



↳ Indigenous Studies Retweeted



Summer May Finlay @OnTopicAus · Oct 11

The Indigenous presenters at #IDS17 demonstrate why the deficit model is flawed. We have so many capable & experienced ppl. Gov, take note!



Indigenous Data Sovereignty: More than scholarship, it's a movement

Editor: Marie McNerney Author: Jack Latimore on: October 29, 2017

In: #IDS17, health and medical research, health ethics, Healthcare and health reform, Indigenous health, Lowitja Institute, Social determinants of health

There's growing acknowledgement that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have been "resettled" over days of colonisation, yet given little control over or access to data that is collected.

The emerging Indigenous data sovereignty movement asserts that Indigenous peoples across the globe have inherent rights to the collection, ownership and application of data about them and their lands and lives.

In the #LongRead below, Goori researcher, writer and journalist **Jack Latimore** reports for the Croakey Conference on the symposium on Indigenous data sovereignty held in Melbourne, which wants to build momentum in Australia, including in New Zealand like the Maori-led Te Mana Raraunga. You can follow him on Twitter at **@LatimoreJack**.

The symposium was hosted by the **University of Melbourne** in partnership with the **Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies** (AIATSIS). Croakey's coverage was sponsored by the **University of Melbourne**, Australia's national institute for Aboriginal health research.

Jack Latimore reports:

Indigenous data sovereignty may provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with valuable resources to overcome Indigenous disadvantage and realise true self-determination and empowerment, a recent symposium heard.

Hosted over two days, the Indigenous Data Sovereignty symposium at the University of Melbourne brought together representatives of data initiatives from Indigenous communities across Australia with researchers, Indigenous health advocates, government advisors and other data practitioners.

As well as hearing from leading Indigenous Data Sovereignty policy and research "warriors" from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, the two-day event heard from community led projects from the Kimberley in Western Australia to Bourke and Brewarrina in New South Wales that are "doing Indigenous data sovereignty already".

These local examples of project development and governance – and the data yielded within communities – highlighted big gaps in Indigenous data and data sovereignty but also showcased ways to tackle concerns about potential exploitation.

Leading Indigenous academic **Professor Marcia Langton**, one of the convenors, said data sovereignty concerns the people to locally manage their data "with respect to ownership, access, consent, collection, analysis and reporting".

She said there is significant evidence – recognised by the Prime Minister in his 2017 Closing the Gap report – that disadvantage for Indigenous Australians "requires the existence of data that is relevant and of high quality".

"However, the lack of reliable and consistent disaggregated data for Indigenous Australians is striking, resulting in the Indigenous policy-making," she said.

"Data are not neutral statistics"

Keynote speaker **Maggie Walter**, a Palawa woman from north eastern Tasmania and Professor of Sociology and Pro Research and Leadership at the University of Tasmania, told participants that the symposium was important to move data sovereignty forward in Australia.

"It is our data, our way and our right," she said.

"I'm so thrilled to hear from the community groups here," Walter said. "You guys are doing Indigenous data sovereignty already. And it is really heart-warming to see that it is happening."

However, she said there was also bad news implicit in those initiatives, many of which had arisen because of poor data organisations previously.

"As Indigenous peoples, we have long been the subject of data collections," Walter said.



In Australia, she said that has been mostly done by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Census, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Survey (NATSISS), hospitals, schools, legal systems, universities and all the data that is being collected through Indigenous Advancement Strategy programs.

And the private sector is also involved.

“The intent in the way that those data have been gathered and analysed over the years has varied from the benign to the exploitative. What they all have in common is that they have all very rarely been collected by us or for us,” she said.

“And – just as critically – data are not neutral statistics. They are inherently human artefacts and they overtly display the power imbalance between those collecting and analysing those data, and those of us who are their data subjects.”

