



Sustainable
Communities
and Waste

National Environmental Science Program



Water Camp25: Understanding, identifying & resisting aqua nullius.

Milestone report IP1.02.02 Water sensitive
and liveable communities: **Water Camp25**



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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26180/30411658>

Citation: harriden, k. (2025) Water Camp25: Understanding, identifying & resisting aqua nullius.

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1.0 Project Overview

This report represents Milestone 10, and is an output, of IP1.02.02 Water sensitive and liveable communities, in the National Environmental Science Program's (NESP) Sustainable Communities and Waste (SCaW) Hub. It provides an account of the Indigenous-led water camp (Milestone 9).

Held on Ngunnawal Country (Canberra) May 20-22, 2025, with traditional custodian permission, was a three-day Indigenous-led water camp. First Nations campers only attended the first two days, with non-Indigenous campers invited on the third day.

The objectives of water camp²⁵ were to:

- enable First Nations water academics and practitioners share and practice Indigenous water sciences between themselves, as acts of nation (re)building and resistance to aqua nullius; and
- develop non-Indigenous water practitioners and policy makers capacity to work with First Nations peoples, by articulating aqua nullius and sharing First Nations water values and priorities and Indigenous science methods and tools that can contribute to transforming current water policy and governance.

Camp outcomes included First Nations water practitioners able to articulate and identify aqua nullius, and more experience in using Indigenous sciences frameworks and methods to challenge it. Importantly, these practitioners are also able to share this knowledge and expertise within their Nation. Similarly, non-Indigenous campers gained a better understanding of water matters important to First Nations peoples, including aqua nullius and how to challenge it by focussing on how to better work with First Nations peoples and water ways of valuing and doing.

The primary audience for this report is SCaW Hub and NESP colleagues. It will also be provided to all campers, the Victorian Aboriginal Water Office, and colleagues at the Monash Sustainable Development Institute at Monash University.

WHAT IS AQUA NULLIUS

Aqua nullius describes

“governments’ lack of inclusion of Indigenous water rights and interests resembles Australia’s western framing of Indigenous land rights—shaped by the doctrine of terra nullius—and reconstructs Indigenous water rights as aqua nullius or ‘water belonging to no one’.”¹ (Marshall 2016:9).

Aqua nullius not only makes Indigenous sovereignty over the waters of ngurambang (Country) invisible, it obscures the depth and sophisticated expertise of First Nations water science, management and governance. These and other practices were critical to pre-invasion custodianship of Country and cultural expressions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF FUNDING

This project was partially supported with funding from the Australian Government under the National Environmental Science Program.

¹ Marshall, V. (2016) deconstructing aqua nullius: reclaiming aboriginal water rights and communal identity in Australia *Indigenous Law Bulletin* 8(26) 9-14

2.0 BACKGROUND

Water camp25 programming and content was directly shaped by the Indigenous only aqua nullius professional development series (Milestone 5), reported as Milestone 6 *Understanding, identifying & resisting aqua nullius*².

The objectives of Milestone 5 were to provide First Nations water practitioners conceptual and operational understandings of aqua nullius, opportunities to contrast this with Indigenous water science and governance, and strengthen Indigenous water practitioners expertise to effectively challenge aqua nullius. This development program resulted in a cohort of Indigenous practitioners able to articulate, identify and resist the impact of aqua nullius on their work, while enhancing their capacity to share this knowledge within their communities.

Outside of NESP, but important to water camp25 programming, CI harriden co-developed and co-delivered an aqua nullius professional development program for non-Indigenous water policy makers and bureaucrats similar to that of Milestone 5. A number of differences between these professional development programs were necessary, including non-Indigenous participants 'challenging' aqua nullius, rather than resisting it. Importantly for water camp25, the non-Indigenous participant's spent significantly more time reflexively exploring their positionality and relationship with water.

Both these professional development programs contributed to water camp25 curation. The Indigenous program informed the nature and the topics covered across water camp25, particularly camp's first two days. This content included the aqua nullius content, the Indigenous sciences frameworks and methods shared and the AWA and water Country plans sessions. The non-Indigenous aqua nullius professional program signalled the need for content to build non-Indigenous capacity to work with First Nations peoples and our water beliefs and values. In particular, camp content was influenced by the need for non-Indigenous peoples to practice self-reflexivity.

