

CHRIS ROTHERY ATTENDS GARMA



Academic Excellence and Cultural Integrity was this year's theme for the Garma Festival. As an educator with over 20 years experience working with Indigenous people, this was my first visit to Garma. It was an enriching experience to say the least and one that was most appropriate, given the theme and my background.

The mix of Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, policy makers, academics, students, trainers, cultural practitioners, government, corporate and community leaders made for a rich and stimulating environment. As one would expect, CDU and OIAS representatives were present. Damien Smith, an Engineering student and one of our newest Student Ambassadors also attended. Damien's happy and bubbly personality soon had him immersed in animated discussions with people of all ages and backgrounds, singing the praises of studying at CDU and the assistance that is available through OIAS.

Other OIAS team members took the opportunity to listen, and participate, in a number of forums and to catch up and meet with CDU remote staff. Of particular interest was the address by Dr Jose Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor - Leste.

This charismatic leader gave an engaging and informal talk about the challenges that he and his country faced on the road to Independence. He also highlighted and emphasised the importance that his Government places on Education. In particular, eradicating the current low levels of literacy and numeracy as quickly as possible, as this is one of the best ways of helping the country and individuals to progress and take control of their lives and destinies.

Indigenous voices — teaching us better— was another forum the team had a vested interest in participating in. The panel comprised some of our students, Angelee Wauchope, Heleana Wauchope, and Nardene Murphy. The discussion was facilitated and led by Alison Reedy (CDU) and the Australian Council for Adult Literacy. It was very encouraging to see our students rising to the challenge and speaking publicly about the challenges they had and still face on their Educational journey. It takes a great deal of courage to step outside your comfort zone and discuss issues that are often controversial and our students displayed that courage with dignity and grace. Well done team!

BOWDEN MCCORMACK PRIZE



L—R: Jessica Procak recipient of the Bowden McCormack Prize for Indigenous Excellence in Commerce, Don Fuller, Head of School of Law and Business and Dominic McCormack.

Local Darwin Law firm, Bowden McCormack have established an award for Indigenous Excellence in Commerce and Jessica Procak is the first recipient to receive the Prize. In 2006 at the tender age of 17, Jessica commenced her first year of university, studying full time for 3 years, moving frequently between Darwin and Alice Springs. In 2009 she completed her Bachelor of Commerce and Graduated at Alice Springs in 2010.

Whilst studying, Jessica was engaged as an Indigenous Student Ambassador for OIAS and her experience and academic achievement at CDU makes her a role model to others.

Originally from Alice Springs, Jessica now lives in Darwin and works in the Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Leadership at Charles Darwin University.

Jessica would like to thank Sean Bowden and Dominic McCormack of Bowden McCormack Lawyers and Advisers for the opportunity to be awarded the prize and acknowledges her partner, family and friends for their love, support and loyalty throughout her studies. She also acknowledges her OPVCIL colleagues for continuous support, as well as the OIAS team in Darwin and Alice Springs for their unwavering support. A special thank you to Lorraine St Clair for her support and guidance throughout Jessica's studies.

We will see more of Jessica in the near future as she plans to come back to CDU to do her Honours.