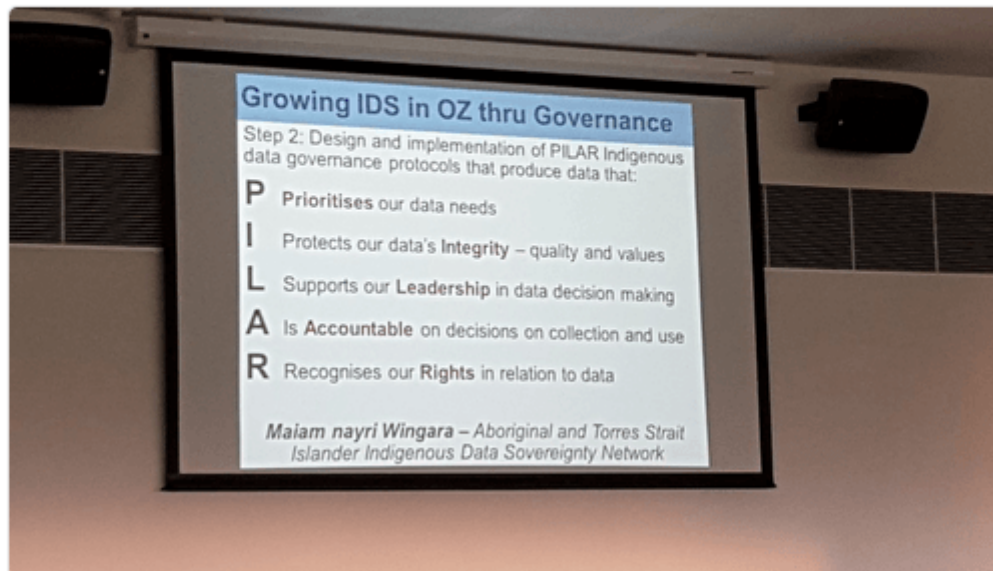
In light of these concerns, symposium organisers and participants are aiming to:

1. develop a nationwide network to empower Indigenous organisations and communities to take advantage of data and maximise the use of their data resources for community benefit
2. increase awareness of the importance of Indigenous data sovereignty for local Indigenous communities, researchers and related stakeholders
3. provide information on custodianship, management of, and reporting and presentation of data, including models
4. outline specific strategies and approaches to make better use of data that Indigenous people already have (for example, the information held by the Indigenous land councils, medical services, legal services etc)
5. provide information on custodianship, reporting and presentation of data.



Andrew Sporle @AASporle · Oct 10

Maggie Walter. Growing data sovereignty through data governance. Start saying no unless robust governance processes in place. #IDS17

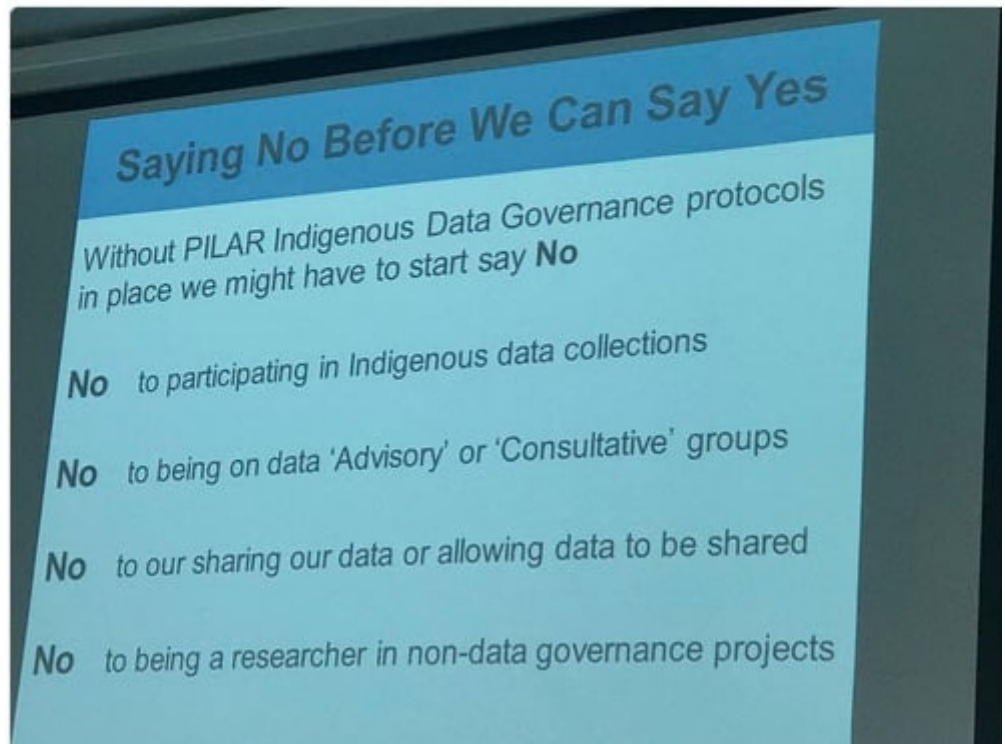




Indigenous Studies Retweeted

Sumner May Finlay @OnTopicalus · Oct 10

"We need to start saying no before we say yes" says Maggie Walter, the current data collection system isn't working for us she said. #IDS17



Data sovereignty cannot be “top-down”

Keynote speakers at the event included **Andrew Sporle**, a researcher in Indigenous statistics at the University of Auckland and Professor of Demography at the University of Waikato.

