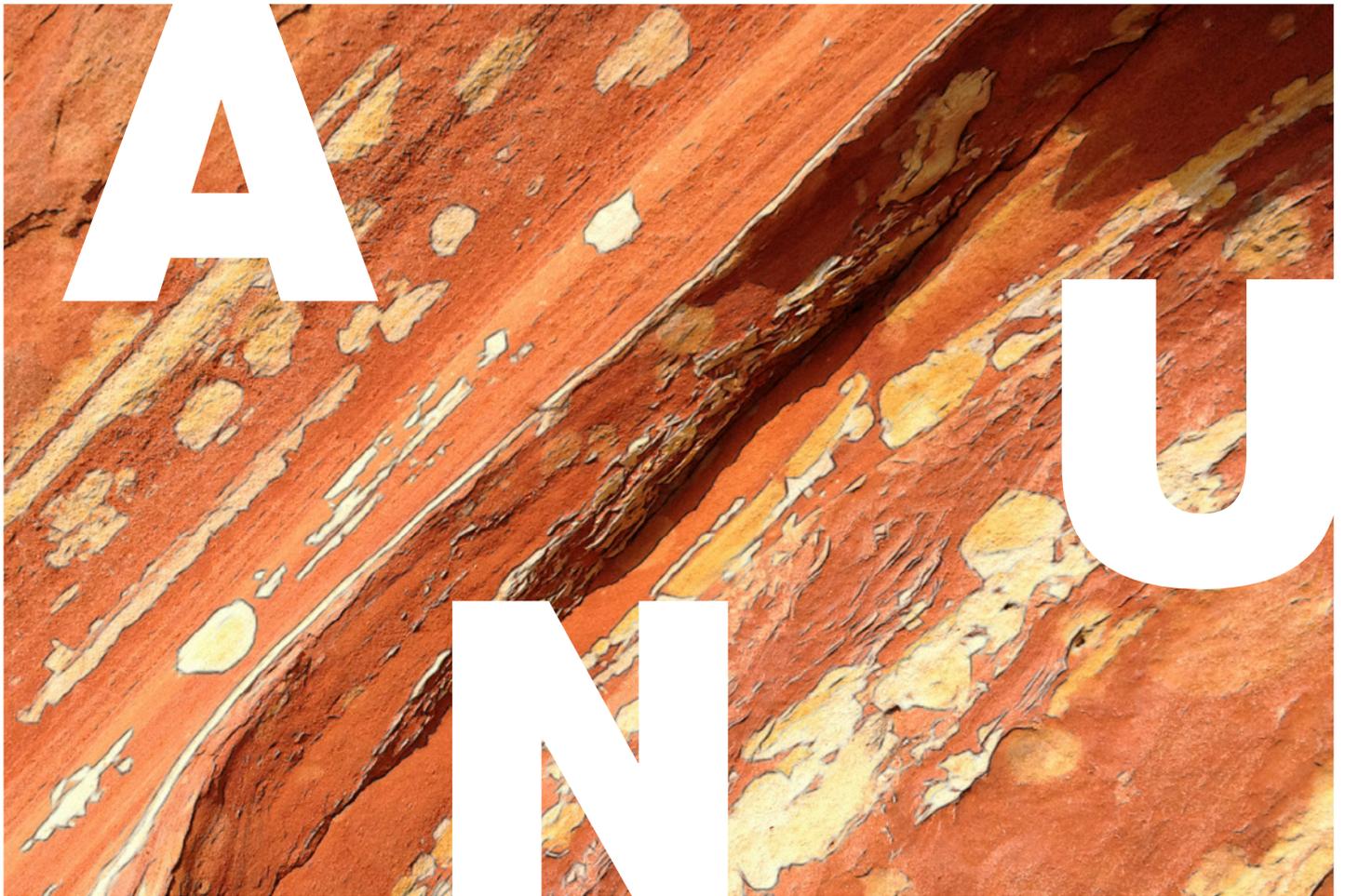




Australian
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CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC
POLICY RESEARCH
RESEARCH PLAN 2012-2014

Centre for
Aboriginal Economic
Policy Research
ANU College of
[Arts & Social
Sciences](#)

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) Research Plan 2012–2014 is organised around four themes:

- Economic, cultural and social circumstances
- Economic development aspirations and alternate futures
- Governance, policy and the state
- Education, lifespan learning and youth

This Research Plan was developed by CAEPR staff at an annual planning meeting in November 2011. As the CAEPR Annual Report regularly documents, planned research activity will be supplemented with additional unanticipated projects and contracted research. At the time of writing, the plan involved the following projects grouped around the four research themes.