2.1 CURRENT POLICY CONTEXT

The recent turn to involve First Nations peoples in settler-state water governance has great potential to further entrench aqua nullius in government policy and industry practice. Factors contributing to this potential include:

- i) low non-Indigenous capacity to work with First Nations people and our water ways;
- ii) unwillingness of settler-state to entertain using First Nations water ways (including governance and science) or to cede power;
- iii) First Nations people's ignorance of how, why and where aqua nullius manifests in settler-state water policy and waterscapes; and
- iv) lack of confidence on part of many First Nations water practitioners to use Indigenous sciences to resist aqua nullius.

By focusing on practical knowledge and skills, whether shared and culturally specific, water camp25 made a small contribution to redressing the new wave of aqua nullius

² harriden, k. (2024) *Understanding, identifying & resisting aqua nullius*. Milestone report IP1.02.02 Water sensitive and liveable communities: Indigenous only aqua nullius workshops 2023 <https://doi.org/10.26180/28183160>

washing over Indigenous water rights. Indigenous campers developed knowledge and skills to resist aqua nullius. Non-Indigenous campers developed knowledge of First Nations water expertise and the skills to avoid exploiting it.

Following First Nations protocols, permission was sought from, and given by, an appropriate Ngunnawal traditional custodian for water camp²⁵ to be held on Ngunnawal Country. A right of passage was provided to First Nations campers by an elder Ngunnawal traditional custodian on the first day of camp.

3.0 APPROACH

This section outlines the approach to camp programming and the primary content presented at camp.

Both programming and content were designed to provide both First Nations and non-Indigenous campers relevant knowledge, skills and experiences and to build the confidence to share with others what they learnt.

3.1 camp programming

The significant programming decision was that the first two days were for First Nations campers only. Non-Indigenous campers were invited for the third day, with First Nation campers to be the majority.

Only First Nations people presented on the first two days of camp; four (of six) presenters on the third day were non-Indigenous. The program is provided as Appendix 7.1 and the speaker biographies as Appendix 7.2.

Camper quotes indicating camp programming relevance are provided at section 5.1.4

3.1.1 Mob only days

Scheduling the first two day for First Nations peoples only provided space to learn about aqua nullius and our Indigenous sciences methods without attending to non-Indigenous interests. Further, this scheduling ensured that the First Nations campers held more knowledge than the non-Indigenous campers.

Importantly the First Nations only programming allowed us to get to know each other and bond using First Nations practices and protocols.

3.1.2 Mob majority campers

An Indigenous-led camp needs to have a majority of Indigenous campers to ensure First Nations protocols are camp protocols. It also elevates First Nations campers to 'expert', allowing them to control how much knowledge is shared.

Thus, in an unfamiliar role reversal, an Indigenous majority camp provides non-Indigenous campers the opportunity to learn from Indigenous experts and follow Indigenous protocols. Further, this role reversal demonstrates to non-Indigenous campers the dissonance associated with being in an unfamiliar situation where your expertise is considered largely irrelevant.

3.1.3 Non-Indigenous Expression of Interest

While First Nations campers were invited to freely register, potential non-Indigenous campers were required to undertake an expression of interest (Eoi) process (Appendix 7.3). This decision was for numerous reasons, including to:

- ◆ control numbers, ensuring mob-majority;
- ◆ put non-Indigenous campers on notice that something different was afoot;
- ◆ give potential campers an opportunity to identify their preferred adventure;
- ◆ allow camp organizers to assess potential campers experience working with mob non-Indigenous people;
- ◆ guide organizers placement of non-Indigenous campers in the adventure considered most suitable for them; and to
- ◆ cull obviously inappropriate people.

A total of twenty-eight Eois were received. A number of accepted campers had to withdraw, allowing late applications to be assessed. Ultimately, twenty-five non-Indigenous campers, camp organizers upper limit, participated.

3.1.4 First Nations campers developed protocols

The purpose of the yarn closing the second day of camp was to prepare for the arrival of the non-Indigenous campers. Two protocols were the key outcomes of this yarn. The first protocol was for the First Nation campers. As mob business, we did not share the details of the protocol with the non-Indigenous campers and it will not be provided with this report. We did say that we had no lesser expectation of ourselves than those we held of the non-Indigenous campers.

The non-Indigenous protocol (Attachment 7.4) provided clear guidance on the behaviours expected. Non-Indigenous campers were not offered the opportunity to amend it.