Both are founding members of the Maori data sovereignty network, Te Mana Raraunga, a model of Indigenous data governance. The convenors of the symposium aim to develop in Australia.

“What we are trying to do in Aotearoa with Te Mana Raraunga is carve out an ultimate vision around our data and our sovereignty and our future and what that might actually look like,” Kukutai said. “It’s about the right of Maori to access, to use, to have governance, to have control over Maori data.”



Kristen D Smith
For Indigenous
in the dark sa

In defining Maori data, Kukutai said there is “a whole multitude of ways of thinking about data”. It involves data sets and infrastructure, she said, but data can also be cultural artefacts or even the location of significant sites. The real challenge is to be able to capture data in a way that is meaningful and that enables communities to be part of it, she said.



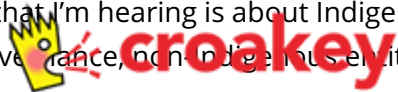
“It’s never going to work as a top-down academic endeavour,” she said. “We absolutely need to work beside our communities in order to do this appropriately.”

That need for community-led data governance and ownership was a common theme emerging from presentations at the symposium, as was the view of data as a tool for realising self-determining aspirations.

With ever-growing cloud-based storage and sharing of data by business, academic institutions, non-government organisations, Kakutai warned that sharing of Indigenous data can be seen as “a new land grab”.

If there are processes and mechanisms around data protection or data governance, they are focused on individual people rather than collective or community ones and therefore deliver no defined benefit to community, she said.

“At the moment, some of the terminology that I’m hearing is about Indigenous data to be shared, to be discovered, to be controlled or owned by non-Indigenous government, non-Indigenous entities, non-Indigenous researchers,” she said.



“There may be rhetoric around benefit to communities, but there’s actually no clear and transparent line of accountability in such a space, Indigenous communities have opportunities to develop processes, principles, structures, networks and are able to be self-determining in this space, she said.

In such a space, Indigenous communities have opportunities to develop processes, principles, structures, networks and are able to be self-determining in this space, she said.



Jack Latimore @LatimoreJack · Oct 10

You know how when people say part of treaty needs to involve reparations for historical exploitation of our natural resources? #IDS17 1/2

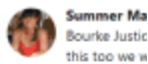


Jack Latimore @LatimoreJack · Oct 10

One of our most valuable resources heading forward is going to be our data. Big business. Get your head into Data Sovereignty now #IDS17

Bourke: “telling a young person’s story”

Skye Bullen, the Community Data Manager from the Maranguka Justice Reinvestment Project in Bourke told the symposium how the Maranguka project uses a community-based participatory research approach to reduce the high rate of Aboriginal children and young people’s offending, reoffending and incarceration in adult prison and youth detention.



Summer Ma
Bourke Justice
this too we w

“Local knowledge in Bourke is a key contributor to making a concrete and constructive difference,” she said.

Bullen said the Bourke Tribal Council has full control of the data that is collected under the Growing Our Kids Up Safe, Smart and Strong strategy that guides the project, the first major justice reinvestment initiative in Australia.

Further vital information is sourced from other community groups such as the Maranguka Youth Advisory Council, The Journey to Healing Women’s Group, and the Men of Bourke.

“These groups actively participate in the data collection process and the results are openly available to them for things like planning, monitoring and evaluation,” she said.

Bullen said that the Maranguka project not only ensured that Aboriginal people in Bourke have the right to maintain, but also govern the direction of the project.

“The first stages of the project focused on building trust between community members and service providers,” she said.

“The data that we collected looked to tell a story about a young Aboriginal person’s journey through the criminal justice system at things such as offending, diversion, bail, sentencing, days and times of offences, and reoffending rates.”

The project also collected data about early life, education, employment, housing, child safety, and health care, including alcohol issues, she said.