Theme 1. Economic, Cultural and Social Circumstances

Theme leaders: Professor John Taylor and Dr Boyd Hunter

This research theme contributes directly to the policy discourse on ‘closing the gaps’ between Indigenous and other Australians across a range of social indicators. Since its inception in 1990, a core focus of CAEPR research has been the tracking of change in Indigenous social and economic circumstances at national, regional and local levels. Initially, much of this work was census based and concerned with demography and economic status but this has gradually broadened to include the analysis of survey and administrative data as well as measurement around specific social issues such as alcohol, criminal justice, poverty, community development and longitudinal pathways for children and families. The current research plan reflects this expansion as well as a growing list of social science research collaborators and sponsors including Commonwealth and State governments, the private sector, Indigenous organisations and the Australia Research Council (ARC). Notable in the current plan is a major population project sponsored by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and each State and Territory.

Urban/remote 2011 Census analysis

Jon Altman, Boyd Hunter, Nicholas Biddle

This project will examine change through time in key socioeconomic indicators at the national and sub-national level.

Education and socioeconomic inequality in Australia: A behavioural economic approach

Nicholas Biddle

This Discovery ARC application will look at the role that expectations have on the education decision. The project will use a range of techniques and contribute to the design of robust, evidence-based policy in Australia by improving our understanding of the way in which students make the decision to complete school and undertake post-school qualifications.

A regional and cohort analysis of the 2001, 2006 and 2011 Censuses

Nicholas Biddle, John Taylor, Mandy Yap, Bruce Doran

This project will establish longer-term trends in Indigenous socioeconomic outcomes with a focus on outcomes over the life course. This will be done by establishing change in the characteristics of population cohorts covering entry to early childhood education, progression through schooling, school to work transition, progression through employment, and aged and retirement populations. This project is part of the larger CAEPR Indigenous Population Project described above.

Indigenous development indices

Nicholas Biddle, Mandy Yap

Building on an index of Indigenous socioeconomic outcomes developed by CAEPR based on employment, education, income and housing, this project will develop a more place-based Community Development Index by making select use of the wide range of administrative data on housing, education, safety, health and welfare that is to be generated by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) Remote Service Delivery National Partnership Agreement. This project is part of the larger CAEPR Indigenous Population Project described above.

Identifying service populations

Mandy Yap, Nicholas Biddle, John Taylor, Jess Bath, Bruce Doran

This project will explore the use of administrative data sets to identify temporary population movement within service delivery catchment areas as a means of quantifying service populations. This project is part of the larger CAEPR Indigenous Population Project described above.

Regional population profiling

John Taylor, Frances Morphy

This project comprises a series of regional population profiles, incorporating the modelling of kin-based social networks, and the needs of regional Aboriginal organisations, major resource projects and service delivery networks for relevant demographic information. The Gumurr Miwatj Yolgnu Population project forms part of an ARC Linkage with Melbourne University while work on the Yawuru Population survey in Broome forms part of an on-going collaboration with the Kimberley Institute. Under this project, cleaning and verification of the database for analysis will be complete, and the report will be submitted in 2012.

Indigenous Australians and alcohol control

Maggie Brady (QEII Fellow), Boyd Hunter

This ARC Discovery Project, subtitled 'The impact of hotel ownership on harm reduction and social and economic development', will continue analysing field work conducted in Alice Springs, Wadeye, and east Kimberley.

Indigenous urban professionalisation: An Australian Indigenous middle class

Julie Lahn

This project examines the increasing involvement of Aboriginal people in urban-based professions. The research addresses this professionalisation in statistical and sociological terms and considers the question: does it constitute evidence of an Indigenous middle class? The project is exploring the interrelation of social mobility, aspiration and sociality alongside broader considerations of Indigenous disadvantage.

Analysis of the dynamics of Aboriginal interactions with the criminal justice system

Boyd Hunter, Jerry Schwab, Kate Sullivan

This ARC Linkage Project is in its final year. A doctoral thesis is being completed on Aboriginal interactions with the justice system in New South Wales with a focus on re-offence and desistance.

