENTRE, CAIRNS, AUSTRALIA





Dr Subhashni Taylor



STEM initiative at Parramatta State School

Parramatta State School (PSS) in collaboration with Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) and James Cook University (JCU) recently held a field day for the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program. The field day is part of a larger project to enhance student participation in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

The project involves students from years 4 to 6 at Parramatta State School in a survey of the biodiversity of ant species in their school grounds. Under the guidance of personnel from the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA), they will undertake activities such as mapping the location of ant species using GPS trackers, testing the efficacy of different types of food as lures for trapping ants and how to identify a yellow crazy ant population (*Anoplolepis gracilipes*) which is listed as one of the top 100 worst invasive species by the IUCN and the Global Invasive Species Database (WTMA, n. d.).



Drs Greg Burnett and Subhashni Taylor from the College of Arts, Society and Education at JCU will assess the impact of this project on student participation in STEM through involvement in a real-life and authentic biodiversity project that has implications for the local community.

During the field day, the WTMA team ran seven stations about different aspects of the Yellow Crazy Ant Eradication Program including mapping and identification, and participation in setting up lures and field work activities. Over 170 students participated in the field day where they also heard stories and viewed cultural artefacts brought along by indigenous rangers. The highlight of the day was Luna, the highly skilful odour detection dog.





WTMA Team



continued

The project will continue in term 2 of 2022 where students will apply the skills that they learned during the field day. They will assess the impacts of invasive species, undertake a survey of ant biodiversity in the school grounds and analyse the results of their field survey. The project will culminate in a community event at the school where students will share a presentation on the impacts of invasive species to the WTMA and the wider school community.

For further information, email subhashni.taylor@jcu.edu.au

Images: Page 6 (top left insert) Subhashni Taylor. Remainder of images are of Parramatta State School primary students engaging with the team from the Wet Tropics Management Authority.





Dr Narayan Gopalkrishnan



New addition to the QSEC Board

Dr Narayan Gopalkrishnan has been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Queensland Social Enterprise Council (QSEC), the peak body for social enterprise in Queensland.

Dr Gopalkrishnan, Fellow of the Cairns Institute, has been responsible for mobilizing the social enterprise eco-system in Far North Queensland and is currently the Chair of the Social Enterprise Network for the Tropics, an organization that brings together stakeholders from across the region. He is excited about his new role in QSEC and his key focus is on ensuring sustainable and long term resourcing of social enterprises in FNQ. His appointment is at an opportune time for this, as the Queensland government is increasingly supporting social enterprise in the state through the Queensland Social Enterprise Strategy and the Social Enterprise Jobs Fund.

As Dr Gopalkrishnan says, "Social enterprises can play a very significant role in working with the social, ecological and economic issues that we face in the region. Unlike traditional business models, social enterprises do not only work for profit, but view profit as a means towards achieving their overall mission of social good. This is of particular relevance in Far North Queensland where our unique demographics and ecosystems also leave us vulnerable to global and local forces with negative impacts. Social enterprises can provide local place-based solutions that draw on the best aspects of the profit and not-for-profit sectors. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and organizations are particularly well placed to work in the social enterprise space due to the close alignment with value systems and sustainable practices".

2022 is a very important year for the growth of social enterprise in Queensland as the Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) is being held in Brisbane on the 28th and 29th of September this year.

James Cook University is one of the supporters of the bid to bring this flagship event to Australia, one that brings together individuals and organizations from around the world towards a common purpose. The last two events were held virtually, and the Brisbane event is the first face-to-face SEWF after Addis Ababa in 2019, which had 1,312 delegates from 71 countries. Despite the impacts of the pandemic, SEWF 2022 promises to be an exciting and game-changing event for Queensland social enterprises. Dr Gopalkrishnan is also the Chair of the Indigenous Enterprise theme at the Academic Forum of the SEWF and looks forward to building stronger collaborations between academia and the social enterprise sector.

Images: Narayan Gopalkrishnan (top left inset and below) Supplied.





