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Jindaola: An Aboriginal Way of Embedding Knowledges and Perspectives

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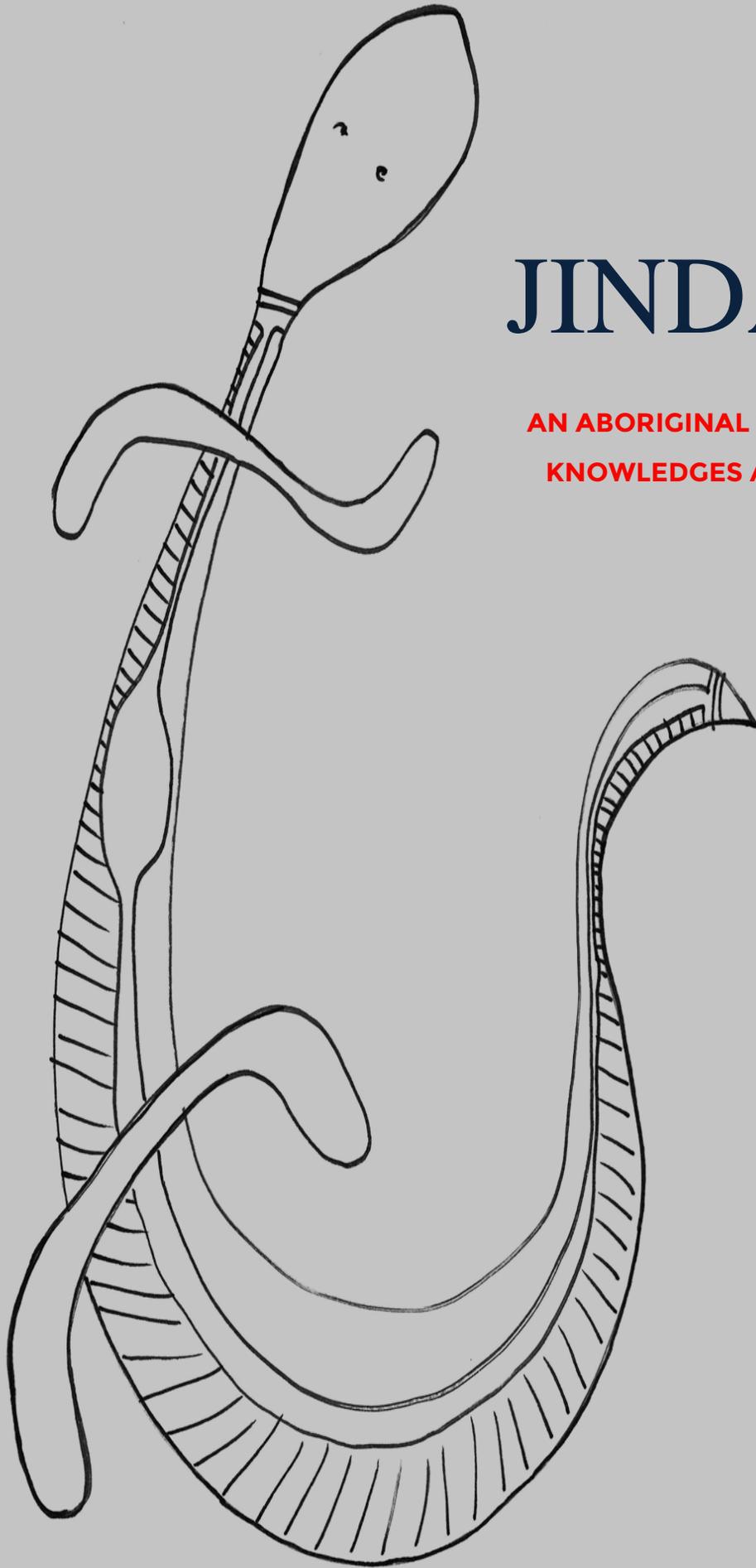
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JINDAOLA

