

INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN NEW SOUTH WALES,
AUSTRALIA

Research Areas

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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Studies (200201)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (160501)

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**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of
Philosophy (Management), University of Technology, Sydney Business
School 2015**

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date:

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Dedication

This work could not have been done if I did not have the mother I had. I would like to dedicate my PhD to my beloved mother Ruth Caroline Kamore Johnson Link.

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Sonya Pearce

Certificate of Original Authorship

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Abstract

Indigenous socio-economic disadvantage in Australia remains stubbornly entrenched despite many policy initiatives by successive Federal, State and Territory Governments. The relationship between cultural context, personal identity and entrepreneurship in the lives of Indigenous entrepreneurs is dynamic and significant. Relating personal, cultural and social contextual factors to the journey, decisions and processes of minority or under-represented entrepreneurs is an important research opportunity. Engaging with the lived experiences of cultural groups allows scholarship to access the deeply personal and intricate nature of entrepreneurship, and proffers innovative research that gives voice to a broader spectrum of entrepreneurs.

This research project engages with the lived experiences of six Australian Aboriginal female entrepreneurs with the objective of determining the relationship between Indigenous identity, female identity, and the formative journey and everyday practice of entrepreneurship.

This research is designed with a phenomenological lens, and expanded through the practice of a traditional Aboriginal practice of deep listening, *Dadirri*, this project approaches the experiences of Indigenous female entrepreneurs in an innovative research design. Through a research design that allows the subjects to quantify their experiences in their own words and through familiar cultural practice, this research project highlights the importance of Indigenous identity and gender in the development and entrepreneurial practice of the individual.

This research project offers innovative promise in communicating the challenges, experiences and narratives of the Indigenous female entrepreneur to a broader academic context. In turn, this research stands as a key precedent for the development of policy and infrastructure to support minority entrepreneurs.