Prof Allan Dale



Developing Northern Australia 2022

Professor Allan Dale will chair the Developing Northern Australia (DNA) Conference for the eighth time in 2022. The conference will be held from 6 to 8 July 2022 at the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre. Hosted this year by the Office of Northern Australia and provides a platform to unite leaders, decision makers, industry representatives and community members who are working to advance our northern regions. Allan said, "Following COVID making us pivot to an online event last year. it will be great to come together and focus again on the issues and opportunities Northern Australia."

Conference topics will include, but are not limited to:

- *global positioning - security, defence and space*
- *next generation agriculture and water*
- *energy and resources*
- *enabling infrastructure*
- *liveability, affordability and workforce*
- *mobilising Aboriginal-led development*
- *reaching further north - business, trade and investment*
- *tourism and environmental service markets*
- *the vision of a sustainable and inclusive northern Australia.*

Keynote speakers include Heidi Lee, CEO Beyond Zero Emissions, Darren Godwell, CEO 121 Global, The Hon Nicole Manison, Deputy Chief Minister, Northern Territory Government and The Hon Darren West MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development; Agriculture and Food; Hydrogen Industry, and Member for Agricultural Region. As in previous years a number Federal and State Minister are also expected to attend depending on the election outcomes.

Croc Pitch will also feature at this years conference. It will take place as a panel-style segment at the DNA Conference. This segment is designed for entrepreneurs or growing businesses that have a scalable innovation, product or technology that will provide a direct benefit to Northern Australia. Applicants will have 6 minutes to pitch a proposal to a panel of business leaders, investors, innovators, and government funding partners.

During your pitch, you will have the opportunity to introduce your innovation, idea or proposal, explain how it contributes to the development of our northern regions, and answer any questions from panel members.

The winner advances to the grand final in Darwin - pitching to win up to \$1,000,000 in investment. For more information on Croc Pitch <https://northaust.org.au/2022-dna-croc-pitch>

For a full list of speakers or for more information please visit the conference website, 2022 Developing Northern Australia Conference - <https://northaust.org.au/2022>

Images: Allan Dale (top left inset and below).





Diana Castorina



Unpacking interregional migration

Diana Castorina is currently completing her PhD in economics in the area of interregional migration in Australia where her overall research objective seeks to understand what makes people want to stay, move away from or move into a region. She is under the primary supervision of A/Prof Riccardo Welters, Theme Leader of 'Sustainable Development' at the Cairns Institute, JCU.

Having lived in regions all her life and experienced first hand how push and pull factors influence decision making and impact on the functionality of those regions, Diana hopes her research findings will better guide practitioners and policy makers who seek strategies to the challenges of attracting and retaining varied skilled people in regional Australia.

As part of her research Diana attempts to better define what is meant by migration. Whilst migration definitions are offered, there are complexities to its dimensions. Margins are blurred temporally, spatially and socially which means there is no clear consensus on its measure. As such within Diana's overarching objective to identify the determinants of interregional migration within Australia, she seeks to explore three research questions:

Who decides to move? Does distance matter? Does space matter?

Castorina and Welters (2022) have since published their findings on the first of these research questions 'Interregional Migration: Who Decides To Move' which can be found here: <https://doi.org/10.47260/bae/917>. In this paper they demonstrate a way by which large scale secondary data can be conformed so that characteristics of all individuals whom make up that household can be better represented.

Understanding who/m is/are making decisions is important, and not just for understanding migration motives. Practitioners and policy makers can be better informed by data which represents the 'decision making unit' rather than assumed societal stereotypes to tackle unconscious bias in policy design. Their findings support this inclusive design, challenging such male breadwinner assumptions.

Their work has been communicated via multiple media streams including webinars (JCU Inspiration on Tap Nov 2020),





continued

Seminars (Pechakucha Townsville Vol. 26), Radio (ABC North Radio Feb 2021); Conferences (BEMAS Conference July 2021 & 2022) and podcasts (Chamber of Commerce Podcast April 2022).

The Science Behind Why People Move

In this episode, Ross sits down with Associate Professor of Economics Riccardo Welters and Associate Lecturer of Economics and PhD Candidate Diana Castorina to talk about Diana's research paper on why people move to the regions, how to attract people to move to the regions, but most importantly, once they have moved, how you get them to stay.