3.1.5 Mix of theory and practical

Mixing theory and practical sessions reflects First Nations pedagogy, including 8 ways³ and wiradyuri frameworks. Using First Nations pedagogy is appropriate in Indigenous-led environments.

Providing opportunities to practice recently learnt knowledge and skills strengthens learning outcomes and supports knowledge transfer behaviours.

Camper quotes indicating how this mix was received are provided at section 5.1.3.

3.2 camp content

This section broadly outlines the session content presented at water camp25. The sessions are not presented in temporal order. The first four sub-sections describe content primarily for the First Nations campers, presented predominately as informal lectures. The following two sub-sections outlines Indigenous-only sessions where theory and practice were overtly mixed, akin to workshops. These sessions were scheduled after lunch, to counter-act the post-lunch slump and to allow the time to practice outside what was talked about inside. Subsection 3.2.7 outlines the final Indigenous-only camp activity. Subsections 3.2.8 and 3.2.9 outline the content directed at non-Indigenous campers. The following three sub-sections outline the content developed for all campers. Subsection 3.2.12 outlines the final, shared walk

³ 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning Aboriginal Pedagogy <https://www.8ways.online>

along Sullivans Creek, designed to practice and build on the skills and knowledge shared during camp.

Camper quotes indicating camp content relevance are provided at section 5.1.4.

3.2.1 Aqua Nullius

There was a daily session with overt focus on aqua nullius. The first session explored what is aqua nullius and how to identify it. This session included practical textual analysis exercises to develop First Nations camper's expertise in recognizing aqua nullius' presence in legislation, policy and other documents.

The second session examined how Indigenous sciences frameworks and methods can be used to resist aqua nullius, and provided examples of each including relational accountability (framework) and deep observation (methods). All methods raised were revisited during the final creek walk

Mel Kennedy's (Tati Tati) presentation to the full camp on third day effectively demonstrated to non-Indigenous campers the range of impacts aqua nullius has on Country and First Nations people.

3.2.2 Water Country Plans

This topic was a direct consequence of the mob-only aqua nullius professional development program (milestone 5). The scheduled presenter had to withdraw at the last minute so a shorter, more theoretical, presentation was developed, followed by a discussion drawing on the experience with water Country plans held within the circle.

3.2.3 Aboriginal Waterway Assessments

This topic was also a direct consequence of the mob-only aqua nullius professional development program (milestone 5). Presented by experienced Walgalu users of this assessment framework, the practical focus of this session was supported by the expertise of other AWA users and the interest of those yet to undertake an Aboriginal waterway assessment.

3.2.4 Indigenous Governance

Monica Morgan (Yorta Yorta) reflected on decades of activism for First Nations rights, including water, and the deep importance of Indigenous governance.

3.2.5 Dadirri

With the permission of the Miriam Rose Foundation there was a dadirri (deep listening) session. The Foundation has been provided a report on how dadirri was used at camp, including the addition of listening technology, and the campers responses.

The theory yarn, based on the academic paper by Dr Ungunmerr-Baumann et al⁴, started with the [dadirri video](#) produced by the Miriam Rose Foundation. Observations from my professional experiences with dadirri were also shared, with time allocated to explain the listening equipment (hydrophones and microphones) provided to support campers develop their dadirri skills.

⁴ Ungunmerr-Baumann, M.-R., Groom, R. A., Schuberg, E. L., Atkinson, J., Atkinson, C., Wallace, R., & Morris, G. (2022). Dadirri: An Indigenous place-based research methodology. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 18(1), 94-103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/11771801221085353>

The practical component included using dadirri to listen to air (with and without microphones) and water (aided by hydrophones) as the campers walked in groups along the creek. Listening stations along the route demonstrated the range of sound, and life, within and alongside Sullivans.

3.2.6 Indigenous (water) Design Principles

The topic included a yarn describing foundational Indigenous design principles, with a focus on water, while demonstrating how aqua nullius obscures and disregards Indigenous design.

This theoretical yarn was complemented by another Sullivans creek-based exercise. In pairs, the Indigenous campers walked a different reach of the creek tasked with identifying Indigenous and non-Indigenous design features. Time was provided for them to then create an Indigenous principles design-based response.

3.2.7 Ngunnawal Culture Walk

This walk, led by a Ngunnawal traditional elder, was scheduled for the First Nations campers while the non-Indigenous campers were having their 'adventures'. Heavy rain on the day forced this activity's cancellation.

