

# Research opens the future

RMIT is supporting a new generation of Indigenous researchers, through Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous pre-doctoral fellowships.

RMIT's pre-doctoral fellowships support higher degree research candidates from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds and build Indigenous research capacity by employing candidates to complete their PhDs.

Candidates receive a four-year fellowship and the opportunity to build their research track record and reputation, supported by training, development and mentorship.

## Developing Indigenous business

Yawuru man Mark Jones is researching a business management model that incorporates aspects of capitalism that can further enhance Aboriginal sovereignty.

"What I am trying to work out is how and what management disciplines you can bring to Indigenous enterprises and markets and also accelerate their success," Mr Jones said.

"The factors for success and failure for an Indigenous enterprise and a traditional enterprise are the same. The difference, broadly speaking, is that Indigenous enterprises often have a cultural



Indigenous Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow Mark Jones and Indigenous Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow Megan Kelleher.

aspect to how they operate.

"What I really want to do is create a model that can incorporate industry best practice for management, but not at the exclusion of the social and cultural factors. I don't know how yet – that's one of the questions my research will answer."

Mr Jones was working as

RMIT's manager of social enterprise when the four-year Vice-Chancellor's Indigenous pre-doctoral fellowship opportunity was advertised in late 2017.

"There aren't a lot of Aboriginal academics so it is positive to see that increasing," Mr Jones said.

"I feel incredibly fortunate to have this opportunity. It's a credit to

the university and the people within it that these kind of opportunities exist."

## New technology, ancient culture

Kelleher/Barada/Gabalbara woman Megan Kelleher is researching the impact of cutting-edge technologies like blockchain

on centuries-old Indigenous culture. Blockchain is a continuously growing list of records which are linked and secured using cryptography.

The technology allows transactions to be recorded in multiple places simultaneously and, despite the absence of a central database, made and tracked sequentially. The transactions are accordingly likened to building blocks.

"I am looking at Indigenous knowledge systems, which underpin and guide Indigenous governance," Ms Kelleher said.

"I've also got to learn about the processes and protocols that underpin blockchain and other second wave automation technologies that are based on algorithms, data sets and systems.

"How do we avoid intergenerational colonial biases from becoming part of those governance systems?"

"How will these systems impact marginalised communities, whose way of life doesn't fit the dominant cultural paradigm?"

Kelleher was on maternity leave from her state government communications job when she heard about the unique opportunity and decided to apply.

The RMIT Indigenous Research Fellowships are now open for submissions.

## Imagine your future

"Ngarara Willim RMIT supports my academic, cultural and personal needs while I am studying

Allison Toby - Bachelor of Arts (International Studies)



Left to right: Torey Brooking - Diploma of Screen & Media, Allison Toby - Bachelor of Arts (International Studies), Israel Carter - Advance Diploma of Music Industry.

### RMIT University offers a number of programs in:

- Business
- Science and Health
- Design and Architecture
- Education
- Engineering
- Fashion and Textiles
- Information Technology
- Community Services

### Ngarara Willim is here to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples throughout their educational journey. Contact us today to find out more about:

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- Support with your application and our Access Program
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