Jack Latimore @LatimoreJack · Oct 10

And what did those data sets say? Often not the accurate story about m... that govt puts out, was the gist of today #IDS17



Jack Latimore @LatimoreJack

Spoke briefly w/Skye Bullen from Bourke Justice Reinvestment program. Asked how they got access to govt data sets. Apply&persistence #IDS17

All that information was then fed back to the Bourke Tribal Council which set out an agenda for the Maranguka proje a 'test and trial' approach to determine which activities best drive progress towards the project's goals and targets.

"Using our shared measurement system, we're now going to closely monitor our performance and track the activities necessary," she said.

Bullen believes that the project can drive sustained change in Bourke, but she said success involves the community h define outcomes.

The project is focused on giving community members a platform to define their needs, and for working group memb the information collected. Local organisations must work collaboratively with the community to ensure goals are ach

An online dashboard is currently being developed, to augment other ways that the project reports via social media, q to make sure it continuously reports transparent, relevant and real-time data back to the working groups and comm

"The value that we find in this collaborative approach is the effective mapping of service sector supply and demand, v services," she said. "Most importantly change is in the hands of the Bourke community. This allows us to identify and

Among those early achievements have been a reduction in police cautions, warnings and move-ons, as well as in dri reoffending, and a significant increase in education engagement for the majority of at risk young people.

"Services in Bourke really benefit from this data being shared with them. It ensures that we're unlocking our future to

Algabonyah Data Unit: tracking progress, performance



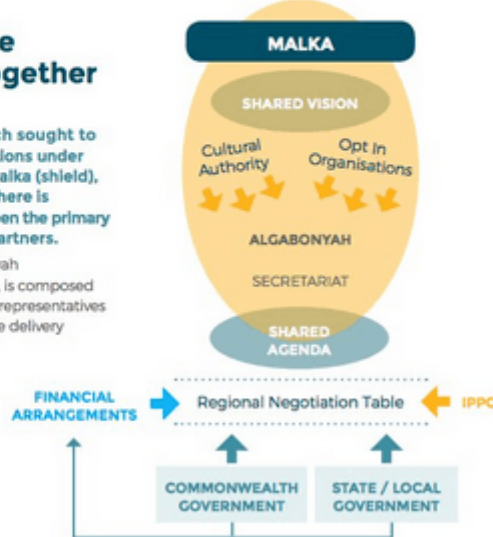
Nikki Moodie @nikki_moodie · Oct 11

Paul Briggs OAM: malka, our shield, is the Algabonyah Community Cabinet, protects our interests in the context of regional governance #IDS17

How we are working together

Our initial approach sought to achieve our aspirations under the safety of the Malka (shield), a platform where there is collaboration between the primary decision-making partners.

The interim Algabonyah Community Cabinet, is composed of opt in community representatives and Aboriginal service delivery organisations.



The interim structure of governance first used to form the ACC is under review. The next round of Community Consultation planned for 2017 will go back to the Goulburn Murray Community to affirm the model of representation.

Specifically, the purpose of consultation will be to reaffirm the direction proposed in the 2006 Community Consultation.

The aim is to build trust and gain community support for a new form of regional Community Governance.



Participants also heard about the Algabonyah Data Unit established last year (as part of the Empowered Communities initiative) in Victoria's Goulburn Murray region, traditional land of the Yorta Yorta people.

Kaiela Institute executive chairman **Paul Briggs** said one of its major pieces of work will be to deliver a comprehensive report on the Algabonyah Community Cabinet, with the first due to be published in December.

The report card will track progress for the local Yorta Yorta community against key indicators and community priorities. It will also track government-funded organisations, to hold the region accountable to the prosperity measures the community is seeking.

"The purpose of the scorecard is to establish what the regional priorities are and to align regional investment and regional priorities," Briggs said.

Briggs said the project was not just focused on Federal Government Indigenous funding but all public and private investment in the region.

"We're talking about the way the region drives its prosperity. We're moving from measuring our deficits into measuring our productivity and prosperity," he said.

"We think that move will also inform the way in which we address Aboriginal health services, legal services, child care services and other resources that we're investing in terms of people and dollars are giving us the returns that we want."

Briggs said a 2009 Access Economics assessment of Shepparton that was commissioned by the Kaiela Institute discovered that if economic parity with non-Indigenous people was achieved, productivity of the town would increase by \$61 million.