3.2.8 First Nations Water 101 Panel

Pitched primarily at non-Indigenous campers, this Indigenous majority panel provided information also relevant to First Nations campers.

The panel topics were *sui generis* rights and colonial law, presented by a settler legal academic, cultural flows and Indigenous data sovereignty. The Indigenous data sovereignty topic particularly prompted insightful questions from all campers.

3.2.9 Chose Your Own Adventure

Non-Indigenous campers were offered a choice of one of three 'adventures', each addressing specific foundational areas where non-Indigenous capacity is systemically low.

These adventures were *Working with Mob*, *Your positionality, your responsibility* and *Working on Country Protocols*. Each adventure was led by a non-Indigenous facilitator. Details of each adventure can be found on the camp program (Appendix 7.1).

3.2.10 Yarning Circles

An important First Nations social and research practice, a number of sessions were yarning circles. The daily circle closing camp have already been noted (section 3.1.4). The closing circle on the first day campers shared what they learnt, and concluded with an impromptu musical moment. The scheduled closing circle on the third day did not proceed due to camper's enthusiasm for the final creek walk (section 3.2.12).

A circle for the First Nations campers to introduce themselves followed the welcome to Country.

3.2.11 Art Exhibit

Available for all campers, either as an optional scheduled session opening the second day of camp or as a DIY tour (Appendix 7.5). The exhibit included pieces speaking directly to aqua nullius, colonization (of water and people) and decolonization. The inclusion of art reflects First Nations ways of being and doing – nothing exists in isolation.

3.2.12 Camp Creek Walk

For the final camp activity, campers were placed in small cross-cultural groups and asked to follow a creek trail of activities designed to reinforce what was learnt during camp, including dadirri, walking Country, deep observation, Indigenous design and relationality.

This session was designed to privilege First Nations leadership, given their greater knowledge and experience of the activities along the trail.

4.0 PARTICIPANTS

There were 26 First Nations campers and 25 non-Indigenous campers. Seven First Nations campers withdrew before camp started, with the most common reason being sorry business.

Campers came from the ACT, NSW, Qld and Victoria, with many having a connection to the Murray-Darling Basin.

There was no gender parity in the non-Indigenous cohort, with 17 female campers (68%). There was an even split between the genders in the Indigenous cohort, with 13 men and 13 women campers.

Of the First Nations campers, the majority (18) worked for an Aboriginal controlled organization, three worked in a government entity, two in a settler-state non-government organization, and two for a university. Among the non-Indigenous campers, employers were balanced between research institutions, public agencies and water authorities.

5.0 FEEDBACK

A feedback form containing 19 questions (attachment 7.6) was provided electronically to campers on two occasions. The link was initially included in an 'thank you' email sent to all campers within 48 hours of camp. A reminder was sent to campers on 9 June, 2025. Twelve responses were provided by Friday 13 June, 2025. This feedback is the basis of section 5.1. Section 5.2 outlines other important observations not mentioned elsewhere.

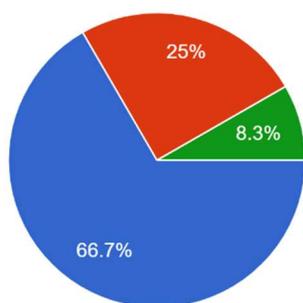
5.1 FEEDBACK

5.1.1 Annual Camp

The clearest feedback is that all respondents found water camp useful (Q1) and would like to see more water camps run (Q12), with strong interest in an annual camp (chart 1).

Q13: If Yes to Q12, how often?

12 responses



- Every year
- Every two years
- Every three years
- 1-2 years, depending on interest from other mob to run them, would also need funding etc., so every year may be difficult with all the competing demands on mob.

Chart 1 desired camp frequency

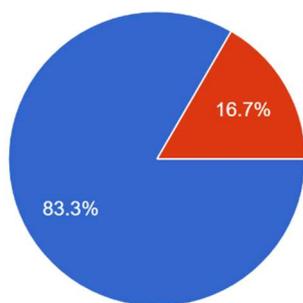
5.1.2 Session Popularity

The vast majority of campers had a favourite session (Chart 2). The most identified 'favourite' session was Mel Kennedy's keynote presentation on day 3 (7 of 12 respondents).

No one had a least favourite one (Chart 3)

Q2: Did you have a favourite session?

12 responses



- Yes
- No

Chart 2a favourite session

Q4: Did you have a least favourite session?