AN ABORIGINAL WAY OF EMBEDDING
KNOWLEDGES AND PERSPECTIVES

O



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

LEARNING, TEACHING AND CURRICULUM

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Acknowledgment

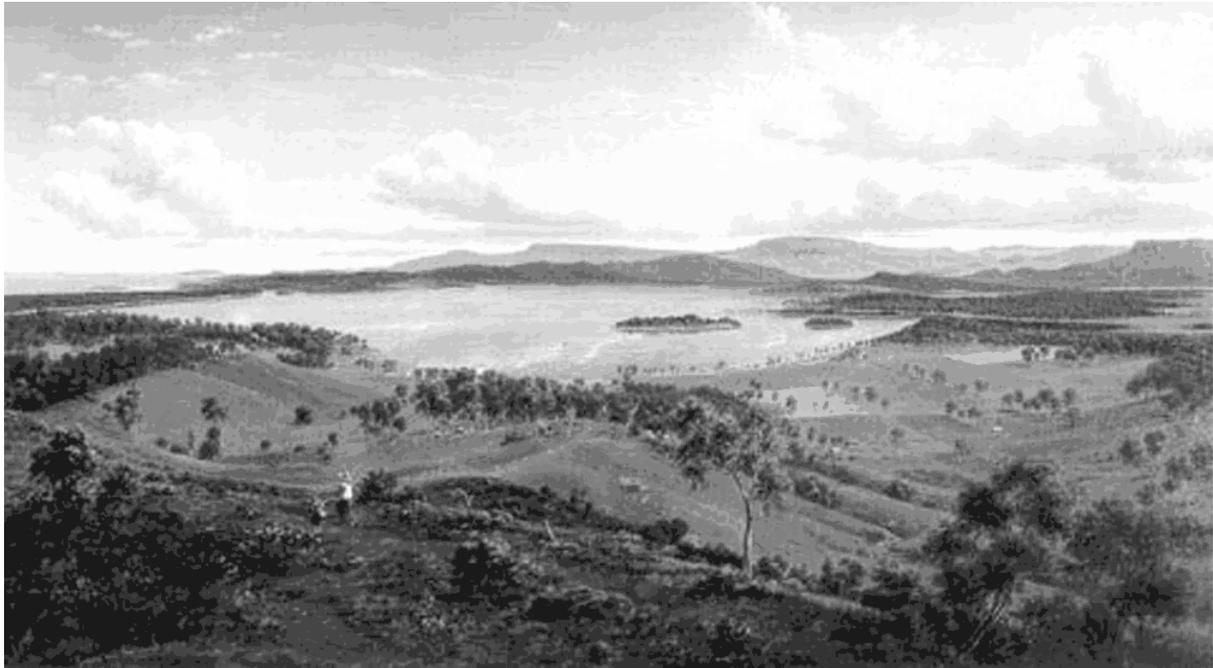


Image. The Illawarra, Eugene von Guérard, oil on canvas (1859)

It is important that before embarking on this Journey together, we stop and take a moment to be aware of our surroundings. It is important that we stop whatever it is we are doing, look around us, and just be present with our environment. Before any Journey it is important that we appreciate that what we know has been gifted us from Country.

This is why we Acknowledge that all things come from Country... that the knowledges and perspectives we will be sharing all come from Country... and that the most of this walk we will take together will be on the Country of the Yuin...

... this is why we Acknowledge the Yuin. We Acknowledge their ancient and sacred knowledges, their ancient and sacred stories and their ever present Dreaming. This is why we also Acknowledge their traditions and custodianship, as it is these practices that have taken care of this Country since its creation.

By Acknowledging this we respect all Aboriginal people and give recognition to Country...

... for the past... the present... and the future...

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The University of Wollongong Acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands the University of Wollongong campuses rest upon, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture these lands, since their creation. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

A very special thank you to the Learning, Teaching & Curriculum staff who gave generously their time and ideas to help build this publication.

Most significantly, much respect, thanks and acknowledgement is given to the Elders and local Knowledge Holders across Yuin that have contributed and consulted with mob around the appropriate knowledges embedded within this publication.

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Welcome

Yulungah... Yulungah... Yulungahla bul...

Welcome... Welcome... Welcome you to me...

Thank you for 'joining our Journey'

Humbly... I thank you...

... and respectfully... I thank you for your enthusiasm and readiness to adopt an Aboriginal approach to embedding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into your curricula.

*To date, the embedding of alternate perspectives into mainstream tertiary curriculum has for the best part followed traditional non-Aboriginal approaches. **Jindaola** however, is a new and exciting initiative we have developed in consultation with local Elders and Knowledge Holders that follows a method of approach modelled on traditional Aboriginal systems for maintaining knowledge integrity. It is in the following of this 'way' we will ensure the authentic, meaningful, respectful and appropriate integration of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into the UOW curriculum.*

This is a significant moment not only for Aboriginal peoples, their knowledges and perspectives... this is a significant moment for all peoples sharing the Australian continent... for all peoples sharing Country... this is a true journey of curriculum reconciliation...

... and therefore, it is important for us all to be aware that this path has not been walked before, and that...

... we are all in this 'new way'... learning together... sharing together... walking together...

So please... use this handbook as a starting guide for our walk together. See it as the beginnings of a map for our long and arduous journey through this unknown Country... and respect this handbook is not designed to give you all the answers... but more so to give you guidance... reference points that will allow you to connect your experiences and stories with the knowledges and perspectives that align with local Aboriginal philosophies, values and customs and relate to your disciplinary field.

... the truth is... this is going to be a hard journey... but eaaa... it is going to be so much more rewarding... so much more beautiful... so much more insightful... and so so much more meaningful...than any of the hardship we encounter along the way... trust me...

