



## NEWS

# Spotlighting the 'I' in WIL: the Yaliwunga Placement Program

Therese Apolonio | 16 November 2022 | 0 comments

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Yaliwunga is the Gomeri word for 'always'. When it comes to work-integrated learning, 'Yaliwunga' expresses our hope that students in the UTS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) will practice a lifelong commitment to advancing Aboriginal self-determination in whichever field they choose.

The Yaliwunga Placement Program is facilitated by the [UTS Indigenous Land and Justice Research Group](#). In this program, students conduct a research project set by an Indigenous organisation for course credit.

The 'Indigenous sector' cuts across public, not-for-profit and private sectors and the Indigenous-led organisations within it often serve their communities in ways that go beyond their formal mandate. Generally, this means that organisations with bold ambitions can find themselves time-poor and under-resourced. The Yaliwunga program responds to these conditions of the Indigenous sector, by developing research projects that align with the unique aims of organisations. In line with UTS's commitment to social justice, this program harnesses the expertise and resources of the FASS to provide students with a mentored WIL experience.



sector. Our students and interns are supervised to conduct high-quality research and share their findings with partner organisations, often presenting their work directly to the CEO and Board.

The goals of the Yaliwunga program are to:

- Provide Indigenous sector and community with access to data, skills and technical expertise
- Build sustainable and nourishing ways of working in the Indigenous sector
- Build UTS graduates' understanding of working sensitively and appropriately with Indigenous people, organisations and on Indigenous issues and concerns
- Enhance UTS students' employability outcomes, develop transferrable and technical skills in a range of contexts, and attain graduate attributes
- Support students who have an interest in further study to develop research skills and knowledge around issues of land justice
- Give students skills and knowledge such as insight into the workplace structures and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations

## Past placement projects

- A cost-benefit analysis for Dareton LALC explored the benefits of converting to solar-powered street lighting on their Namatjira Reserve property
- A report identified opportunities for Mudgee LALC to establish a Commonwealth-funded Indigenous Rangers Program in their area
- A discourse analysis of mainstream print media reported on Local Aboriginal Land Councils to assist Illawarra LALC with public communications and advocacy
- Trangie LALC and Wungunja Cultural Centre's social media accounts were evaluated to increase visitor engagement
- A case study analysis of innovative community housing models for Dorrigo LALC explored possible solutions to the regional problem of housing scarcity

## Internship success stories

Final-year students and recently graduated students have opportunities to work closely with subject coordinators or students via the placement program as a trainee research assistant. Some recent examples:

- Research undertaken for Quandamooka Yoolooburrabee Aboriginal Corporation was featured in the [BLAK BIAS podcast](#) series, which examines media coverage of



Aboriginal communities on the basis of renewable energy to guide decisions about engaging with developers or pursuing their own energy projects.

## The impact of Yaliwunga

Yaliwunga is a novel contribution to the WIL research place. It prepares graduates for employment in the Indigenous sector, and is a strategic opportunity for students interested in Honours or postgraduate studies.

By developing relationships with Aboriginal organisations and joining their projects in a research capacity, our students make a practical contribution. We have witnessed a range of benefits for our students and partner organisations.

Explore other work-integrated learning case studies in a [SharePoint site \(UTS staff log-in required\)](#) that's dedicated to good WIL practice. For more perspectives on work-integrated learning from this year's WIL Symposium, [hear from our external partners on their experiences](#).

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