That could be a powerful motivator for non-Indigenous people in the region, he said:

“ *If there's nothing else driving non-Indigenous people to look in our direction and to seek to be a part of our economic challenges, there's actually some cash in it.*

You'll sell more cars, you'll sell more houses, you'll sell more pizzas. And that productivity assessment is not just for the whole country, it's just Shepparton itself.”

Briggs said that data had stimulated the business sector and local government to engage more enthusiastically with the Algabonyah Community Cabinet.

"Our region has a GDP of about \$8 billion and integrating Indigenous prosperity measures into regional planning should increase that GDP, as well as what we receive from it," he said.



Marcia Langton @marcialangton · Oct 11
#IDS17 Paul Briggs: We have a right to reinstate our quality of life - dealing with trauma of colonisation & burden of racism



16

20



Jack Latimore @LatimoreJack · Oct 11
Paul Briggs: if nothing else, this should be enough incentive to stimulate thinking of regional govt to engage more enthusiastically #IDS17

Raelene Nixon, a community engagement officer with the Algabonyah Data Unit, told the symposium the Yorta Yorta people have fought for sovereignty as far back as 1988 as a way to disentangle itself from pervasive welfare dependent structures.

It became involved in data processes again in 2006 amid concerns the Australian Bureau of Statistics had under-counted people for that year's national census.



Working with the University of Melbourne's School of Rural Health, the community employed 12 local Aboriginal men which found that the ABS initial count fell 30 per cent short of the region's actual Aboriginal population.

Again in 2009 the Algabonyah Community Cabinet analysed local data sets to ask what worked in Closing the Gap in Goulburn region.

Workshops were held involving Aboriginal community members, representatives from all levels of government, non-academics and members of the non-Indigenous local community, Nixon said.

"We identified data needs for our community, identified the gaps, and with that information started to ask what community structure would look like. At the time 98 per cent of our community were saying that it was important that we have a vision though were split on what that might look like," she said.

The consultations finally led to the creation of the Algabonyah Data Unit.

Its role is to resource the Yorta Yorta community with knowledge in a sophisticated way, and to protect local Aboriginal research, said **Karyn Ferguson**, also a community engagement officer with the unit.

It will also assist in the sustainability of Yorta Yorta culture and identity, and ensure that the local voice is injected into

"We want to measure the things that are important to us, to identify what our priorities are. We want to measure the investment into our region, IAS (Indigenous Advancement Scheme) funding for example, and also what the state government infrastructure, like building new hospitals."

Ferguson said some of the early benefits coming from the work of the unit is that the data now reflects community boundaries from an Aboriginal community lens".

"So, we're talking about Yorta Yorta people on Yorta Yorta country, as opposed to local government boundaries," she

"Also, while we do have the quantitative data and access to those data sets, we'll provide the Aboriginal community local interpretation and analysis to ensure that our voice is across data and research at all times."



Claire @claire_melanie7 · Oct 11

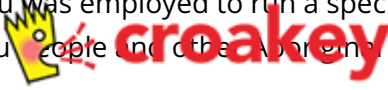
Paul Briggs: Closing the Gap reconceptualised to moving towards pre-invasion quality of life standards #IDS17 #decolonization #resurgence

Yawuru Knowledge and Wellbeing: "I designed it"

The symposium also heard about the Yawuru Knowledge and Wellbeing Project from the Kimberley region of Western Australia which emerged from cultural flaws in ABS national census data.

Eunice Yu of the Kimberley Institute, which set up the project, said a number of accountability issues emerged in 2011 over funding for an Indigenous language agreement signed with the Western Australian Government and the Shire of

"We needed to work out where to get appropriate data from in regard to how many Yawuru people were out there. We broke it down into local language groups," she said.

Three months out from the 2011 Census, Yu was employed to run a specific Yawuru demographic survey, which she numbers about both the number of Yawuru people and the Aboriginal people living in the Broome region. 

“We needed to establish a baseline of information in relation to what Native Title was going to bring to us, and what we would be able to demonstrate as a result of the investment and change in the landscape that we were about to embark on.”

“Further to that we wanted to show that what was important to Yawuru people would actually be able to be demonstrated by the community but across the nation.”