Anyway... once more, my deepest thanks... I am just so excited to be walking this way with you!



Jade Kennedy

Yuin.

Academic Developer, Indigenous Knowledges



Jindaola: An Aboriginal Way

A protector of many many knowledges, the goanna *Jindaola* [*Jinda-ole-la*] walks from place to place helping people know '*proper way*'. He speaks of protocol, the sacred and the special, and the appropriate practices we must perform to maintain the continuation of these...

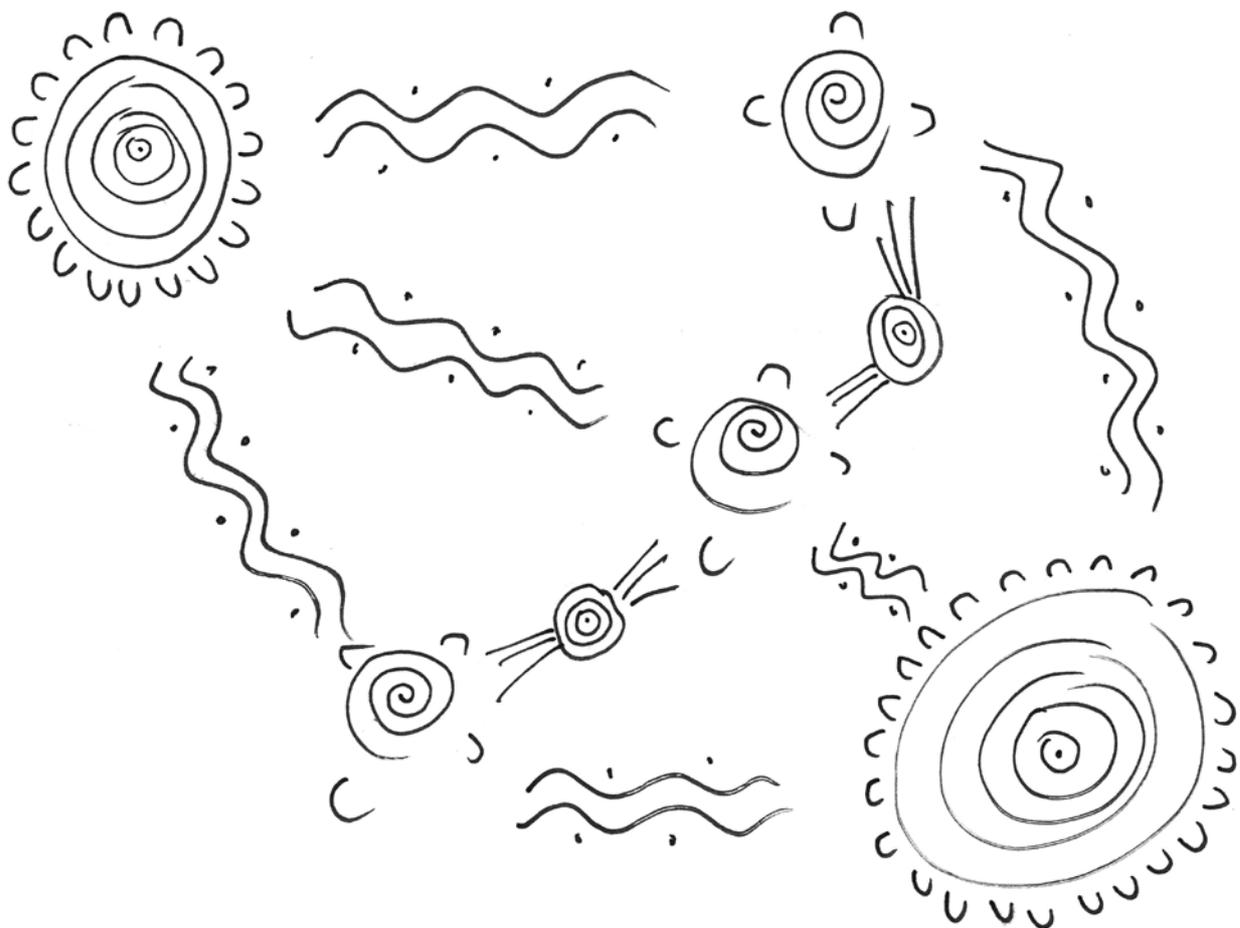
Jindaola is unique to this place... unique to the shared places of the University of Wollongong and the Aboriginal communities its campuses rest upon... and where it is a grant program... and a way of approach... *Jindaola* is most importantly a *journey*...

... you see... *Jindaola* has left his tracks across this place for us to follow... long ago before we knew his tracks were even there...

It is our time now... to walk these tracks and learn... together... *proper way*...