SEASON 2 EPISODE 9

THE SCIENCE BEHIND WHY PEOPLE MOVE

Diana Castorina
ASSOCIATE LECTURER OF
ECONOMICS, AND
PHD CANDIDATE
JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY



Riccardo Welters
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
ECONOMICS
JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY



Ross McLennan
CEO
**TOWNSVILLE CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE**



Images: Page 10 & 11 (top left insets) are of Diana Castorina speaking at Townsville's PechaKucha night at the Heritage Exchange. Left is Dr Keith Noble along with Diana being interviewed at ABC North's radio station by the host Michael Clarke.

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**Re-Imagining Economic
Resilience and Urban Futures
in Post-COVID 19 Era**
1-3 July 2022



**JAMES COOK
UNIVERSITY**
AUSTRALIA

**International Conference on Business, Economics,
Management, and Sustainability (BEMAS).**



Adjunct Professor Craig Volker



UN International Decade for Indigenous Languages

On 15 March 2022, the Cairns Institute Adjunct Professor Craig Volker joined colleagues from Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Germany in an online panel discussion at the Lowy Institute Australia - PNG Network to discuss languages in PNG in light of the United Nations Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022 - 2031).

PNG has more languages than any other country in the world, but increasingly many children are not learning their ancestral languages and families are switching to Tok Pisin. While there are concerns, there are also surprises. In 2020, a newly recognised language in New Ireland, where Volker has his home, was added to PNG's list.

Participants discussed the importance of local languages to identity and connections to ancestral land. University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) linguistics lecturer Sakarepe Kamene, explained how he is only accepted by his own clan when he uses their ancestral language. Volker emphasised the necessity of community consultation in the process of language documentation and showed how this has worked out in his own research into the Nalik language.

He explained how it is important that overseas researchers listen to community leaders and the goals that they themselves have for the development and documentation of their language. He also pointed out that Papua New Guineans have much to teach Australians about how to live comfortably in a multilingual and multicultural society.

You can watch this event on YouTube and at the Aus-PNG Network Facebook page.

Images: Top left inset is Craig Volker. Right is a map of New Ireland province. Courtesy Wikipedia maps

Bringing PNG Skulls Home from Germany

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, western academics collected human remains from the many societies they encountered, often treating them with no more respect than they would flora and fauna specimens. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness in western countries that this was unethical. At the same time, there have been increasingly louder calls from formerly colonised people to return the remains of their ancestors to their homelands.

Recently the Übersee Museum in Bremen, Germany discovered a crate with decorated skulls of two women and three men from New Ireland, Papua New Guinea, that had been "collected" in the former German colony prior WWI. Until around 1930, skulls were often exhumed from graves in central New Ireland societies and decorated with bee wax, lime, paint, and plants to be used in rain-making and other ceremonies. These skulls were often taken by European missionaries, explorers, and plantation owners as exotic





souvenirs. The practice died out under the influence of missionaries and colonial administrators.

Curators contacted The Cairns Institute's Adjunct Professor Craig Alan Volker to try to identify the New Ireland clans from which the skulls were taken. The current museum staff have a policy of working with the Bremen State Government to return all human remains in their collections to their homelands. Volker says that after so many years it will be extremely difficult to ascertain exactly where the provenance of the skulls lies, particularly

since the skulls arrived at the museum with very little documentation. Nevertheless, it is important to make the effort to record any oral history related to the skulls. As a person of German descent living in New Ireland, he sees this as an important step in the reconciliation of Germans and New Irelanders with their shared colonial experience.

Images: Top left inset is a scene from the New Ireland province, PNG.

Credit: New Ireland Tourism Authority.

Below: Skull images. Supplied by Craig Volker.





Dr Kearnin Sims



The myth of non-interference: Chinese foreign policy in Cambodia

On 13 April 2022, The Cairns Institute's Research Fellow Dr Kearnin Sims and Griffiths University PhD Candidate Sovinda Po delivered a joint presentation to The Australian National University's Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs and Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW). The presentation marked the launch of CIW's Global China Research Spoke's new seminar series, and was titled "The myth of non-interference: Chinese foreign policy in Cambodia."