Indigenous entrepreneurs, financial literacy and financial stress

Boyd Hunter

This project originates in multidisciplinary research collaboration with the College of Business and Economics, ANU for FaHCSIA. A conceptual framework is being developed for assessing financial capability and financial stress, critical analysis of potential measures, and development of recommended measures. This research will have a particular focus on implications for Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Indigenous self-employed and discrimination

Boyd Hunter, Dennis Foley

This project develops a set of hypotheses on the determinants of Indigenous self-employment that can be tested them using the available nationally representative survey data. Another aspect of the project is to explore these hypotheses using qualitative data collected by Professor Dennis Foley over more than a decade. Professor Foley (University of Newcastle) will join CAEPR as a Visiting Indigenous Fellow in 2012.

Audit studies on discrimination

Nicholas Biddle, Boyd Hunter

The possibility of conducting an audit study of people discrimination against Indigenous people is being explored. Dr Nicholas Biddle and Dr Boyd Hunter are editing a special issue of the Australian Journal of Labour Economics that explores creative approaches to analysing labour market discrimination (scheduled for publication in 2013). This project involves a close collaboration with Dr Yin Paradies (Centre for Health & Society, Onemda VicHealth Koori Health Unit, The University of Melbourne) and other prominent researchers in the field.

Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children

Boyd Hunter, Nicholas Biddle

Following exploratory analysis of the Longitudinal Study of Indigenous Children (LSIC) survey data, in-depth analysis in collaboration with FaHCSIA is now underway. The focus is on social emotional wellbeing in urban and remote Australia, on building a more comprehensive model of the social determinants of Indigenous health, and exploring life events in more detail.

Assessing development: Designing better indices of poverty and gender equity

Janet Hunt

This ARC Linkage Project aims to construct new indices of poverty and gender equity that are applicable both at national/supranational levels and to smaller groups affected by a policy or program. Dr Janet Hunt is an Investigator with Chief Investigators Professor Thomas Pogge (Centre for Applied Philosophy and Public Ethics), Dr Sharon Bessell (Policy and Governance Program), Dr Christian Barry (School of Humanities), Dr Yuk Chu Liu (Crawford School of Economics and Government) (all ANU), Professor Alison Jaggar (University of Colorado, USA) and Partner Investigators from International Women's Development Agency, Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam America, Philippines Health Social Science Association, and Action Against Hunger (UK).

Gender aspects of development

Mandy Yap

This doctoral research investigates the relevance of gender-related indices of development to Indigenous Australians, and ties in with the ARC Linkage project above.

The economics and demography of American Indians and Alaska Natives in urban areas

Nicholas Biddle

This research in collaboration with the Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, Stanford University is analysing the spatial distribution of American Indians and Alaskan Natives across cities and by neighbourhood/suburb within cities, using United States Census and other data sets. The research will also examine the demographic and socioeconomic determinants of the wellbeing of American Indians in urban areas.

Evaluation of income management in the Northern Territory

Matthew Gray, Will Sanders

This multi-disciplinary evaluation of the New Income Management policy in the Northern Territory is in collaboration with Rob Bray (College of Business and Economics, ANU) and in partnership with the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales and the Australian Institute of Family Studies. It will assess the effectiveness of implementation; whether the program was delivered to the target population in a fair and equitable manner; and the impacts on individuals, families and communities in the Northern Territory. It has been commissioned by FaHCSIA for completion in 2014.

Income Management Evaluations outside Northern Territory

Matthew Gray

This research will build on previous evaluations, to develop an evaluation framework for income management schemes outside the Northern Territory.

Theme 2. Economic Development Aspirations and Alternate Futures

Theme leader: Professor Jon Altman

This theme explores innovative ways to improve livelihood opportunities for Indigenous people through economic engagement with the market and the customary sectors appropriately enabled by the state. Much of the focus is on regional and remote Australia and on Indigenous communities located on the significant Indigenous estate. It also explores the relevance of mainstream policies and programs for Indigenous Australians whether in remote or non-remote settings. The theme addresses two crucial issues that have emerged in policy debates in the past decade. The first is the provision of economic development opportunity for Indigenous people in geographically remote contexts, recognising the demographic reality that this population is growing and is relatively immobile in terms of labour migration. The second is the provision of economic development opportunity that acknowledges the diversity of Indigenous aspirations and their fundamental difference from those of mainstream Australians in many situations. Much of the research in this theme will focus on opportunities in new and emerging sectors, like the provision of environmental services, as well as recognising established competitive advantage in sectors such as the visual arts and cultural tourism. The theme will analyse institutional barriers to development and will provide an evidence base and cogent argument for new policies to effectively facilitate regional and community economic development for Indigenous well-being and for national benefit.

