

About Professor Roianne West (BNurs, MMHNurs, PhD, PFHEA, FCATSINaM)

Professor Roianne West was born and raised Kalkadoon on her grandmother's ancestral lands in North West Queensland and has connections to the Djaku-nde peoples in South West Queensland. While her pioneering work in Aboriginal health research and health workforce reform started over 20 years ago when she first came to work in an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service, in many ways it began generations before. Professor West's work builds on a family legacy that includes four generations of Aboriginal nurses and a long line of healers.

Leadership:

Professor West is currently [Foundation Professor of First Peoples Health at Griffith University](#) and inaugural Director of the First Peoples Health Unit. Beginning as a health worker in an Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Service in her hometown over 25 years ago, Professor West went on to complete a Bachelor of Nursing, followed by a Masters of Mental Health Nursing, and finally her PhD in 2012.

Professor West's research focuses on embedding cultural safety in healthcare systems and promoting workforce reform through the recruitment, education and training of Indigenous health professionals, and building the cultural safety of the wider health workforce.

She was Australia's first nursing director in a tertiary hospital with a dedicated portfolio for Indigenous health and Australia's first Professor of Indigenous Health in a joint appointment between a state health service and a university.

In 2019 Professor West was recognised for her sustained and effective record in high impact teaching and learning innovations, as part of a wider Griffith University commitment to excellence in academic practice and (inter)nationally as a Principle Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

She has contributed to university-wide changes in curriculum, pedagogy and policies through her focus on culturally-safe practice and her work provides a critical link for the development of standards in Indigenous health and cultural safety training.

During her time with Griffith University she has been instrumental in establishing the First Peoples Health Unit and the body of research that underpins Griffith University's commitment to implementing the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health curriculum framework of which Professor West was a key informant for the development of this framework.

Having been involved in a diverse range of national and international projects targeting health workforce reform and curriculum innovations, Professor West's strengths lie in bringing key stakeholders, such as Indigenous consumers, researchers, and clinicians together to achieve common goals.

For example, in collaboration with Griffith University's Indigenous Research Unit, QAIHC, Queensland Government's Department of Health and AIATSIS, Professor West co-led the first Roundtable in Queensland in 2014 to explore the Future Directions in the Ethical Review of Health Research Involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Queensland and in 2020 established the cultural safety research portal in collaboration with the Indigenous Health InfoNet.

She attributes her success to, and acknowledges, the privileges and strengths she has drawn from the communities of practice built while being a graduate of Australia's first community based Aboriginal Nursing Program in North Queensland, by the Institute of Kirrie Education at Deakin University and as a team investigator on the NHMRC funded Building Indigenous Research Capacity Building Grant at JCU.

Research Benefit:

Framed by a word from languages of her grandmother's country, Professor West's describes her body of work in health care reform as *mucu - mucucu*. These words were gifted to her while developing an Aboriginal Australian Nursing Theory in the early 2000s. *Mucu - mucucu* translates from Kalkadoon to 'my ancestors dreaming' – and reflects

Professor West's underpinning research philosophy, approach and Indigenous research standpoint.

The program of research she leads through diverse health and education partnerships is applied and responsive to industry needs and aimed at more immediate and high impact outcomes. Currently the First Peoples Health Unit is involved in 17 research partnerships nationally.

As Program Leader of the [Yuwan Gulgan Study](#) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health and Cultural Safety Education and Training at Griffith University, Professor West has built a research program focussed on ensuring quality and standards in health education.

This program of research is aligned with both local priorities and the nationally endorsed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Curriculum Framework, the NACCHO Cultural Safety Training Standards and the Australian Qualities Framework.

In order to measure the impact and effectiveness of Indigenous Health and Cultural Safety Curriculum innovations, Professor West led the team that developed and validated the Cultural Capability Measurement Tool, which has since been further refined to measure cultural safety for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous learners.

The enhanced tool called *Ganngaleh nga Yagaleh* assesses the impact of cultural safety innovations and draws on the [Ahpra definition of cultural safety](#) in the way it has been framed. *Ganngaleh nga Yagaleh* are Yugembeh words gifted to the research team and mean education and training.

This tool has now been used in several health education contexts, including within the Ahpra [Moong-moong-gak: cultural safety training](#) innovation that Professor West has been instrumental in developing through her involvement with Ahpra 's [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Strategy Group](#).

Capacity Development and Community Strengthening:

To date, Professor West has been involved in over 35 publications, and has supervised two PhD and one Masters students to completion. Within her faculty, consisting of 8 schools, over 12,000 students and over 1,000 staff, Professor West has implemented widespread and systematic reform in how First Peoples health is taught.

Her [PhD thesis](#), entitled “Indigenous Australian participation in pre-registration tertiary courses: an Indigenous mixed methods study”, developed a model of excellence to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nurses in Australia.

The findings from her PhD were applied in 2009 in the design of a community based Aboriginal Nursing Program titled “*Tjirtamia*” - which translated means “To Care For”

Contribution to Indigenous Knowledges and research methodologies:

Professor West is the only Aboriginal Nurse nationally to both a recipient of the Congress of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nurses and Midwives (CATSINaM) Sally Gould Award and the CATSINaM Fellowship Award in recognition of her substantial contribution to the nursing and midwifery profession and the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Mucu muccuca are Kalkadoon words that Prof West uses to express her research standpoint. “*Tjirtamia*” is the way she describes the application of the key learnings from her program of research in health workforce reform and particularly in how it underpins the approach being taken in one of the research projects she is currently leading:

Ahpra [Moong-moong-gak: Cultural Safety Training](#). This project focusses on measuring the impact of Cultural Safety Training on systems and individuals within Australia’s health practitioner regulatory system.

As a member of the [Lowitja Institute Research Advisory Committee](#) and a former member of the Lowitja Health Workforce Research Program Committee, Professor West’s contributions have shaped the direction of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research throughout Australia.

In addition her research has been cited in various policy documents, such as [Beyond enrolments: a systematic review exploring the factors affecting the retention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health students in the tertiary education system](#) (2019) and [Australian healthcare governance and the cultural safety and security of Australia's First Peoples: an annual critique](#) (2018). Her research has been cited in First Nations contexts in both Canada and New Zealand.

Professor West's work to build the Indigenous midwifery workforce includes being a Chief Investigator in the NHMRC funded [Indigenous Birthing In An Urban Setting \(IBUS\) Study](#) targeting improvements in Indigenous Maternal Infant Health (MIH) outcomes.

Into the future, Professor West sees the body work she is involved in as moving toward aligning quality and standards in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health care and healing.