

Decolonising Settler Cities Symposium—call for participants

Hosted by:

- Translational Research Centre for Aboriginal Knowledges and Wellbeing, Curtin University
- Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University
- School of Built Environment, Curtin University and
- Centre for Urban Research, RMIT.

Date and location: Monday 25 September to Wednesday 27 September in Perth, Western Australia.

Context:

The lands on which Australian urban centres continue to be built are located on the unceded territories of distinct, sovereign Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who continue to exert and practice their laws, cultures, rights and interests. Beyond such broad recognition statements as this, there has been remarkably little effort made to figure out what this means and how this acknowledgement fundamentally unsettles the categories and knowledges by which we claim to understand the Australian city.

Decolonising Settler Cities seeks to create a space to talk about issues that are difficult to define, but are also essential for justice and our collective futures. While it is clear that urban areas in settler colonial countries have always been Indigenous, the implications of this understanding for the future of our cities is unclear. We invite scholars and practitioners to share their questions and critiques, experience and knowledge of decolonising possibilities and obstacles in urban locations. Our hope is to find ways to think through and beyond ‘whitestream’ categories of knowing, thinking and imagining the Australian city, and appropriately centre Indigenous experiences, theories, knowledges and perspectives.

We are particularly interested in perspectives that draw on contemporary Indigenous experiences and knowledge to unsettle the categories that underlie urban governance and often make Indigenous peoples’ aspirations impossible to achieve. These categories include but are not limited to property, health, development, education, work and family. The corollary of this negative set of experiences is the way that Indigenous Australians find ways to claim rights, practice culture, enact laws and act in their interests in urban locations. These are the practices of Indigenous urban citizenship.

We invite participants to contact us with a short statement explaining their interest in participating. For those participants wanting to make a presentation, please indicate the topic area and the type of medium (whether a paper, film, performance, reading, or another format). We welcome approaches from people with a variety of backgrounds, experiences and expertise. *Decolonising Settler Cities* will have a limited number of speakers and will seek a diverse set of presenters with a large Indigenous presence.

The bench commemorating Yaluritja’s (Clarrie Isaacs) protest against the Swan Brewery redevelopment near the Perth CBD.



Principles for the Decolonising Cities Symposium:

Our guiding principle for the symposium is to ***practice ways that support a decolonising politics by:***

1. Finding ways to appropriately centre Indigenous experiences, theories, knowledges and perspectives on the Australian city;
2. Creating spaces for conversation and mutual learning that are respectful, honouring, critically aware and diverse;
3. Working to de-centre colonialist whitestream categories of knowing, thinking and imagining the city;
4. Identifying how mutual learning and delicate, respectful, collaborative imaginings between different streams of understanding in cities (including Indigenous and whitestream) can be cultivated and encouraged; and
5. Co-designing respectful methods for producing knowledge, teaching and learning about urban Australia.
6. Developing a set of practical outcomes and actions that participants in the symposium will take forward both individually and as a group.

Decolonising Settler Cities is strongly committed to supporting Indigenist research approaches. Indigenist research provides the basis for understanding the lived experiences (narratives) of Indigenous people which “are powerful instruments by which to measure equality and social justice” (Rigney, 1999, p. 116). Indigenist research begins by “centring Aboriginal ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of doing, in alignment with aspects of western qualitative research frameworks” (Martin, 2003, p. 12). By beginning with and foregrounding an Indigenous worldview, Indigenist research addresses the trap of appropriating “the cultural knowledge and experiences of their Indigenous participants, and then, using the theoretical frameworks of Western knowledge” reinterpreting those experiences and presenting them as their own (Wright, 2011, p. 28). The expectations and constraints of research must be informed by and respectful of Indigenous worldviews to be capable of contributing to the shared project of decolonisation.

Timeline:

Submissions due (300 words): 1 May 2017.

Notification of acceptance: 15 May 2017

Materials (whether film, paper, photographs, art work or something else) due –17 July 2017

The materials will be circulated before the symposium. We will discuss publication of papers and other materials at the symposium.

Please email your submissions to either Tod Jones at Curtin University (T.Jones@curtin.edu.au) or Libby Porter at RMIT (libby.porter@rmit.edu.au). And if you have any questions, please let us know! We are happy to work directly with you if you would like assistance with abstracts or accessing information for your presentation.