People on Country, healthy landscapes and Indigenous economic futures project

*Jon Altman, Seán Kerins, Emilie Ens, Bill Fogarty, Gillian Towler, Gillian Cosgrove
John Hughes, Elisabeth Yarbakhsh*

This applied research project supported by the Sidney Myer Fund to the end of 2012 focuses on exploring the links between Indigenous well-being, natural resource management and new resource-based development opportunities in six Indigenous communities in the Top End of the Northern Territory, and a traditional owner group in the West Kimberley of Western Australia that is a project affiliate. This work focuses on Indigenous Protected Areas and Working on Country projects.

The socioeconomic benefits of working on country for Aboriginal people in New South Wales

Janet Hunt, Jon Altman

This project explores the range of benefits which derive from the diverse experiences Aboriginal people have of working on country in New South Wales.

Fieldwork and analysis are focusing on the benefits emerging from an Indigenous Protected Area on the New England Tablelands and from selected Green Teams in the Northern Rivers area. The study is funded by the New South Wales Department of Climate Change and Water and is scheduled for completion in 2012.

Hybrid economic futures for remote Indigenous Australia

Jon Altman, Geoffrey Buchanan

This ARC Discovery Project is exploring theoretical, empirical and policy-focused aspects of this field. Doctoral field work has been completed for an ethnographic study provisionally titled 'Country, culture, economy: Challenges to livelihoods and development and remote Indigenous Australia'.

The domestic moral economy in the Asia and Pacific region

Jon Altman

International comparative work will continue with the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Manchester under a project 'The domestic moral economy: an ethnographic study of values in the Asia and Pacific region' funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (United Kingdom) (2011–15). Jon Altman proposes to convene an international workshop 'Domestic Moral Economy: Rethinking kinship and economy in intercultural contemporary Oceania' in September if a final tranche of sponsorship can be secured from ASSA or CASS.

Welfare to work or work to welfare? Will reform of the Community Development Employment Program help close the employment gap?

Jon Altman, Boyd Hunter, Will Sanders, Kirrily Jordan

Under this ARC Discovery project funded 2011–13, Kirrily Jordan will examine recent changes to Indigenous employment policy, with particular focus on assessing the changes to the Community Development Employment Program with statistical data and case study research.

After the National Emergency

Jon Altman

This research will continue to track the policy implications and state performance in the ongoing implementation of the National Emergency Intervention in the Northern Territory now renamed Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory. Aspects of this work will be in collaboration with the Aboriginal Peak Organisations of the Northern Territory.

Indigenous rights, resources and industries

Jon Altman, Paul Cleary, Annick Thommasin

This research focuses on the broad issue of land and resource rights in Indigenous socioeconomic development and explores Indigenous property rights in existing and emerging industries. Doctoral research is exploring the links between financial aspects of resource development agreements and Aboriginal development; and on fisheries management in the Torres Strait.

Indigenous livelihoods

Jon Altman, Seán Kerins, Elizabeth Yarbakhsh

As part of theme 2, 'Biodiversity values and Indigenous livelihoods' of the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) Northern Australian Hub, Jon Altman is co-leading a project on Indigenous Livelihoods in collaboration with Dr Sue Jackson, CSIRO Ecosystems Sciences. This project will have Seán Kerins as chief researcher and will focus on two regions: northeast Arnhem Land and the Gulf in the Tropical Savannah. The project runs to 2014.

Theme 3. Governance, Policy and the State

Theme leaders: Dr Will Sanders and Dr Janet Hunt

Public policy towards Indigenous Australians is characterised by a vast array of activity at all three levels of government, plus the activities of Indigenous organisations and other NGOs (non-government organisations) which are state-authorized or funded. This research theme aims to discern patterns within this vast array of activity, such as principles which compete in guiding policy or patterns of intergovernmental conflict and cooperation. A significant portion of the work examines public policy from the local level, through working either with local governments or with Indigenous organisations and other NGOs involved in community development as well as service delivery. Relations between this local level of state-authorized activity and super-ordinate levels of government, such as accountability and responsiveness to emergent practice, are another important focus.