Building on Po and Sims 2021 Asian Studies Review article of the same name, the seminar focused on Beijing's non-interference rhetoric through a case-study analysis of Cambodia. Discourses of "non-interference" features prominently in China's so-called "peaceful rise" and "win – win" approach to international diplomacy. However, Po and Sims argue that Beijing's "non-interference"

rhetoric is not demonstrated in the context of Cambodia, where China has repeatedly interfered to reinforce Prime Minister Hun Sen's leadership during times of political contestation. To make this argument, Po and Sims offered a historical summary of Chinese interference in Cambodia followed by an analysis of the key domains in which Hun Sen's regime supports Chinese geostrategic interests. These are: support for Beijing's One China Policy and its Belt and Road Initiative; support for Beijing in negotiations with ASEAN; and support for Chinese economic interests. These domains, so Po and Sims argue, contribute to the advancement of China's "core national interest", and have been prioritised by Beijing over its principle of non-interference.

Images: (top left inset) Kearnin Sims and (below) Portraits of Chinese President Xi Jinping and Cambodian King Norodom Sihamoni in Phnom Penh, during Xi's visit in 2016





Dr Ed Johnson



Ed Johnson's visit to Cairns

Ed Johnson visited The Cairns Institute in February to explore research opportunities after recently completing his PhD at the University of Sydney. The collaborative and meaningful nature of the work done at the Cairns Institute is something which appealed to his desire to learn about and contribute to the lives of people living in rural and remote communities.

His thesis focused on humanistic approaches to supporting rural and remote families in the context of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Julia Gillard called the NDIS is "the greatest change to Australian social policy in a generation" and says it is pretty difficult to disagree with that, but the reality of the rollout has meant that many rural and remote communities are being left behind again.

Ed conducted a qualitative study of rural and remote family experiences of access to disability supports, and the general consensus was that there is a lack of timely and high-quality clinical supports for people with disabilities in the bush, and that many families do not expect that a metro-centric NDIS will change this. Taking on board the experiences of these families, he undertook a series of in-depth case studies examining the phenomenologies of families and their kids with intellectual disabilities accessing digital speech pathology supports (telehealth) across a period of 18 months.

He coached co-workers (in his case, school teachers and an early childhood intervention support worker) embedded in community to support the families to achieve their goals. Together they developed an effective model of support which proved that families and communities could be supported to upskill and achieve their goals in a complex clinical context which was previously thought to be ineffective by many clinicians and families. Co-workers developed skills which they began to use with multiple families across their communities, decreasing the reliance on outsider assistance.

Ed is very interested in applying this coaching and community-capacity-building model in other areas, as well as more broadly exploring the phenomenologies and ethnographies of people in rural and remote Australia through a humanistic lens. He believes this work may have implications for understanding how people define "health", "disability", and "health services" in their communities, and could contribute to decolonising health and social services by creating more person-centered and community-oriented support options.

He is interested in talking with like-minded community members and researchers across health, anthropology, and sociology in pursuing these next stages of my research.

Image: (top left inset) is Ed Johnson outside the Cairns institute. Credit: Vyvyan Wong

Sunbelt 2022 Australia
International Social Network Analysis Conference
12-16 July Cairns Convention Centre



INSNA
INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS





Ellie Bock



Introducing Ellie Bock

Ellie Bock is undertaking a Master of Philosophy (Society and Culture), and in April presented her pre-completion seminar: Prescient Custodians: Biocultural Ecological Economics and Restorative Governance of the Wet Tropics.

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) is considered the third most vulnerable of all protected areas on Earth to global warming impacts (Le Saout et al. 2013). Arguably this vulnerability continues to escalate as a result of pervasive neoliberal paradigms and increasing greenhouse gas emissions. A limited understanding of ecological economics and biocultural concepts characterizes the Wet Tropics region, particularly as these relate to established Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) in this globally exceptional bioregion.