12 responses

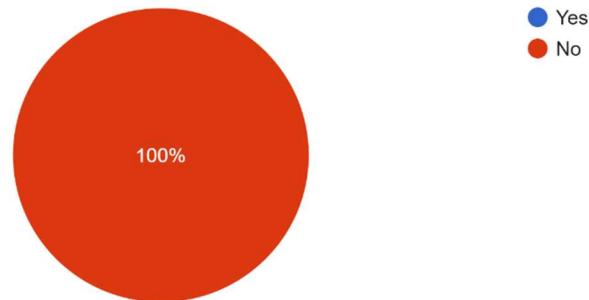


Chart 3a least favourite session

5.1.3 Quotes Indicating Value of Mixing Theory and Practice

- ◆ I thought the program was really well balanced
- ◆ I really enjoyed the format between formal learning and outdoor activities
- ◆ I liked the circle, the small groups where we chose our own adventure and walk
- ◆ I think it was a nice mix of listening in and giving space for a yarn, then also being able to be outside.
- ◆ relax [sic] environment made it very easy to learn
- ◆ more workshops outside

5.1.4 Quotes Indicating Programming and Content Relevance

- ◆ The day has had an impact on me and my colleagues. We are noting how it has made us more aware of aqua nullius in our work. I learned a lot and there was much for reflection
- ◆ i wish more MDBA staff could have this experience
- ◆ was very eye opening and inspiring!!
- ◆ the TO led was a strong and empowering format
- ◆ spending the entire program by water would be nice

5.2 IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS NOT MENTIONED ELSEWHERE

5.2.1 Indigenous Only Space

An Indigenous-only camp site, including weaving materials, was provided close to main camp. This site was not policed, so there is a degree of uncertainty about how it was used. Informal Indigenous camper comments suggests its existence was appreciated.

5.2.2 Weaving

The First Nations campers brought the weaving materials into the main camp site early on the first day. By lunchtime the third day campers from both cohorts were weaving while participating, with non-Indigenous campers learning directly from highly experienced weavers.

Casual weaving proved a good way to bring the cohorts together in a low-key social manner.

5.2.3 Language Sessions

The use of First Nations languages at water camp 25, including Ngunnawal during the welcome to Country, wiradyuri during personal introductions and others for naming methods and during casual conversation was incidental but widely appreciated.

Given First Nations campers responses, introducing a formal language session to future water camps is essential. Such sessions would ensure that knowledge and learning is done fully within First Nations ontological frameworks, where all forms of knowledge are connected and related. Greetings, the words for water, Country and camp on the First Nation hosting the camp are some suggested words for future language sessions, though any language taught would be according to the relevant traditional custodians protocols.

5.2.4 Sorry Business

As with any First Nations led/majority event, sorry business loomed large, influencing First Nations campers attendance and attention.

The impact of sorry business needs to be accounted for when programming events in collaboration with or at the direction of First Nations peoples.

6.0 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The First Nations water community response has been overwhelmingly positive, generating strong support for an annual water camp. One First Nations camper so appreciated listening deeply to waterscapes that on camp's first night they purchased a listening kit for their mob.

The clear preference from conversations with campers is for Nations to take turns hosting and curating water camp. Beyond sharing the organizational load, this approach will allow for different priorities to be shared, while encouraging different camp formats. While important to not be too proscriptive, Indigenous sciences will remain a key feature of water camp.

The split between Indigenous-only and all welcome days was particularly appreciated by the First Nations campers and likely a permanent feature of water camp.

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Program water camp25: May 20 -22

Venue: Australian National University, Canberra

Host: MSDI, Monash University

	Tuesday 20 May – mob only	Wednesday 21 May – mob only	Thursday 22 May
9.00am	Registration	First Nations Art Tour	Registration.
9.30am	Welcome to Country Wally Bell (Ngunawal)	Practicing Indigenous sciences to resist aqua nullius. kate harriden (wiradyuri)	keynote – aqua nullius: impact on Country and mob. Mel Kennedy (Tati Tati)
10.00am	Camp purpose Introductions		
10.30am		morning tea	morning tea
11.00am	morning tea	Aboriginal Waterway Assessments Oliva Williams (Walgalu)	First Nations Water 101 panel sui generis rights, colonial law Katie O'Bryan cultural flows Mel Kennedy (Tati Tati) Indigenous data sovereignty Adegboyega Adeniran (Yoruba)
11.30am	Understanding and resisting aqua nullius kate harriden (wiradyuri)		
midday		Indigenous (water) governance Monica Morgan (Yorta Yorta)	Choose your own adventure (see over for details)
12.30pm	water Country plans - introduction		
1pm	lunch	lunch	lunch
2pm*	dadirri (deep listening) workshop kate harriden (wiradyuri)	Indigenous (water) design principles workshop kate harriden (wiradyuri)	Sullivans creek walk Identify aqua nullius in action, practice deep listening, discuss Indigenous water design principles

