



# The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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## Editorial

We are very proud to bring Volume 40 of *The Australia Journal of Indigenous Education (AJIE)* to our readers — a fascinating and thought provoking collection of six book reviews and 13 scholarly articles. In this issue we welcome Professor Martin Nakata to the team as co-editor and are looking forward to the fresh insight he will provide to the direction of *AJIE*. Volume 40 of *AJIE* marks our shift to a combination of print and online publication with Brisbane-based publishing house Australian Academic Press and we are excited about the potential this has for reaching a much wider international audience. This year *AJIE* continues to bring our attention to issues of contemporary relevance, importance and necessity across the national and global Indigenous education landscape. Right now in Australia, there are a number of pressing concerns for us in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education that include the impact of the Northern Territory intervention on the education of Indigenous children, the broad reaching effects of neoliberal policies on Indigenous education, National Assessment Program — Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), the Closing the Gap policy, and the framing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge as a cross-curricular perspective within the national curriculum. In response to the current climate, the first article by Nakata reflects on pathways for Indigenous education in the developing agenda of the Australian Curriculum, the Cross-Curriculum priorities, the General Capability area of Intercultural Understanding, and the positioning of Indigenous learners within the diversity of learners with English as an additional language or dialect (EALD). The article by Griffiths later in the volume similarly examines approaches to Indigenous education in Australia with a view to identifying best practice.

We then bring to you three suites of articles. The first suite centres in and around the complexities of teaching and learning maths and science with Indigenous Australian students and in ways that embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge. McDonald, Warren and DeVries's article explores the ways in which mathematical representations in language can assist overall mathematical understanding for Indigenous students in the early years of school. The article by Appanna picks up

on the theme of effective teaching and learning practices and takes us into the area of embedding Indigenous knowledges and engaging Indigenous students in school science. McNamara and McNamara's research shares with us the process of documenting and synthesising the knowledge of elders on Erub Island of seasonal patterns, indicators and climate for use in a local season calendar and curriculum material in the local primary school. The article by Manning later in the volume continues an environmental theme but shifts our focus across the Pacific to the teaching of *Te Ātiawa* (Māori) and *Pākehā* (non-Māori) history in New Zealand and critiques place-based education partnerships in Wellington as appropriate teaching and learning approaches.

The second suite of articles in this volume explore specific teaching, learning and research spaces for Indigenous students and academics in Australia, New Zealand and Norway. Pechenkina, Kowal and Paradies analyse higher education statistics for Indigenous students and staff in Australia so as to better understand the correlation between Indigenous student support mechanisms and current patterns and factors within universities that are associated with participation and success. Mercier, Asmar and Page consider the everyday experiences of Māori academics within Aotearoa–New Zealand universities, and how this experience reveals or enacts the commitments to claim an Indigenised space. The article by Manning et al. asks us to consider methodologies and approaches that assist Māori *whānau* (family) and *iwi* (tribe) to actively engage in the New Zealand schooling system and assert their rights in accordance with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840). Along similar lines, Keskitalo and Määttä explore the ways in which Sámi culture outside school is embraced and privileged inside school culture and raise important questions about the continued dominance of western education over Indigenous children in Norway.

The final suite of articles in this volume moves into remote educational settings in Indigenous Australia to consider teaching practices, learning outcomes and ways forward. Harrington and Brasche's article addresses the urgent need to improve teacher retention rates in schools with high indigeneity and draw upon success stories from teacher training programs in New South Wales to high-

light potential solutions to this problem. The article by Kenny questions the use of Standard Australian English oral language development guides in remote contexts with Indigenous children in early childhood settings and makes suggestions for new ways of assessing emerging English oracy that takes into account homeland Aboriginal languages. Constable, Dixon and Dixon then provide a different take on Indigenous learning preferences through exploration of the educational outcomes of a dog health education program in five rural and remote Indigenous Australian communities and assert that cultural relevancy and appropriateness is key to success.

Collectively, the articles in this volume provide us with enormous insight into what is happening on the ground

right now in a diverse range of educational settings to improve the educational outcomes for Indigenous Australian students and to better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through education. Amid much political adversity and a neoliberal environment of governmentality, measurement and 'policy by numbers', the work presented here provides us with a sense of hope that at grass roots level, Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, teachers and students are working persistently, strongly and creatively towards a positive educational future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Indigenous peoples the world over.

**Martin Nakata and Elizabeth Mackinlay**  
Editors