

Mapping UNSW Impact Global Development

Primary SDG	10: REDUCED INEQUALITIES
Broad theme	Indigenous identity
Research	Creating a new definition and understanding of Indigeneity, free of colonial terms and ideas
Impact region	Australia
Faculty	Arts and Social Sciences
School/Institute	Social Sciences
Academics	Jessica Russ-Smith
Project partners	UNSW
Related SDGs	4: Quality Education

Elevator pitch

UNSW research is exploring how Indigenous people embody sovereignty in country, lore and language and how it can be applied to rethink the current colonial ways of understanding Aboriginal identity.

The Challenge: Recognition of Indigenous sovereignty and ways of being

Indigenous sovereignty is topical in Australia with dialogue centring on legal, constitutional and treaty methods of recognition. These methods are considered colonial by Indigenous people, and they ignore what sovereignty means to Indigenous people and the way the practice sovereignty already in culture and knowledge sharing.

UNSW's solution: Define identity and experience from an Indigenous perspective

Jessica is seeking to explore the ways in which Indigenous people embody sovereignty through her Wiradyuri ancestry. Taking into account bloodline, language, lore and interrelationships, she is moving beyond legal definitions and colonial ideas of sovereignty to understand what Indigenous sovereignty means in contemporary society. As part of this exploration, she will learn lore and language and how both challenge the colonial methods of Indigeneity.

The Impact: New approach to defining Indigenous sovereignty

Jessica is looking to shift the discourse around Indigenous sovereignty from colonial methods to an approach guided by country, lore and language. She hopes to provide new ground on which Indigenous sovereignty is recognised and celebrated, challenging colonial methods and powers.

Researcher

Jessica Russ-Smith is a Wiradyuri woman and PhD Scientia scholar. This is her PhD research and builds on her honours thesis which she completed as a part of a Social Work degree at UNSW.

Ben Falkenmire 06.11.17