	Tuesday 20 May – mob only	Wednesday 21 May – mob only	Thursday 22 May
3.30pm	yarn – sharing what learnt Amala Groom (wiradyuri)	yarn – how to use what learnt to resist aqua nullius; working with non-Indigenous campers Amala Groom (wiradyuri)	yarn – how to use what learnt to challenge aqua nullius in your work Amala Groom (wiradyuri)
4.30pm	close	close	close

* includes informal afternoon tea

dhjan yimaba/thank you to the employers of the facilitators for supporting their contribution to Water Camp 2025.

Registration Links & Fees

Indigenous campers Free, including catering all 3 days.
<https://forms.gle/cGoeRBxDayFRWAV4A> Registration closes Friday 9 May

Non-Indigenous campers Day 3 only, including catering. \$300
Expressions of Interest: <https://forms.gle/YjariYLnAKUdp3C67> Closes Monday 28 April
Successful Eol's will be informed by Friday 2 May. Registration and payment link will be provided at this time.

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Day 3 Thurs 22 May Choose your own adventure

Non-Indigenous campers please rank the three following choices in order of interest on the expression of interest form. The outcome will be provided during registration.

i) working well with mob Nicola Lambert co-founder [Catchment Studio](#); Nyssa Miller, manager [bandalang studio](#): Indigenous engineering design

Learn important skills for working respectfully and effectively with First Nations people. Both presenters are experienced and highly regarded by the Indigenous peoples they work with. Nicola works extensively with Ngunawal people, largely around water. Nyssa worked for many years on Ngaanyatjarra Country, and with other First Nations in NT and WA, in the arts sector before coming to ANU. They will happily try to answer any sticky questions or help you understand your less-than-successful experiences of working with mob.

ii) your position, your responsibility Rachael Gross [Tikkun Olam environmental consulting](#); [Australian National University](#)
Rachael brings her decolonial and teaching expertise to this session on positionality. Exploring your positionality will help you understand your worldview and its influences on the position(s) you adopt in your work, particularly your work with First Nations peoples. This session will support your capacity to navigate Indigenous spaces as a non-Indigenous person.

iii) working on Country protocols Renee Hartley Fenner School decolonizing research and teaching circle, [Bush Heritage Australia](#)
This session will examine the importance and role of working on Country protocols. Renee led the Fenner Decolonial Research and Teaching Circle's development of their working on Country protocol. Designed for the ANU's Fenner School of Environment & Society, this protocol was approved by the Circle's First Nations custodians. In her role with Bush Heritage Australia, Renee has practical expertise in how such protocols work in the field.

First Nations campers are invited to attend an [ANU campus tour](#) with Traditional Custodian [Wally Bell](#). If preferred, you can attend one of the other sessions. Wally will share the importance of Sullivans Creek and how Ngunawal mob managed Country, including bush foods and medicines, ceremony and tradition.

Everyday Mob only space

bandalang studio – weaving materials provided

for more information email kate: k.harriden@monash.edu

Please note: 1) program subject to change. 2) facilitators without cultural identification are non-Indigenous.

7.2 Speaker biographies

Amala Groom, wiradyuri

Session: yarns

[Amala's](#) conceptual art practice is the performance of her cultural sovereignty. Grounded in a Wiradyuri ontology, her creative practice is informed by the principles of Yindyamarra - a genuine presence and respect for all beings, Kanyini - nurturing, protection and interconnected responsibility among kin and community, and Dadirri - profound, reflective listening and inner quietude.

Boyega Adeniran, Yoruba

Session: First Nations Water 101 (Indigenous data sovereignty)

[First Nations Portfolio](#), ANU

kate harriden, wiradyuri

Sessions: understanding aqua nullius, dadirri, Indigenous sciences, walking Country, water Country plans

[MSDI](#), Monash University

kate is a wiradyuri woman who has never lived on ngurumbang wiradyuri/wiradyuri Country. She has, however, spent a lot of time in creeks including those here on Ngunnawal Country. kate's work on Indigenous water sciences frameworks and methods, our water rights and decolonizing the academy activities centres Country and mob.

