

Indigenous keynote

What's your legacy? – Making a difference through Indigenous research

Dr Leanne Holt

Abstract

What's your legacy? – Making a difference through Indigenous research

The journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to undertake PhD's within Australian universities is relatively recent. In the 1980s there were no Indigenous PhD graduates. Fast-forward to the mid-1990s and from here there is evidence of relatively steady growth. The under-representation of Indigenous PhD graduates creates a significant challenge for the Indigenous academic workforce as well as the development of a strong cohort of Indigenous researchers able to contribute to mentorship and research from an Indigenous standpoint. Most Indigenous PhD students utilise Indigenous methodologies and undertake research on Indigenous topics with the aim of contributing knowledges which empower Aboriginal communities. However, this pathway is often challenged by the euro-centric lens of research processes and methods within Australian universities.

This presentation discusses the journey of Indigenous PhD students and ECR's and the importance of their legacy in embracing community driven Indigenous research. The future of Indigenous research will require decolonising the dominance and resulting confines of Western methodologies that ultimately forces Indigenous researchers into a 'straight jacket', limiting their ability to effectively discover and build new knowledges within an Indigenous landscape. We will discuss how making a difference through Indigenous research can be achieved by respectfully walking with our communities, re-repositioning Indigenous communities from the 'other' or 'objects of research' to position them as experts, informers and communicators of knowledge.