OVERVIEW

The below symbolic diagram represents the path of *Jindaola* between local Aboriginal communities of knowledge and UOW communities' of knowledge:



Drawing 1. Jindaola: An Aboriginal way of embedding knowledges & perspectives

In this way, *Jindaola* represents a philosophy of practice, based upon the principles of **respect**, **responsibility**, and **reciprocity**. These principles are consistent across all symbols and aspects of this way, however if we consider communities as an example, you will recognise:

- **Respect:** for the various communities (all peoples, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) with which you are working,
- **Responsibility:** as a commitment to the program and a commitment to the group, to share with each other, learn from each other and teach each other (to form a new, responsible community),
- **Reciprocity:** ‘*ngapartji ngapartji*’ – the act of giving and taking – in this instance giving back to each other and the broader communities.

The ways of *Jindaola* underpin this grant program, carrying knowledge from place to place, informing the authentic embedding of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into the curriculum at UOW. The symbolic diagram is a road map... a walking track... a guide... that is to be broken down and understood symbol by symbol to present an overall structural interpretation of an interconnected Aboriginal approach in this context.

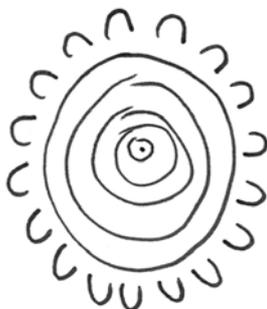
DETAILS

Aboriginal peoples not having a written alphabet used symbols and iconography to visually share stories and information. The following are Yuin symbols - but not only, as they are understood and transferrable across many Aboriginal countries. In this way protocol can be consistently understood abroad and still be meaningful and particular to *Country*...

Each symbol within this diagram therefore informs us of the appropriate relationships and protocols we are required to undertake in following the ways of *Jindaola*...



These symbols are the tracks of *Jindaola*. The spots on the side are his footprints and the lines are the marks his tail leaves on the earth and in the sand as he travels. For Aboriginal people, *Jindaola* represents the carrying of knowledge from one place to another, with the markings he leaves behind representing knowledge tracks connecting groups and places.



The closed circular symbols are a *Bora* or a significant gathering place. Here there are strict protocols to retain the integrity of ‘*proper way*’. Elders and Knowledge Holders will gather at a *Bora* to collectively make decisions in the best interest of community.

There are *Big Bora* and *Little Bora*. A *Big Bora* represents a big gathering where important decisions are negotiated, where the outcomes will have an impact on the whole community.

A *Little Bora* is a smaller gathering where important decisions are made, where outcomes will have an impact on a smaller proportion of the community.

In the way of *Jindaola* there are two *Big Bora* (*Drawing 1*). One represents Aboriginal community, the other represents the University community. Each of these groups are collectives of Knowledge Holders in their own right and in their own contexts.

The *Little Bora* represent the times and places where cross-faculty groups will come together to share knowledge collectively.



The open spiralling circles are camp fires around which people gather. Here, protocol is not as strict, as it is around the camp fire we sit and yarn, build new knowledge, grow, and develop ideas. The open spiralling circles in the symbolic diagram are representations of each of the faculty groups who are participating in this program.

It is within these camps that knowledge creation, development and protocol will emerge.



The semi-circles around the *Bora* and camp fires are *goonie* prints (bum prints). These represent people sitting, but also indicate that with sitting, there are strong protocols related to respect, responsibility and reciprocity.

These attributes in such environments are demonstrated through acts of deep listening and soft speaking, with no aggression or shouting. There is no leader. Each person sitting is an expert in their own context



The straight lines are the notion of travelling, or coming together. For *Jindaola*, the straight lines bring faculties together at *Little Bora* to collaborate around important knowledges and decisions.

Jindaola brings together knowledges and peoples from various faculties, LTC and local Aboriginal communities for the purpose of knowledge creation, learning development and sharing. In walking our journey this way together we are establishing the appropriate relationships for embedding authentic Aboriginal stories, experiences, knowledges and perspective into the curriculum at UOW in an '*Aboriginal way*'... in the '*old ways*' of *Jindaola*. In this way we are working towards reconciling the curriculum.

The interrelationships of these symbols are a traditional Aboriginal approach alive and practiced within Aboriginal communities in varying ways today. This method however, has had limited presence or practice at universities across the nation. When raising these concerns with Elders and Knowledge Holders during consultation, endorsement and encouragement to follow the ways of *Jindaola* was understood when there was shared agreement around one Uncle's statement of '*why would you use any other way*'...

This reassurance is also given to us by *Jindaola* being a protector of many knowledges. Traveling between *Bora*, *camp fires*, gatherings and collaborations *Jindaola* requires particular spoken and unspoken protocols to maintain the integrity of his *Dreaming*. These practices for us are ingrained within the above interrelated symbolic diagram (*Drawing 1*), and are probably best understood as the **Formal** and **Informal** roles, responsibilities and obligations we all have within these defined relationships.