Katie O'Bryan

Session: First Nations Water 101 (sui generis rights & colonial law)

[Castan Centre for Human Rights Law](#), Monash University

Katie O'Bryan is a Senior Lecturer in Law at Monash University of settler origins whose research expertise includes the systemic disregard of First Nations water rights by all levels of settler government in Australia. It is Katie's experience as a native title lawyer prior to becoming an academic that drives her work in First Nations water rights.

Mel Kennedy, Tati Tati

Sessions: impact of aqua nullius impact on Country & First Nations Water 101 (cultural flows)

University of Melbourne & Monash University

I belong to the waters of the Murrumbidgee and Milloo, on Murray River floodplain Country. A descendant of river people, my inheritance is the enduring responsibility to care for and maintain a relationship with Country. I also walk under the dark umbrella of colonial institutions; I am a Research Fellow in Water Policy and Social Science at the University of Melbourne, a PhD candidate at Monash University, and an Advisory Board Member of the Aboriginal Water Entitlements Program (DCCEEW).

Monica Morgan, Yorta Yorta

Session: Indigenous governance

Murray Darling River Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN)

A founder of the confederation of Murray Darling River Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN), Monica Morgan has for decades actively campaigned for Yorta Yorta

sovereignty, and that of other First Nations peoples, to be recognized and respected. Beyond her vital water work, Monica is interested in Upholding the Rights of Koori Women & Children and protecting the international Human Rights standards for First Nations Peoples globally.

Rachael Gross

Adventure: your position, your responsibility

Tikkun Olam environmental consulting; [Australian National University](#)

Dr Rachael Gross is a geographer and a reformed ecologist. Working at the intersection of decolonial pedagogy, landscape science and community development, Rachael works with and for Indigenous communities on using geospatial technology in Native Title claims and Caring for Country plans, as well as developing a global Indigenous-led framework to decolonise protected areas.

Renee Hartley

Adventure: working on Country protocols

Fenner School decolonizing research and teaching circle, [Bush Heritage Australia](#)

Renée is an ecologist living and working on Yuin djiringanj walbunja muncata, Wiradjuri, Ngambri, and Ngarigo Country. She is a member of the Fenner School decolonizing research and teaching circle, and works for Bush Heritage Australia where collaboration with Traditional Custodians is a key focus in all areas of work. In her role with Bush Heritage Australia, Renee has practical expertise in how such protocols work in the field.

Nicola Lambert

Adventure: working well with mob

Co-founder [Catchment Studio](#)

Nicola Lambert is an Irish woman living, mothering, creating and being hospiced on Ngunnawal Country. Shaped by Mt Majura, Sullivans Creek, the Ngunnawal community, and fellow water bodies and friends, she guides others to connect with Country. Her work bridges communities and institutions through decolonising, relational approaches. She is seen and forged by her relationship with strong women.

Nyssa Miller

Adventure: working well with mob

Manager [bandalang studio](#): Indigenous engineering design

Nyssa Miller is a white settler working and living on Ngunnawal Country. She is the Program Manager for the ANU Bandalang Studio and has been working for and with Indigenous people and communities since 2012, across various disciplines, organisations and institutions, including many years on Ngaanyatjarra Country, and other First Nations in NT and WA, in the arts sector.

Oliva Williams, Wolgalu

Session: AWAs

Wally Bell, Ngunawal

Session: Right of Passage and campus walk

7.3 Non-Indigenous campers Expression of Interest form

1.Name*

2. Contact Details (email or phone)

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3. Organisation

4. At the water camp, there will be a segment where you can choose your preferred activity. To help with planning, could you please select which is your first preference?*

Mark only one oval.

- Working with mob (presented by Nicola Lambert & Nyssa Miller)
- Positionality (presented by Rachael Gross)
- Working on Country protocols (presented by Renee Hartley)

5. At the water camp, there will be a segment where you can choose your preferred activity. To help with planning, could you please select which is your second preference?*

Mark only one oval.

- Working with mob (presented by Nicola Lambert & Nyssa Miller)
- Positionality (presented by Rachael Gross)
- Working on Country protocols (presented by Renee Hartley)

6. Why are you interested in attending Water Camp 2025?

7.Please detail any experience you have had working with mob on water-related projects or initiatives.