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Romlie Mokak @RMokak · Oct 10

Eunice Yu and Mandy Yap: started from position of mabu liyan; three knowledge pillars strong country, strong culture, strong identity @YawuruAU #IDS17 @LowitjaInstitut @LatimoreJack @WePublicHealth



Like the Algabonyah community-led data initiative, Yawuru people were employed as the research team. The research team interviewed Elders to identify potential data indicators that were important to them.

As over 100 indicators were developed, the project began to evolve into what might represent wellbeing for Yawuru people. A wellbeing survey was conducted.

Project collaborator **Mandy Yap**, a research fellow at the Crawford School of Public Policy at the Australian National University, in partnership with the Yawuru community in Broome, said she knew the research had integrity when she watched a Yawuru member participate in the survey.

“He was answering the questions with his wife, and because it is quite a long survey – we have a hundred questions in it and a bit. And he did it in half an hour because he wanted a race between the husband and wife.

“And the wife said, ‘Well how did you do it so quickly? It took me an hour and a half!’ And he said, ‘Well it is because I designed it, so I knew what I was going to say.’ From my perspective as a researcher, sitting there and hearing that from him needed to know that the research reflected his values and what his thoughts were.”



Summer May Finlay @OnTopicAus

So important for our mob to have data which is useful. This is what the Yawuru Ppl have done. They have measured their own Wellbeing. #IDS17

Ngemba Data Research Hub: “when people don’t have a voice, they grieve”

For **Jason Ford**, a Ngemba man and cultural consultant with Dhirranggal Solutions, the team managing the Ngemba central New South Wales, Indigenous data sovereignty goes hand in hand with nation building.

Having worked in the past with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries and as an Aboriginal Liaison, he realised the significance of data after hearing colleagues talk about collecting information on threatened animal g

“I was really interested because they were talking about collecting this data so that this species could coexist with the Australia,” he said.

“I started thinking about my own people, the Ngemba people, and I said, well they can collect information about the I habitat is, population demographics. Yet for my Ngemba people, I couldn’t find any information about my mob.”

Ford said the project was driven by community concerns about significant Ngemba cultural erasure as a result of the by non-Indigenous institutions such as the ABS, and state, federal and local government bodies, but also Indigenous Aboriginal Land Council, the Native Title Services Corporation and even the region’s own Indigenous Murdi Paaki Reg

There is no quality assurance to current models of governance that control Ngemba data, Ford said. As a result, Ngemba nation boundaries began disappearing off of new maps of traditional nation boundaries in the region.

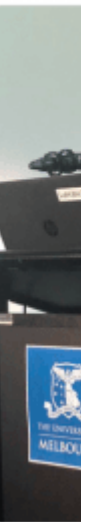
Ford said even the Ngemba name was often not appropriately attributed to the nation’s significant cultural sites, such as the local heritage fish traps.

“There’s been no consultation with the Ngemba Elders and they’re really concerned with this type of behaviour, about having no jurisdiction around data, and how things appear to be headed, without the Ngemba having a voice,” he said.

“When people don’t have a voice they grieve, they grieve.

“And it’s very concerning when you see our people, when they grieve, they start to do things which contribute to poor health, because they’re not being listened to.”

Summer May
“When our pp
the Ngemba p



See links to other community data initiatives:

Wadeye Community Archive Project <http://networkedsociety.unimelb.edu.au/research/projects/ibes/wadeye-iptv>

Queensland National Empowerment Project <https://www.qmhc.qld.gov.au/awareness-promotion/aboriginal-torres-s-initiatives/national-empowerment-project>

You can access a free download of *Indigenous Data Sovereignty: Towards an Agenda*, edited by symposium keynote and **John Taylor**, Emeritus Professor at the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research at The Australian National University. Symposium presenters have also contributed articles to the publication.

You can also view a selection of tweets from the symposium at the @WePublicHealth archive: Week Oct 7

The symposium was convened by: Professor Marcia Langton, Associate Provost, Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies; Professor Shaun Ewen, Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous), Director, Melbourne Poche Centre of Indigenous Health, University of Melbourne; Janet McCalman and Dr Kristen Smith, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health; Dr Nikki Moodie, Melbourne School of Education; and Dr Len Smith, Australian National University.

Jack Latimore writes for Koori Mail and Guardian Australia. He is the daily editor of IndigenousX. His work has previously appeared in Story, Crikey, NITV, SBS, & the ABC.

Croakey

“Conference News Service”

Indigenous Data Sovereignty Sympos