THE FORMAL

Aboriginal cultures pre-contact upheld disciplined customs in maintaining their symbiotic relationships with all things related to their ecological environment. This required ceremonies and gatherings, generally relating to the changing of seasons or the migrations of animals, birds or fish. These customs are still practiced, and have simply been adapted by Aboriginal peoples to accommodate their contemporary worlds. The significance of ceremony and gathering being core to cultural identity, and an ever present obligation within community, requires **regularity, routine and relevance**. Today one colloquial term used for such ceremony is '*business*'.

Walking this journey together in an '*Aboriginal way*' means many things, however in this formal space, it means stopping at significant times... at significant landmarks... and sitting together... sharing together... learning together... this is doing '*business*' within *Jindaola*.

Where this journey will have many and varied milestones for each faculty, person and place... this formal space within *Jindaola* will not be about milestones. It is a shared space... a space and place for *sharing*... a space for *collaboration* and *learning*... a space for us all to *practice*... not only *respect, responsibility, and reciprocity*... but also *regularity, routine and relevance*.

The below are the dates of our formal gatherings... our landmarks... our changes of season... our times to come together as a community of practice. These gatherings are significant and essential to the development of our community relationships, our personal relationships and our professional relationships... as you cannot embed Indigenous knowledges and perspectives authentically without relationships...

	GATHERING	DATE
WORKSHOP 1	<i>Joining the Journey</i>	25 th February 2019
WORKSHOP 2	<i>Sharing your Landscape</i>	29th April 2019
WORKSHOP 3	<i>Sharing your Way</i>	30 th September 2019
WORKSHOP 4	<i>Sharing your Walk</i>	3 rd February 2020
WORKSHOP 5	<i>Sharing your Stories</i>	12 th June 2020

Workshops are all day gatherings. It is encouraged that people place these in their diary in advance.

All workshop days will be held off campus and run within community places or on Country. Workshops are not restricted to those only listed as grant recipients, but open to those that are in closely related teams undertaking this walk with us. It is expected also that as we walk with *Jindaola* more community Elders and Knowledge Holders will be in attendance at these gatherings.



THE INFORMAL

Informal gatherings are the nuanced underpinnings of any culture...

Where professional networking is generally understood for professional development, and engaging with others around common interests while professionally networking is usually confined to working spaces... the acts of embedding Indigenous knowledges and perspectives requires community... where the professional and personal assume different relations.

The old people say '*humpy's have no doors*', and engaging in these changing sets of principles and practices will not only reinforce the *ways of Jindaola*, but also subtly develop our own appropriate nuances informally within the approach. Through the bringing together of our personal and professional lives and worlds, the Aboriginal unspoken will become like it is spoken... as too will the spoken become as the unspoken... and as we all begin to better understand each other more, over time, through stronger interpersonal professional relationships... the less we will need to speak.

The following are only a few examples of the Informal, and we just need to be aware that there are many unspoken traditions, behaviours and customs that will emerge and support us as we walk with *Jindaola*...

INFORMAL GATHERINGS

Informal gatherings can be spontaneous, or can be planned. They can have no agenda and simply be a yarn, or they can have an objective, an agenda and a set of outcomes. Their informal nature comes from sitting outside the *Bora* and the seasonal calendar for major significant gatherings. Participants are encouraged to arrange informal gatherings, within and beyond faculty groups as desired.

YARNING CIRCLES

Yarning circles are literally that... yarning in a circle. There are some basic protocols yarning circles have, but these are opportunities to listen and reflect on your sharing in the context of others. These are great practice for sitting at the *Big Bora*... or any *Bora*... as they foster deep listening and sharing, respect, responsibility and reciprocity. These can be arranged by LTC to address a need as it arises between groups. For example, groups may indicate a desire to work on a specific area, perhaps virtual reality. LTC can call a yarning circle inviting experts and community to contribute furthering our understanding and application in an informed way.

ATTENDING EVENTS

Attending events together, be they for example an Aboriginal NAIDOC event or a seminar on string theory, it doesn't really matter what the event, it is that they allow the act of engaging in a space external from the everyday activities of the team. This develops stronger links through shared experience, and shared engagement around alternate knowledges.

COFFEE... LUNCH... DRINKS...

Such activities edify the Informal and therefore build on a variety of interactions and associations that influence positive relationships with knowledge and place. Food and drink not only help people think, they also help people relate on levels outside of the Formal, increasing multi-layered connections along the way.

Creating opportunities to engage in the Informal is all our responsibility.

Inter-disciplinary informal gatherings, cross-faculty yarning circles, LTC-faculty seminars or event attendance can be initiated by any individual walking with *Jindaola*. Within Aboriginal communities all are required to have a role, and informal cultural protocols are significant responsibilities and obligations we have to each other in these non-routined spaces.