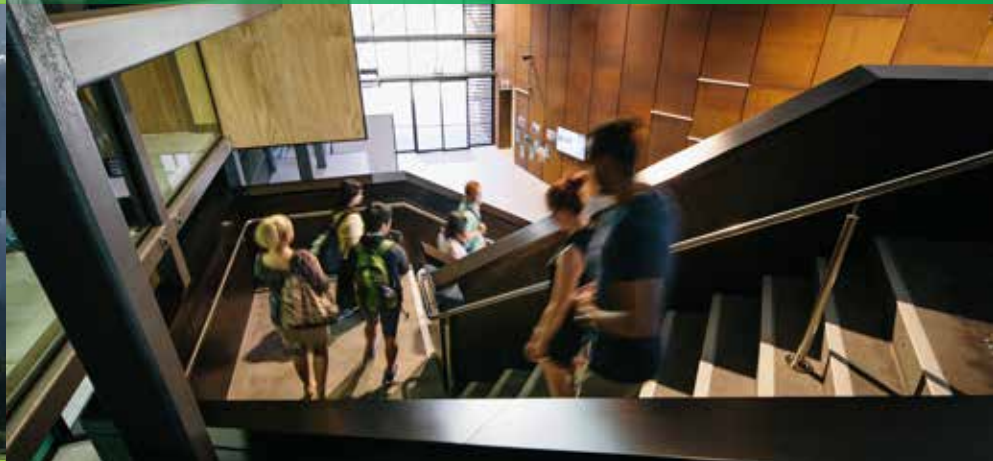
WTWHA governance arrangements remained structurally little changed from their inception during the 1990s. Ellie's research aims to investigate the intersects between ecological economics, biocultural concepts and a potential restorative approach to governance of the WTWHA and its buffer.

Ellie has been successful in her application to bring her research into a PhD, which she will begin later this year under the supervision of Professors Allan Dale and Hurriyet Babacan. Her research aims to:

- Address significant knowledge and research gaps in relation to ecological economics in collaboratively managed world heritage protected areas.
- Develop a unique bi-cultural framework relevant to regional populations.
- Contribute to better understanding of the potential for IPAs to deliver ecological economic benefits.
- Contribute to better understanding of ecological economics and biocultural concepts to inform a new governance model and policy frameworks.
- Provide new research and an evidence base for policy change.

*"Restorative place-based governance
is the path to a livable future
for all species"*





Ellie currently plans to publish a co-authored journal article based on her findings to date in late 2022.

NOTE: Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples group name positioning and indicated Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) locations are approximate only.

MAP IS NOT TO SCALE.

The Wet Tropics bioregion's Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) comprise:

