**Symposium title: Towards an Australian Model of Culturally Nourishing Schooling**

**Overview**

This symposium examines the notion of a *culturally nourishing* model of Australian schooling. This is presented in a context of the continued systemic failure of both government policy and teaching practice to bring about substantive improvements in Indigenous student learning outcomes. Paper 1 provides an overview of a systematic literature review of over 10,000 papers published in the field of Indigenous educational research in Australia. Paper 2 will present four key elements of an Australian model of culturally nourishing schooling. Case studies of the model will then be presented in papers 3 and 4.

**Paper 1:** Establishing a critically informed model of culturally nourishing schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

**Presenter**: Kevin Lowe, UNSW

Abstract

For 5-years, the Aboriginal Voices team have looked to establish a whole-of-community model of culturally nourishing schooling for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Drawing on the theoretical work of Smith (2000), Brayboy (2020) and Nakata (2007), this presentation will frame this project within the tradition of critical Indigenous theory and disclose the pervasiveness of the colonial moment and its cumulative impact on the schooling of Indigenous students.

This presentation outlines the research that informed the foundations of this Australian model, by first focusing on the 3-year wide-ranging systematic review of Indigenous education in Australia, and, and a re-analysis of school-based case studies to identify the ontological, epistemic and axiological elements of this model of culturally nourishing schooling. We will argue that this purpose-built model is urgently required, if education is to meet the needs and aspirations of diverse Australian Indigenous communities.

**Paper 2**: The Culture, Community and Curriculum Project in redux: A culturally nourishing mirage or miracle?

**Presenter:** Greg Vass, Griffith University

Abstract

We advocate for an Australian culturally nourishing model of schooling with four interlinked elements: (1) rich understandings of Country, (2) Indigenous knowledges and heritage as foundational to identity-work, (3) epistemic mentoring of educators, and (4) transformative teacher professional learning. This model emerged drawing collectively on the empirical and theoretical work of contributors to the Aboriginal Voices team. In this paper, the model will be called on to look back at research that helped crystalize the import of this approach. Starting in 2016, the three-year *Culture, Community and Curriculum Project* (CCCP) took place in Sydney, it reveals both the possibilities and complexities for schools that are yet to effectively or sustainably support Indigenous learners. While incomplete with effecting wide-spread or long-term change, the CCCP none-the-less hints at the potential benefits that may emerge when the seeds of a culturally nourishing approach are carefully sown, watered and cared for.

**Paper 3:** Aboriginal community educators leading professional learning on Country

**Presenters**: Katrina Thorpe, University of Technology, Sydney & Cathie Burgess, University of Sydney

Abstract

A systematic review of the research literature over a ten-year period found that professional learning tends to focus on school reform despite the evidence that quality teaching and thoughtful collaboration with Aboriginal communities are more likely to impact Aboriginal student outcomes. This paper presents research with Aboriginal community educators who lead professional learning for pre-service and in-service teachers. Through the enactment of Country as a pedagogical device, Aboriginal community educators’ knowledge of place, culture, history and politics provides opportunities for teachers to transform their perceptions of teaching and learning in Aboriginal contexts. Pre/in-service teachers reported increased confidence, knowledge and relationship-building skills to work with Aboriginal communities to embed Aboriginal content and to develop culturally nourishing pedagogies to better engage Aboriginal students in their learning.

**Paper 4**: Developing a *Trauma Informed Pedagogy* for higher education

**Presenter:** Neil Harrison, Macquarie University

Abstract

This paper presents the results of a three year study of the impacts of teaching about the experiences of trauma on students studying to become teachers. The project’s overarching objective is to develop an effective trauma-informed pedagogy that can support students who learn about the experiences of the ‘Stolen Generations’, the Holocaust, wars, and genocide. Following a presentation from a member of the Stolen Generations, students reported strong emotional impacts, indicating heightened arousal and defensive dissociation. Results indicated that effective teaching about the experiences of trauma must be accompanied by management processes that will mitigate the potential detrimental emotional impacts on such learning. We conclude that the reflexive power of narrative can implicate students in their own lives, as well as in the lives of others. Of critical importance is a recognition that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous lives are bound to one another in contemporary Australia.