Support

It's in the way...

Jindaola provides a myriad of supports through its protocolled relationships. The beauty of this system is that in adhering to these protocols through relationships of **respect, responsibility and reciprocity** we in turn give integrity to '*ngapartji ngapartji*'.

It's holistic... It's cyclical... it's seasonal... it's give and take...

Remembering, where *Jindaola* is a grant program... it is also an '*Aboriginal way*'...

Its family... its mob... its community... it's '*ngapartji ngapartji*'

The following communal online space, for discussions, and a framework for aligning projects culturally and authentically have been incorporated to support, involve and inspire genuine collaboration along the way...

THE ONLINE SPACE

A key responsibility of each person walking with *Jindaola* is respect for '*business*'...and in this instance that means the maintaining of **regularity, routine, and relevance** around contact and communication. Aboriginal communities are still practicing '*old way*' such as sharing time in daily activity together yarning work and non-work related things interchangeably. Appreciating our '*new times*', and the university environment that brings us together initially, we are encouraging '*old ways in new times*'... and expecting that people engage with **regularity, routine and relevance** in a communal online sharing space.

The image below is the Moodle site that sits with *Jindaola*. It has faculty specific spaces and a communal space for sharing. It is a space for sharing resources, literature and contemporary case studies relating to any Aboriginal affairs. It is a space to write collaboratively, ask questions and yarn work and non-work related things interchangeably.