Agenda change in Indigenous affairs

Will Sanders

This work is part of a larger project in which a network of political scientists at a range of Australian universities are looking at changes in the policy agenda of governments over the last 50 years (1962–2012). Will Sanders has been asked to contribute a paper on changes in the Indigenous affairs agenda over that period. The network is meeting at University of Queensland in October 2012.

Competing principles and the dynamics of Indigenous affairs

Will Sanders

This research examines the dominant principle of equality in Indigenous affairs and how it relates to other competing values such as autonomy and freedom, tolerance and diversity, and protection and guardianship. The research seeks to understand the dynamic way in which these different principles guide, or are otherwise related to policy and state-authorized action over time. This research contributes to CAEPR's teaching role through providing a structuring framework for the masters-level course Australian Indigenous Policy.

Collaborative federalism and policy change in Indigenous housing

Will Sanders

The Commonwealth does not have a constitutional power relating to housing. As a consequence housing is a highly collaborative policy sector within Australian federalism. States and Territories provide public housing funded largely by the Commonwealth and user rents. But the Commonwealth also funds other providers, such as community-based housing organisations, and uses policy to encourage home ownership. This research project examines recent change in the Indigenous-specific housing policy sub-sector. To what extent has the recent shift away from Indigenous community-based housing providers and towards public housing and home ownership for Indigenous people also involved changing roles and relationships between the various levels and elements of Australian government? What has this policy change meant for Indigenous people in various geographic localities in which different housing tenures predominate?

Australian public policy and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands: Changes to the APY Land Rights Act 1981–2006

Deirdre Tedmanson

This doctoral research explores changes in public policy towards the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands and looks back to the original ideas informing the Pitjantjatjara Land Rights Act of 1981 passed by the South Australian parliament. Conceptually the research is driven by the idea that the framing of an issue is an important aspect of policy processes. So it asks how and why the framing of the APY lands in Australian public policy processes changed during the 25 years after the passing of the APY Land Rights Act (1981).

Indigenous interests and local government in the Northern Territory

Will Sanders

This continuing research asks how recent reforms in the Northern Territory local government system in remote areas have affected the Indigenous population who are the majority in these areas. Conceptually it focuses on two central aspects of the upscaling and broad-scale land incorporation in local government: the mixing of Indigenous and settler interests and the idea of economies of scale.

Community development with Indigenous people and organisations: The involvement of international NGOs

Janet Hunt

Approximately 10 international development NGOs based in Australia are working with Indigenous Australians and their organisations. Most, if not all, subscribe to a community development approach. This research, conducted in partnership with Professor Larissa Behrendt of the University of Technology Sydney, enquires into the nature of international NGO community development practice among Indigenous Australians and development effectiveness in Indigenous communities. A study of the partnership between World Vision Australia and the Central Land Council in relation to the Warlpiri Education and Training Trust's early childhood project is nearing completion.

Pacific practice and its application among Indigenous Australians: Implementing a psycho-social, basic human need approach to community development

Richard Barcham

This doctoral research aims to reflect both conceptually and empirically on the development and application of community development techniques in Solomon Islands (Solomon Islands Development Trust), Papua New Guinea (Bismark Ramu Group), and Fiji (Social Empowerment and Education Program) from 1982 to the present. Among Indigenous Australians, the study is focusing on the development of the Family Well Being Program in various locations under the auspices James Cook University.

The practice of accountability in Indigenous organisations

Will Sanders

This ARC Linkage Project with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations is being led from the College of Business and Economics, ANU. It examines the way in which different accountabilities are balanced in Indigenous organisations in practice: internal community accountabilities to members and constituents versus external accountabilities to funders and regulators.

Umpiyara Kanyini Tjungu ('We Care Together') The Road to Eldership—Following the Tjurkurpa Way

Tjanara Goreng Goreng

Doctoral research (part-time) will continue on this project, which examines the impact of elders on community based development and community recovery amongst Anangu People in the Central Desert.

