

# Indigenous News Flash ARCHIVE: MAY 2009



## News:

Indigenous PhD program opens at the University of Alaska (United States). The University of Alaska announced in April that it would be opening a new Indigenous Studies Doctoral Program.

For more information: <http://indigenousissuestoday.blogspot.com/2009/04/indigenous-peoples-doctoral-programs.html>

Samson and Delilah (Australia)

Indigenous directed film in Australia shows the hard hitting issues occurring in NT Indigenous communities and makes it into a love story that deals with topical health issues such as petrol sniffing.

For more information: <http://nit.com.au/blog/?p=291>

## New Recommended References:

1. Garnett, S.T., Sithole, B., Whitehead, P.J., Burgess, P., Johnston, F.H. and Lea, T. (2009) Healthy Country, Healthy People: Policy Implications of Links between Indigenous Human Health and Environmental Condition in Tropical Australia. *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 68, no. 1, pp. 53-66

2. Pilgrim S., Samson C. and Pretty J. (2009) Rebuilding Lost Connections: How Revitalisation Projects Contribute to Cultural Continuity and Improve the Environment. *iCES Occasional Paper 2009-01*. Interdisciplinary Centre for Environment and Society, University of Essex.

3. Burgess, P.C., Berry, H.L., Gunthorpe W. and Bailie, R.S. (2008) Development and preliminary validation of the 'Caring for Country' questionnaire: measurement of an Indigenous Australian health determinant. *International Journal for Equity in Health* 2008, 7:26.

## Education Centre:

*Ethical issues surrounding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collection of data and research (Australia)*

by Jonathan "Yotti" Kingsley

"Within the research process, failing to understand difference in values and culture may be reckless act that jeopardises both the ethics and quality of research. However, to do better is not always straightforward. Working with a difference in a research context takes time, care, patience and the building of robust relationships" (NHMRC, 2003).

Ownership of data involves the same collaborative trust building process to ensure ethical

outcomes (NHMRC, 2003, AIATSIS, 2000). It is critical that researchers/ data collectors are prompted to ask whether the general research could contribute to the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through consultation with key stakeholders within the community (NHMRC, 2003; AIATSIS, 2000). Models that have proven to build this trust include:

- Greater reliance on participatory process
- Innovative institutional arrangements with ongoing involvement of communities
- Legal agreements that codify substance
- Aboriginal community control over the research process
- Explicitly recognition and commitment to respect

Important to issues of ownership, researchers and data collectors need to conform to relevant legal requirements and Human Research Ethics committee (HREC) need to be satisfied that the conduct that they approve is lawful. Beyond law the guiding principles of the NHMRC (2003) and AIATSIS (2000) which focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are based on reciprocity, respect, equality, meaningful engagement, survival and protection and responsibility.

#### **Some relevant references on this issue:**

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Studies (2000) Guidelines for ethical research in Indigenous studies, AIATSIS, Canberra.

Henry, J., Dunbar, T., Arnott, A., Scrimgeour, M. & Murakami-Gold, L. (2004) Indigenous research reform agenda: a review of the literature, Cooperative Research Centre for Aboriginal and Tropical Health, Canberra.

Henderson, R., Simmons, D.S., Bourke, L. & Muir, J. (2002) Clinical ethics: development of guidelines for non-Indigenous people undertaking research among the Indigenous population of north-east Victoria, *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 176(10), pp. 482-485.

Humphery, K. (2000) Indigenous health and 'western research': discussion paper, VicHealth Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit, Melbourne.

Mathews, J.D. (1998) The Menzies School of health research offers a new paradigm of cooperative research, *The Medical Journal of Australia*, 169, pp. 625 - 629.

McAullay, D., Griew, R. & Anderson, I. (2002) The ethics of Aboriginal health research: an annotated bibliography- discussion paper no. 5, Vichealth Koori Health Research and Community Development Unit, Melbourne.

National Health and Medical Research Council (2003) Values and ethics: guidelines for ethical conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research, National Health and Medical Research Council, Canberra.

Stewart, P. & Pyett, P. (2005) Victorian Aboriginal ethics project report: a community report from Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit, University of Melbourne and Vichealth, Melbourne.