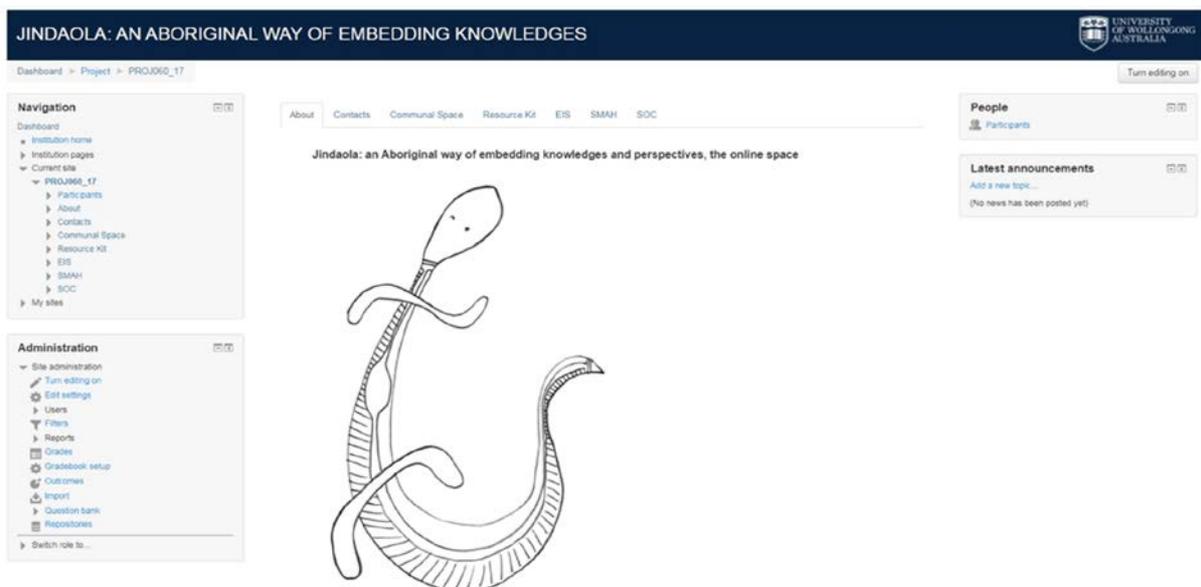


Image. *Jindaola Communal Online Sharing Space*

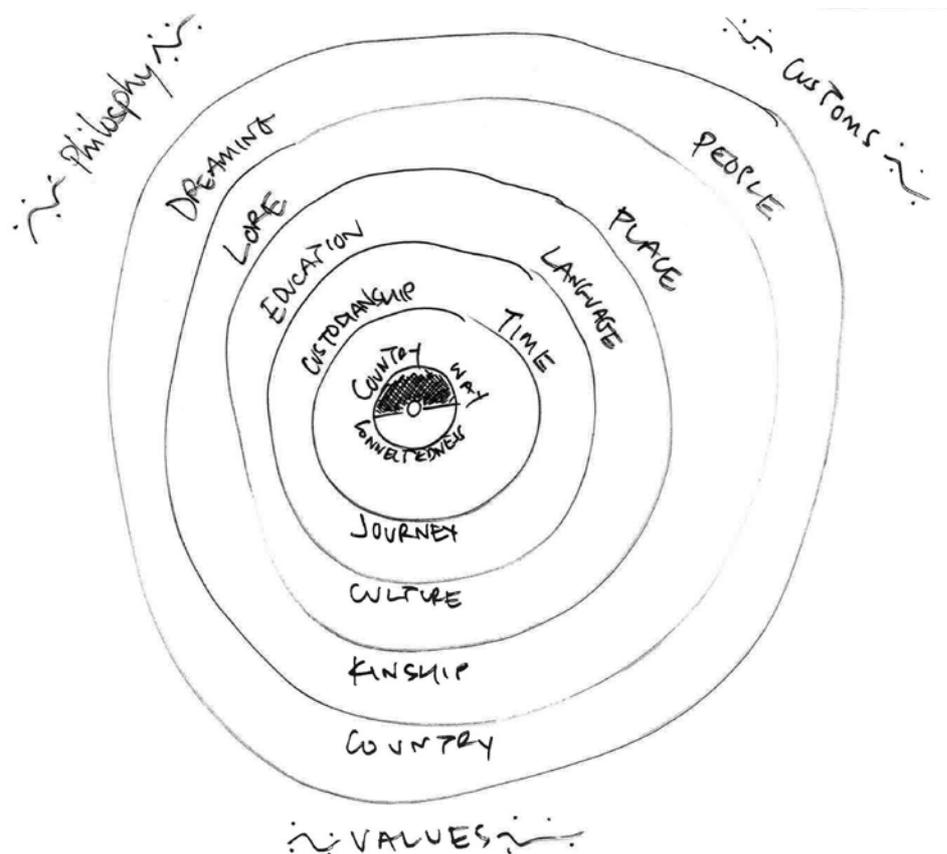
Within the Moodle dashboard search *Jindaola* and enrol yourself in the forum.

It is expected that online conversation will lead to the realisation of common needs and goals between different faculties, project teams and discipline areas, as is the way when community speak. It is from these conversations and instances that informal gatherings are instigated and at times formal gatherings to discuss, consult and respond to community needs or aspirations. It is anticipated that these ‘old ways in new times’ will allow us through *Jindaola* and the *business* conducted within the online space will lead to the same significant and important gatherings.

Staff are asked to create a profile and contribute to the forum before the next Formal gathering ‘Sharing your Landscape’ on the 20th April 2018 as part of a commitment to *Jindaola*.

CULTURAL ALIGNMENT

Maintaining ones **respect**, **responsibility** and **reciprocity** throughout this process can at times become overwhelming, especially when embedding oneself into such a diverse complex environment as Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. Cultural alignment, grounded in Aboriginal philosophies, values and customs will underpin our journey as we explore these interrelationships together.



Drawing 2. Cultural alignment framework

Connecting with the above framework while walking with *Jindaola* will support our journey and pursuits towards:

- Upholding the respect and integrity of the knowledges and perspectives relevant to disciplinary areas being integrated,
- Facilitating genuine two-way relationships around appropriate knowledges and perspectives with the appropriate Elders and Knowledge Holders, and
- Cultivating the authentic Acknowledgement of Country through the embedding of appropriate Indigenous knowledges and perspectives into the curriculum.

Resources

The majority of resources will sit within ‘**Resources**’ tab in the communal online space for all to access. Key links, articles, case studies, readings, videos... whatever it is we find... we share... this is *Jindaola*...

It is also important to consider that the artefacts we create along the *way* are resources too... and that these are not only restricted to the things we can touch, see and feel... there are many many intangible artefacts that can and will be made from us walking together... talking together.. sharing together...