8.Is there anything else you would like us to know regarding your interest in attending the conference?

* Indicates required question

7.4 Non-Indigenous campers protocol

- ◆ yindyamarra/respect
- ◆ give name and org when start speaking
- ◆ recognize diversity of mob societies (eg language)
- ◆ don't talk over mob
- ◆ DO NOT talk over elders
- ◆ don't tell mob's stories
- ◆ don't assume person who told you mob story is the proper person to share that story
- ◆ be constructive, not fragile
- ◆ LISTEN wudhagarbinya wudha dhuray-gu (listening to hear – wiradyuri)
- ◆ don't be offended
- ◆ no recording/videos/stealing our ideas and words
- ◆ check privilege at the door.

7.5 Self-guided art exhibit

Start at video exhibit in innovation space.

Read the poem *Water Memory*.

Don Christopher Gunggari 2022

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Don gifted this poem to [Catchment Studio](#) during the Water Country Symposium (2022)

Watch the video exhibit

1 *Following Sullivans: Learning Country* (7:29 mins) Sammy Hawker.

Documents three curated walks, led by traditional custodians, along Sullivans creek in 2022. The voices of many Following Sullivans: Learning Country program (20 22) participants are included, as are the many voices of Sullivans Creek.

2 *Water Memory* (6:13 mins) Sammy Hawker and Paul Wyrwoll.

This work is a response to their involvement in the Following Sullivans: Learning Country program (2022). The viewer follows the shifting form of water as it transforms from precipitation into run off from the mountains, through the drains/creeks of Canberra's urban waterways all the way to the Murrumbidgee river where it evaporates as mist and back into clouds.

This work is based on the premise that waterways are sentient beings with memories of what has come before.

View the camp pieces*

1 *the water connects us* 2024 Kulan Barney

This piece was commissioned by the aqua reflexivity table for their understanding, recognizing and challenging aqua nullius professional development program for non-Indigenous water researchers, practitioners and policy makers.

2 *owning up* 2025 Zoe Kalanis

This piece, done as part of a high school project, reflects conversations held between the artist and her mother, who is part of the aqua reflexivity table. The artist statement is a clear, firm rejection of aqua nullius as well as a clarion call for the critical role art plays in public debates.

[Visit the Birch Building art pieces*](#)

1 *we were free before 2017* Patrick Green Ngaanyajtarra

Ground Floor Birch Building. Front of student kitchen, behind the stairs

Patrick Green also designed the colourful decal on bandalang studio's walls and the bridge between Birch and Brian Anderson buildings. The studio emblem is another Patrick Green design.

2 *series of artworks 2023* Ambelin Kwaymullina Palyku

Top floor Birch Building. Left hand side, at top of stairs.

These works were completed during Kwaymullina's creative residency in the School of Cybernetics during 2023.

Kwaymullina has also published *living on stolen land* (2020), described as

“a prose-style manifesto about our settler-colonial ‘present’.

At once a call and a guide to action, this beautifully articulated declaration is a must-read for anyone interested in decolonising Australia”.

[Drill Hall Gallery](#) Kingsley Street, Acton ACT 2601

Open

Wed–Sun, 10am–5pm

Entry

Free

There is lots of Indigenous art in buildings across campus, including the Drill Hall Gallery. But water camp organizers can't speak to providence of any of it.

7.6 water camp feedback form

1. Did you find water camp useful? Y/N
2. Did you have a favourite session? Y/N
3. If yes to Q2 above, which one?
4. Did you have a least favourite session? Y/N
5. If yes to Q4 above, which one?
6. What do you hope to share with others after camp?
7. Do you have any comments about water camp's format?
8. Do you have any comments about water camp's program?
9. Was the catering sufficient?
10. Was the venue suitable?
11. Is there anything else about Water Camp25 you'd like to share?
12. Would you like to see more water camps run? Y/N
13. If yes to Q12, how often?
 - Every year
 - Every 2 years
 - Every 3 years
 - Other
14. What topics would you like discussed at future water camps?
15. What activities would you like to see at future water camps?
16. Are there any Elders or Traditional Custodians you recommend as future camp leaders/presenters/facilitators?
17. Are there any First Nations water organizations, businesses or groups you'd like to participate in/be invited to future water camps?
18. Do you have any other suggestions for future water camps?
19. Would you like to help organise any future water camps?