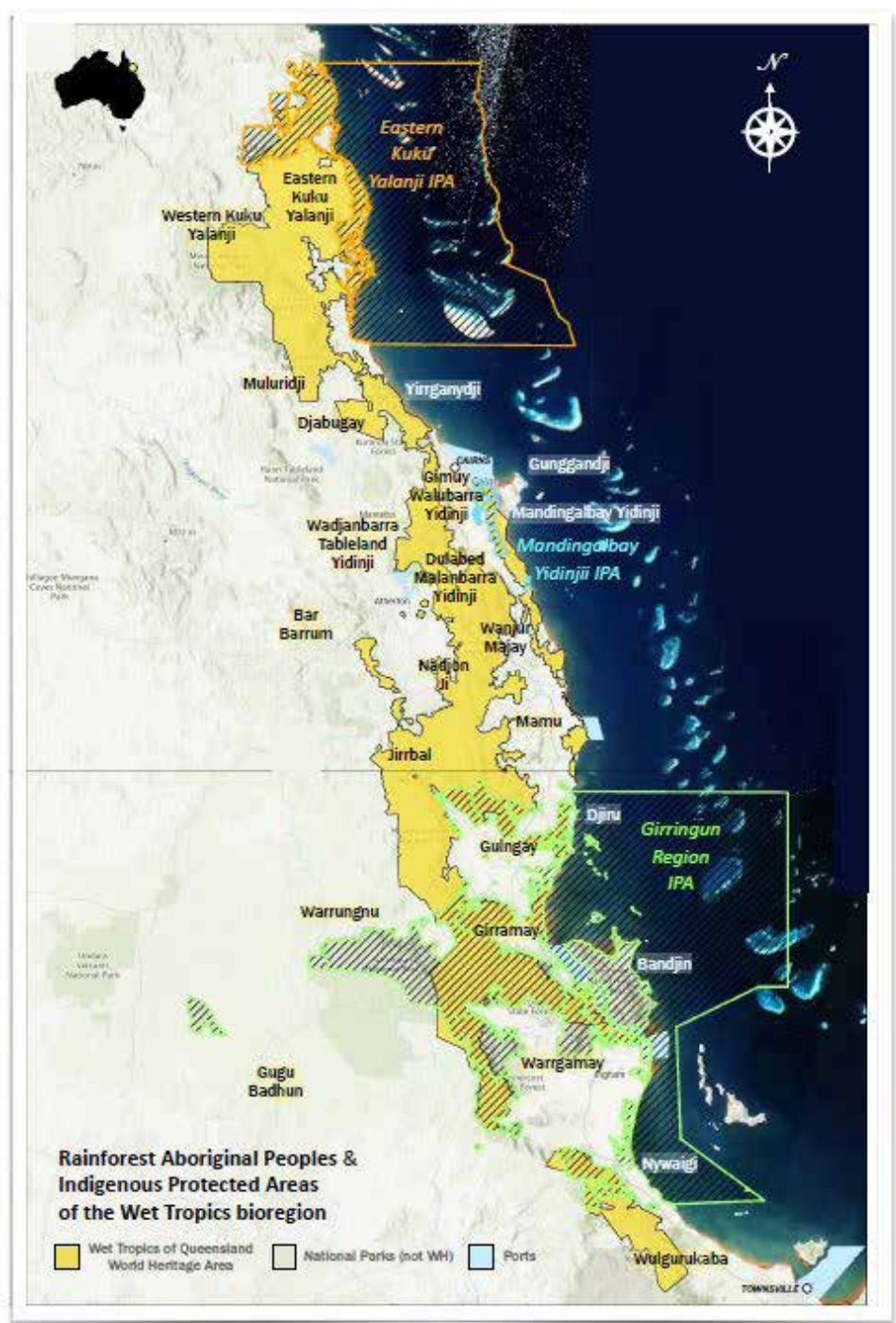
Eastern Kuku Yalanji IPA: Kuku Nyungkal bubu (country), Jalunji Warra bubu and balun (sea country).

Mandingalbay Yidinji IPA: Mandingalbay Yidinji country, including sea country.

Girringun Region IPA: Bandjin, Djiru, Girramay, Gulngay, Warrgamay and Nywaigi country, including sea country; and Gugu Badhun and Warrungnu country, in addition to Mungalla Station (Nywaigi country) and Yaballum (Girramay country).

Source: Native Title Vision, with added datasets <http://www.nntt.gov.au/assistance/Geospatial/Pages/NTV.aspx> [Accessed: 23 April 2022].

Images: Ellie Bok (top left inset) and (left) presenting in the Boardroom of The Cairns Institute. Credit: Jennifer McHugh.



Teddy Winn



Pacific Women's Political Empowerment

On 8 March 2022, Teddy Winn joined a small group of distinguished women scholars in Australia and PNG via zoom to discuss issues related to political and socio-economic empowerment of women in Papua New Guinea (PNG), and across the Pacific. These women are members of a project that is placed under the Pacific Women's Political Empowerment Research Group (PWPERG); a research group of The Cairns Institute. The group raised key issues pertaining to women's political and socio-economic representation. The following were some ideas emanating from the discussions, with emphasis from my present research.

It was widely acknowledged that women in PNG and across the Pacific are grossly underrepresented in their respective elected legislatures. For instance, PNG has had only seven women legislators since independence in 1975, and its 10th parliament (current) consisted of all male MPs. Politics in PNG, and across some Pacific Island Countries (PICs) is male biased. Women's representation in government, business, and industry, although well documented, was comparatively lower than their male counterparts, owing to ongoing global disparities/inequalities.

A recent study by the Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative (PPSDI) found that the global average 'rates of representation' of women holding board seats, board chair positions, and CEO positions were 16.9%, 5.3%, and 4.4% respectively. For the Pacific, the average rates of women's representation across these three positions as a share of the global average were 21%, 11%, and 13% respectively. Meanwhile, in PNG, the rate of women's representation in business (across these three positions) as a share of the regional average were 19%, 4%, and 2% respectively. Women's representation in PNG overall is poor, not only in politics and

business, but across both the formal and informal sectors.