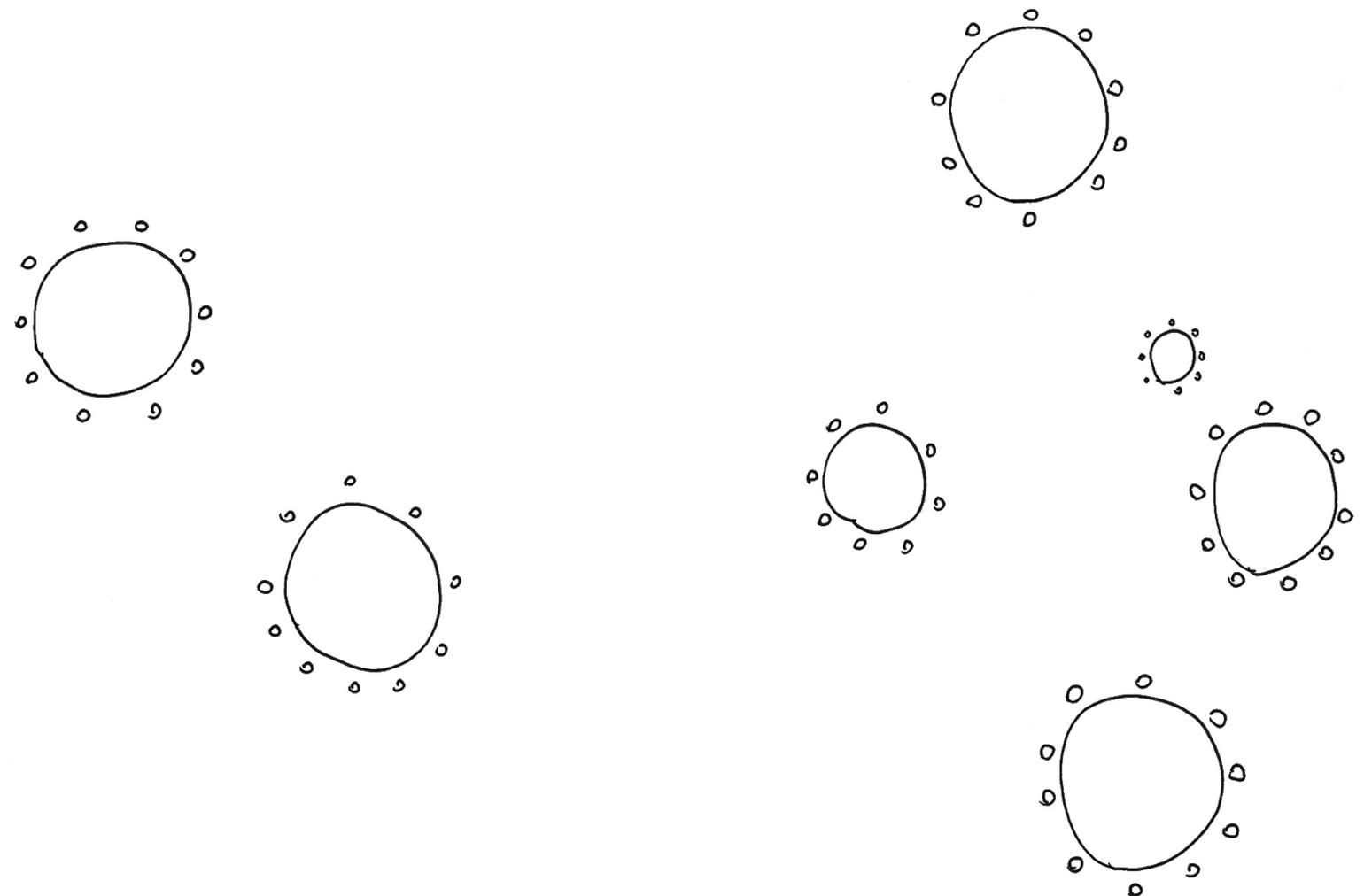
TERMINOLOGY

Some terms used within this handbook have an Aboriginal English meaning that differs slightly at times from the general uses of the words by non-Aboriginal people. As we walk... and as we talk... these words will become part of our shared spoken and unspoken vocabulary... for now though... below are some initial interpretations of their meanings...

COMMUNITY	An interconnected set of families and peoples who share story, history, traditions, resources, identity, and aspirations with each other to have a communal sense of who they are.
COUNTRY	Country is all living things. It is people, plants and animals. It embraces the seasons, stories and spirituality. Country is both belongingness and a way of being.
CURRICULUM RECONCILIATION	The bringing together of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal knowledges and perspectives to privilege and Acknowledge Country while imparting respect, responsibility and reciprocity through the learning experience.
DREAMING	The Dreaming can be seen as an embodiment of Aboriginal creation that gives meaning to everything.
ELDER	Recognised person of age for their knowledge, wisdom and contribution to community. They are accepted spokespersons and representatives for community.
JINDAOLA	Dharawal word for Rosenberg’s Goanna
KNOWLEDGE HOLDER	Recognised custodian of traditional knowledge
PROTOCOL	Cultural, ethical principles that guide our behaviours in certain situations
WAY	Is not going to be described in words here... this one is yours to share... experience... and articulate together...
YUIN	The Country/Nation that runs between the Hawksbury River in the north, Mallacoota entrance in the south, the escarpments and Snowy Mountains in the west, and the Pacific Ocean in the east.
YULUNGAH	Dharawal word for Welcome



Respecting UOW's Australian campuses are at Wollongong, Shoalhaven, Batemans Bay, Bega, Moss Vale, Loftus and Liverpool – the term Aboriginal is used throughout this handbook without the usual attached reference to Torres Strait Islanders. This is not in any way meant as a sign of disrespect, or exclusion. The term Aboriginal has been used in singularity as it is explicit in its reference and relevance to mainland Aboriginal peoples of the South East of Australia, in particular the Yuin.



Drawing 3. Story of the Seven Sisters, an interconnecting Dreaming throughout mainland Australia

...and as we adopt *Jindaola*... *Jindaola* will adopt us...