Theme 4. Education, Lifespan Learning and Youth

Theme leaders: Dr Jerry Schwab and Dr Inge Kral

This research theme focuses on the effective delivery of education, the development of evidence-based education policy and the social context of literacy and life-long learning among Indigenous Australians. It includes research on all levels and sectors of formal education and training, but also extends to consideration of non-formal contexts and learning across the lifespan. Research under this theme involves both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and is anchored by an understanding that learning is fundamentally social and situated and can be found and enhanced both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, CAEPR research in this area is framed by an awareness that education and training are most effective when linked to the local social, cultural and economic contexts of everyday life. Several of the current projects in this theme involve collaborations: with Indigenous organisations and communities, government departments, philanthropic bodies and NGOs. Key research projects focus on Indigenous education policy formation, youth, building effective partnerships between philanthropic and indigenous groups, post-school skills acquisition and youth pathways to employment through land management, media and other community-based arenas of learning.

Philanthropy and Indigenous people: Enhancing Indigenous education outcomes

Jerry Schwab, Janet Hunt, Tony Dreise

This ARC Linkage Project (in partnership with the Melbourne Community Foundation) is critically assessing the degree to which philanthropic interventions improve Indigenous education outcomes—from both Indigenous and philanthropic perspectives—with the goal of identifying or developing models, strategies and principles of effective partnership and engagement.

Coming of Age: Youth, citizenship and the internet

Inge Kral

Under a Discovery Early Career Researcher Award, this international project with Glynda Hull (University of California, Berkeley, USA) will investigate how online social networks, and the semiotic activities they generate, can be turned towards educational purposes. Through an examination of the process of communicating and constructing knowledge online with distant audiences this work will contribute to international as well as interdisciplinary conversations about learning in a digital global age.

Directions in Indigenous education policy

Jerry Schwab

Taking a longitudinal perspective, this project examines the evolution of Commonwealth Indigenous education policy in Australia over the past 50 years, with a particular focus the notion of Indigenous 'self-determination'.

Indigenous people, high-stakes testing and school reform

Jerry Schwab

This research investigates the implications and likely impact on Indigenous students, families and communities of current moves toward high-stakes testing and a range of other elements of the school reform movement.

Youth engagement in natural resource management

Adrian Fordham, Jerry Schwab

This research involves an international exploration of models for engaging Indigenous youth through land and resource management programs.

Land as 'third space': Towards an educational and social re-engagement of Indigenous youth in remote Australia

Jerry Schwab, Bill Fogarty

Drawing on the theoretical notion of land as 'third space' this research explores the potential for land to serve as a transformative space where Indigenous youth in remote Australia might re-connect with learning and their home communities. This is collaborative research with Dr Bill Fogarty (National Centre for Indigenous Studies, ANU).

Learning spaces: Youth, literacy and new media in remote Indigenous Australia

Inge Kral, Jerry Schwab

Research findings from the ARC Linkage Project 'Lifespan learning and literacy for young adults in remote Indigenous communities' (in partnership with the Fred Hollows Foundation) will be provided in book and DVD form. The work focuses on young adults (16–25 years) in the post-school years and explores language and learning and how multimodal literacies can be acquired, transmitted and maintained in community-based projects and across the lifespan.

Talk, text and technology: Changing social practice in remote Indigenous Australia

Inge Kral

This book is based on the doctoral thesis titled 'Writing Words—Right Way! Literacy and Social Practice in the Ngaanyatjarra World' which won the Australian Anthropological Society PhD Thesis prize for 2007 for best thesis by research, and will be published by Multilingual Matters in 2012.

New media and informal learning

Inge Kral

This research in collaboration with Shirley Brice Heath (Professor Emerita at Large, Stanford University, USA) involves a case study of informal learning among remote Indigenous Australian youth in order to lay out a theory of explanation for voluntary specialisation development.

Comparative study of minority Indigenous education, language and literacy issues in Australia, Malaysia and Vietnam

Inge Kral

This joint research with Sumathi Renganathan (University Teknologi Petronas, Malaysia) and Chi Truong (Vietnam National University, Hanoi) is surveying education, language and literacy issues for minority Indigenous groups in remote regions of Australia, Vietnam and Malaysia.

Community-based educational partnership for Orang Asli children

Inge Kral

This joint project with Sumathi Renganathan (University Teknologi Petronas) explores the development of community-based learning environment for lifelong learning in an Orang Asli village in Malaysia.

An evaluation of a national youth aspirations program's effectiveness in supporting Aboriginal program participants' individual aspirations

Helen Alexiou

This doctoral research aims to understand the education and career aspirations of young Indigenous people and how aspirations are developed and influenced. It also looks at the effectiveness of a youth program focusing on sports, arts and cultural, which is aimed at supporting young Indigenous people to achieve their career aspirations.