Taking the above analysis into account, Teddy presents thoughts regarding his current research; part of which is devoted to understanding the concept of the 'big man' (bigshot) system (more recently, some PNG followers referred to 'big man' figures as 'daddy boss'), and his role in government corruption. What Teddy found interesting is that the role of women in politics (government/business/leadership) has often been overshadowed by the massive cultural and structural factors associated with a predominantly patrilineal society. The preponderance of men in politics and business have always placed women leaders and entrepreneurs in a precarious position. The term 'big woman' or 'bigshot woman' (sometimes, 'mummy boss') was recently coined in reference to the emergence of a new class of PNG women leaders in urban spaces (an example is the late Janet Sape, a successful businesswoman and a one-time political candidate) who had stood shoulder to shoulder with male counterparts. Beyond that, majority of the womenfolk in rural areas continued to be subservient to their husbands and male relatives. Most women remain 'invisible'.

Political discourse pertaining to the role of 'big woman/big shot woman' has not been investigated at any significant length by scholars interested in government corruption and politics in PNG. Traditionally, the role of women in society has always been downplayed largely by patriarchal dispositions. Most PNG societies are patrilineal, except for several places, like parts of Bougainville and East New Britain (Tolai society), that have matrilineal kinship systems. Unfortunately, this status quo has not experienced any significant shift in contemporary PNG politics. Although there are well



continued

documented cases of corruption allegations among some women leaders in government and politics, this is usually overshadowed by a large gender inequality gap, cultural constructs, and other structural factors, such as political competition, lack of political will, and money politics. A biased appointment system and an unfavourable business climate that favours 'big men' or 'bigshots' are other notable structural issues that face women leaders in PNG.

Many PNG women have a passive voice in society and are politically timid or inactive. Most times they tend to disagree or do not support women candidates or leaders in politics, government, and business. Their passiveness means that they become targets of domination, and therefore, are easily influenced by the male members of their communities. National institutions representing women are weak, or dysfunctional. For instance, the importance of the PNG National

Council of Women (NCW) – an institution with twenty-two representations created under the Department of Community Development and Religion to drive awareness and mobilise women's voices was ruined due to funding limitations, in-house politics, poor coordination, and lack of political will. These factors tend to push women leaders and their role in government, politics, and business to the periphery, consequently placing the onus of leadership on big men.

In order to understand the various social constructs and how they have 'engineered' the gendered roles across different sections of PNG society (and the Pacific), one needs to apply the 'emic' approach. Unless we understand the context, we would be less likely to identify the different forms of power and leadership structure women across PNG and the Pacific are trying to cultivate – to be empowered.



Images: Teddy Winn (page 18 top left inset) and above are the women featured in Pawa Meri: Role Models to Inspire - A set of six documentaries showing the struggles and challenges of each woman. source: <https://alilbitofpickleinpng.wordpress.com/tag/pawa-meri/>

What's happening in the Institute?

Details for these events can be found at: www.cairnsinstitute.jcu.edu.au/upcoming-events/

Event	Date & location
Exploring a Traditional Owner-led Community of Practice framework for understanding Crown of Thorns Starfish research and management on the GBR TCI Impact and Engagement Seminar Dr Vincent Backhouse	19 May The Cairns Institute
Unravelling the Northern Australian Glass Bead Record CABAH/TARL Seminar Dr Mirani Lister	20 May The Cairns Institute
Long-lived Termitaria in the Top End - ecology, paleoclimate and palaeohydrology CABAH/TARL Seminar Prof Bob Wasson, A.K. Singhvi & S.Garnett	27 May The Cairns Institute
Out of the Woodworks: The interdisciplinary study of the 1962 Batavia's ship remains, its timber and connection to the Dutch fine arts CABAH/TARL Seminar A/Prof Wendy Van Duivenvoorde	03 June The Cairns Institute
Inaugural Symposium JCU RED	14 July, 2022 The Cairns Institute
Sunbelt 2022 Australia International Network for Social Network Analysis Conference	12-16 July, 2022 Cairns Convention Centre
XV World Congress of Rural Sociology Register at www.IRSA2022.com	19-22 July, 2022 Pullman Cairns International

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