

Public lecture by Professor Anne Poelina

Abstract and Speaker Bios



MACQUARIE
University

Abstract – ‘Ancient Wisdom for Modern Times’

We are Kimberley women elders, who come to share with Martuwarra, RiverOfLife, author, and living ancestor being, creation stories which underpin Kimberley Aboriginal people's lawful, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, and thousands of years of customary practices for Yi-Martuwarra people, the people of the River Country^[1]. The discipline of ‘First Law, Law of the Land and not Law of Man’ looks at how both humans and non-humans can come together to protect the environment for humanity and the world. This multi-species justice approach transcends the usual boundaries of law, science, humanities, culture and nature, and in doing so illustrate the concept of nature-cultures creating a “sympoesis” which enables multiple actors, both human and non-human, to effect change at a national and global level.

Our collaborative efforts of art to science includes music and oration with film, to examine the colonial approaches still in use by government and industry, which are responsible for the ongoing injustices experienced by fellow Australians, Indigenous Australians, our environment, and our non-human kin. However, we see ourselves as we have always, done ‘protecting the commons for our common good’ as ‘one society’ of planetary citizens, working to transform watersheds, globally, seeing cultural flows in all forms of living water as life, critical to sustain humanity within our common home, Mother Earth. We believe this can only be achieved by valuing the wisdom of Indigenous peoples, igniting our dialogic actions through an ethics of care, love, and peace, see www.martuwarra.org.

[1]

RiverOfLife Martuwarra, Poelina, A., & Perdrisat, M. (2024). Ancient wisdom dreaming a climate chance. In A. Pentead, S. P. Chakrabarty, & O. H. Shaikh (Eds.), *Traditional knowledge and climate change: An environmental impact on landscape and communities* (Vol. 1, pp. 3-19). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-8830-3_1 ; Knight, K. N., Poelina, A., & Wooltorton, S. (2024). Regenerative Learning: Hearing Country and Music for Healing People, Place, and Planet. In A. Pentead, S. P. Chakrabarty, & O. H. Shaikh (Eds.), *Traditional Knowledge and Climate Change: An Environmental Impact on Landscape and Communities* (pp. 255-266). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-8830-3_11; Poelina, A., Webb, B., Wooltorton, S., & Godden, N. J. (2024). Waking up the Snake: Ancient wisdom for regeneration. In M. Lobo, E. Mayes, & L. Bedford (Eds.), *Planetary Justice: Stories and Studies of Action, Resistance and Solidarity* (pp. 25-38). Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.51952/9781529235319.ch002>; Anne, Poelina, Donna Bagnall, Mary Graham, Ross Timmulbar Williams, Tyson Yunkaporta, Chels Marshall, Shola Anthony Diop, Nadeem Samnakay, Michelle Maloney, and Davis, M., (2024). *Declaration of Peace for Indigenous Australians and Nature: A Legal Pluralist Approach to First Laws and Earth Laws* (Springer Nature).

Special Guests

Kankawa Nagarra Olive Knight



Kankawa Nagarra (Olive Knight) is a Walmatjarri Elder, international blues and gospel singer-songwriter, teacher and mentor, human rights advocate, and political activist, and a member of the Extinction Rebellion. She has a Bachelor of Applied Science Community Management and Development.

Olive released her third album *Heroes and Laments*; and returned to the stage for her fourth concert tour with Hugh Jackman *Broadway to Oz*.

Professor Anne Poelina



Professor Anne Poelina is citizen Nyikina Warrwa (Indigenous) Nation, PhD, PhD, MEd, MPH&TM, MA. Chair & Senior Research Fellow Indigenous Knowledges Nulungu Institute Research University of Notre Dame, Adjunct Professor, College of Indigenous Education Futures, Arts & Society, Charles Darwin University, Darwin.

Anne is the Murray Darling Basin (MDB) inaugural First Nations appointment to its independent Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences (2022). Visiting Fellow Water Justice Hub at The Australian National University, Canberra. Inaugural Chair of the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council (2018). Co-winner of the Women Taking Climate Action Award, awarded by the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra and the Zonta International District 23 Zonta Says NOW team (2023). Awarded

Kailisa Budevi Earth and Environment Award, International Women's Day (2022) recognition of her global standing.

Ambassador for the Western Australian State Natural Rangelands Management (NRM) (2023). Assistant Commissioner National Water Initiative (NWI), Productivity Commission -Australia (2024). Member of the Commonwealth Department Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water, Indigenous Advisory Committee (2024).

Founding member of the Commonwealth Department Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water, Aboriginal Water Interest Group and the Western Australian government Aboriginal Water and Environment Group (AWEG). In 2017, she was awarded a Laureate from the Women's World Summit Foundation (Geneva). Anne is a Peter Cullen Fellow for Water Leadership (2011).