



## International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies

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Editorial

Aileen Moreton-Robinson, Maggie Walter and David Singh

This edition is marked by a strong Antipodean focus. The first three articles bring a critical Indigenous perspective to areas previously cosseted by Western understandings. Robyn Moore, using critical discourse analysis, takes Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard's 2011 'Closing the Gap' speech to task for naturalising Indigenous Australia's position on the wrong side of the social and economic 'gap'. She argues that, far from accepting white culpability, Gillard instead polishes cultural deficit understandings of Indigenous disadvantage by framing the social and economic divide in meritocratic terms. In so doing, Moore further argues, Gillard casts a benevolent light upon white Australia.

Charlotte Craw's article also serves to unsettle notions of white Australian virtue by critiquing the historical and contemporary narratives that attend the consumption of native foods. It was thought previously that native foods had been largely ignored by European settlers and that this indifference was necessary to the colonial project. Craw argues that contemporary consumption of native foods is presented as a way of disavowing past colonial attitudes, so affording a redemptive dividend. However, as Craw demonstrates, the idea of absolution following consumption is flawed as many settlers did, in fact, consume a wide variety of native foods yet still maintained attitudes consistent with the colonial enterprise. Craw succeeds in complicating conventional Australian culinary histories by disputing the idea that contemporary consumption of native foods is a novel practice, and that enlightened consumption is sufficient to mollify a history of injustice.

Kyllie Cripps critically reflects upon the coinage of the term 'best interests' as it is used in Australian child protection policies and procedures, and its particular application in Indigenous contexts. Citing statistics representing the disproportionate number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care, Cripps considers other factors that have impacted upon this state of affairs, including the haste with which interventions are made in Indigenous families in contrast to wider state reluctance to intervene in the private sphere of the 'family'. Cripps concludes with a discussion of more effective ways of supporting Indigenous mothers, families and communities to raise their children in safety.

The final paper, co-authored by Fiona Cram and Hazel Phillips, examines the question of how Māori and *Tauīwi* (non-Māori) researchers might effectively partner with each other in the course of undertaking transdisciplinary research. Crucial to the success of any partnership, both authors argue, is an approach which respects the integrity and aspirations of all parties. The idea of interstitial space, governed by 'community-up' research values, is offered as a middle ground where productive research engagements can be fostered.

### Book Review

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education: An introduction for the teaching profession. Edited by Kaye Price. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2012

Reviewed by David Singh, Research Fellow, Indigenous Studies Research Network, Queensland University of Technology, Australia.