Major Grants for funding commencing in 2015

Discovery Indigenous projects

Australian research organisations will receive almost $4.4 million through the Australian Research Council Discovery Indigenous scheme for 10 new research projects commencing in 2015.

All successful project details are provided below.

**Australian Catholic University**

**Lead Chief Investigator and Discovery Indigenous Award recipient:** Miss Fabri Blacklock (IN150100064)

**Summary:** Sharing the wisdom and knowledge of New South Wales (NSW) Koori Elders is imperative for the continuation of Koori culture and for the understanding of all Australians of the country we share. By recording oral histories and illustrating them with historical and contemporary records, images, and commentary, by insider-interview, recording and collaborative editing with participants, the project aims to document Koori Elders' wisdom and knowledge, perspectives and experiences, for use in school and community education. Expected outputs include a scholarly book, refereed-journal articles, conference presentations, and preparation resources for NSW school students, and academic publications. The proposed outputs will make it accessible to schools and communities.

**ARC funding:** $419 000

**Australian Catholic University**

**Lead Chief Investigator:** Professor Janet Mooney (IN150100060)

**Summary:** A new generation of professionals is triumphing in a new Indigenous Australia. There is a paucity of research that has explained the drivers of this success that has enabled these Indigenous Australians to lead productive and fulfilling lives. Hence little is known about how to replicate this success. This research aims to identify the psycho-social determinants of Indigenous professionals’ socio-economic wellbeing. The expected outcomes will include new research-derived strategies for enhancing Indigenous Australians’ socio-economic wellbeing thus improving Australia’s productivity, economic growth, and socioeconomic wellbeing while advancing international Indigenous theory, research, and practice and building research capability of Indigenous researchers.

**ARC funding:** $459 000

**The University of Newcastle**

**Lead Chief Investigator and Discovery Indigenous Award recipient:** Dr Brett Turner (IN150100037)

**Summary:** The Australian coastline is dotted with soft clays to a significant depth. These soft clay deposits display excessive settlement characteristics, affecting transport infrastructure. Understanding the couplings between the biogeochemical composition of the pore liquid and the mechanical behaviour of soft soils is essential, but current engineering practice is limited. Sea level rise in Australia will potentially place as much as $67 billion in transport infrastructure at risk; consequently, this project aims to examine the impact of climate change on the biogeochemical processes of estuarine sediments in relation to: geotechnical properties; soft soil stability under sea level change; and soil carbon sequestration.

**ARC funding:** $570 000
University of Wollongong

Lead Chief Investigator: Professor Kathleen Clapham (IN150100030)

Summary: This project involves an in-depth investigation into the use of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in Aboriginal health services research. FGDs are a common way of gathering qualitative data in Aboriginal health services research, however, there have been no studies as to whether they are appropriate research tools in such contexts. The aim of this project is to generate the knowledge to inform the accountable, culturally appropriate, ethically sound and methodologically rigorous use of FGDs in qualitative Aboriginal health service research.

ARC funding: $317 000

RMIT University

Lead Chief Investigator and Discovery Indigenous Award recipient: Associate Professor Barry Judd (IN150100017)

Summary: This project examines the construction of Indigenous identity through organised sport in remote communities. Despite high profile successes of Indigenous people in elite sports, the effectiveness of relationships between remote communities and organised sport is not well understood. This project addresses the problem of how participation in organised sport affects identity and everyday life in remote Indigenous communities, both positively and negatively. The project aims to provide an understanding of the role of organised sport in Indigenous identity construction in remote Australia and thus open opportunities for equitable and reconciliatory modes of participation.

ARC funding: $529 000

James Cook University

Lead Chief Investigator: Dr Felecia Watkin Lui, (IN150100011)

Summary: The proposed project aims to bring together researchers and Indigenous community members to develop a collaborative framework for measuring research benefit. It aims to address two main ‘Closing the Gap’ priority areas, Indigenous health and education, by questioning what constitutes research benefit from an Indigenous perspective, and how can the benefits of research be measured to ensure sustainable outcomes for Indigenous communities. The innovation of this project lies in its methodology which endeavours to unpack the benefit construct from an Indigenous worldview to enable future research projects to be designed with outcomes in mind that are acceptable and valued by Indigenous beneficiaries and be informed by Indigenous Knowledges.

ARC funding: $612 845

Queensland University of Technology

Lead Chief Investigator: Dr Grace Sarra (IN150100045)

Summary: This project aims to address the gap between incarcerated young people’s (10-17 years) education and their future education, training and employment opportunities. Indigenous and low SES young people face a lower quality of life in the areas of education, health and employment, and are at risk of both offending and re-offending because of low educational outcomes and life expectations. This project aims to focus on improving incarcerated Indigenous and low SES young people’s mathematics education outcomes to reduce this risk and thereby improve these individuals’ potential to improve their quality of life.

ARC funding: $450 000
Charles Darwin University  
**Lead Chief Investigator:** Dr Linda Ford (IN150100013)  
**Summary:** This research aims to develop and implement suitable Indigenous frameworks for the preservation, interpretation and dissemination of the recordings of ceremonial performances in the Wagait-Daly region of the Northern Territory of Australia. The focus is a body of recordings, made by early anthropologists and missionaries, of final mortuary ceremony performances. The ceremonial performance is a key process for integrating Indigenous knowledge from many different domains, a socially powerful site of exchange, transmission and transformation of relationship to country, kin and identity. The aim is to extend the power of ceremony in order to benefit Indigenous people's identity and Australia’s shared history in the future.  
**ARC funding:** $99,537  

The Australian National University  
**Lead Chief Investigator:** Professor Michael Dodson (IN150100007)  
**Summary:** This project investigates the prevalence of ‘deficit discourse’ and its influence on Indigenous education. Deficit discourse frames Indigenous identity in a narrative of negativity and deficiency. Recent work indicates that deficit discourse is active in policy, public debate, pedagogy and practice, and its prevalence in Indigenous education influences student performance. By mapping the discursive environment and analysing education programs that reject the deficit model, this project assesses whether its removal improves outcomes for Indigenous students. This project provides an original approach to challenge entrenched perceptions, resulting in tangible benefits for the Australian education system and the communities that it serves.  
**ARC funding:** $456,000  

The Australian National University  
**Lead Chief Investigator and Discovery Indigenous Award recipient:** Ms Elizabeth Ellis (IN150100018)  
**Summary:** Verbal arts are central to social interaction. In the Western Desert Ngaanyatjarra and Ngaatjatjarra people use special speech styles to mark particular occasions and life transitions. Led by Ngaatjatjarra linguist, researcher and educator Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis, the research team aims to build on a corpus of these endangered oral traditions. Following in-depth linguistics analysis the project aims to implement strategies to revitalise these endangered styles through dynamic contemporary applications thus reintegrating them into the language socialisation framework of youth. The project aims to assist Aboriginal people to safeguard their heritage and contribute to a wider public appreciation of Aboriginal languages and cultures.  
**ARC funding:** $480,227