Picture of the building that housed the New Era Aboriginal Fellowship (est. 1970) at 136 William St, Perth that spawned a number of important organisations in Western Australia including the ALSWA and the AMSWA.



Convenors:

- Shaphan Cox, Department of Planning and Geography, Curtin University
- Julie Hofman, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University
- Tod Jones, Department of Planning and Geography, Curtin University
- Cheryl Kickett-Tucker, Translational Research Centre for Aboriginal Knowledges and Wellbeing, Curtin University
- Jeanie Morrison, Centre for Aboriginal Studies, Curtin University
- Libby Porter, School of Global, Urban and Social Studies, RMIT

Readings on settler colonialism and urban indigeneities:

- Anderson, Kay, and Jane M. Jacobs. 1997. "From Urban Aborigines to Aboriginality and the City: One Path Through the History of Australian Cultural Geography." *Australian Geographical Studies* 35 (1):12-22.
- Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks. Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Book.
- Edmonds, Penelope. 2010. *Urbanizing frontiers : Indigenous peoples and settlers in 19th-century Pacific Rim cities*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- James, Sarah W. 2012. "Indigeneity and the intercultural city." *Postcolonial Studies* 15 (2):249-265.
- Martin, Karen. 2003. "Ways of Knowing, Ways of Being and Ways of Doing: A Theoretical Framework and Methods for Indigenous Research and Indigenist Research. Voicing Dissent." *Journal of Australian Studies* 27 (76):203-214.
- Peters, Evelyn, and Chris Andersen, eds. 2013. *Indigenous in the City: Contemporary Identities and Cultural Innovation*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Pieris, Anoma. 2012. "Occupying the centre: Indigenous presence in the Australian capital city." *Postcolonial Studies* 15 (2):221-248.
- Porter, Libby, and Janice Barry. 2016. *Planning for coexistence: Recognizing Indigenous rights through land-use planning in Canada and Australia*. United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Rigney, Lester. 1999. "Internationalization of an Indigenous anticolonial critique of research methodologies: A guide to Indigenist research methodology and its principles." *Wicazo Sa Review* 14:109-121.
- Simpson, Audra. 2014. *Mohawk interruptus: political life across the borders of settler states*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Walker, Ryan, and Manuhua Barcham. 2010. "Indigenous-inclusive citizenship: the city and social housing in Canada, New Zealand, and Australia." *Environment and Planning A* 42 (2):314-331.
- Wolfe, Patrick. 2006. "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8 (4):387-409.
- Wright, Laura H. V. . 2011. "Transforming Canada's hegemonic global education paradigm through an anti-colonial framework." In *Modernization, Development and Education in African Context* Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto [OISE/UT].
- Yiftachel, Oren, Batya Roded, and Alexandre Kedar. 2016. "Between rights and denials: Bedouin indigeneity in the Negev/Naqab." *Environment and Planning A* 48 (11):2129-2161.

Laural Nannup's 2012 mural on Newcastle Street in Northbridge just north of the Perth CBD.



The Urban Theory Symposium Series

This event is the second in the Urban Theory Symposium series. This event is the joint initiative of the Urban Geography Study Group and the Indigenous Peoples' Knowledges and Rights Study Group of the Institution of Australian Geographers.

The Urban Theory Symposium series aims to:

1. To provide a critical space where a range of urban geographical and planning theory related questions can be interrogated and further developed
2. To facilitate a debate about the politics of urban research, and questions of urban contest and transformation
3. To create an active and collegial platform to explore and critique emerging urban and planning theory, with a view to further activate and characterise planning and urban geographical scholarship in Australia.

Our pursuit of these goals in Decolonising Settler Cities is only possible through mutual learning and reflexivity. The partnership, presence and contribution of Indigenous practitioners and academics who are engaging with urban issues is essential, and dialogue needs to occur with a range of groups who are focussed on issues of justice and healing for Indigenous Australians. Mutual learning through dialogue is the basis for participants' reflexive practice through which we can interrogate our own blind spots and work towards more sophisticated, informed and just understandings and perspectives.

The pinjar (wetlands) in the Perth Cultural Precinct, a reminder of the extensive linked wetlands of this area that were the supermarket for the Wadjuk Noongar.

