

New Director for
Centre for Native Title Anthropology
From 1st July 2021

Professor Emeritus David Trigger

From the 1st July 2021, Professor Emeritus David Trigger will takeover as Director for the Centre for Native Title Anthropology. The day to day running of the Centre will remain the responsibility of Dr Julie Finlayson.

David has held chairs of anthropology at both the University of Western Australia and the University of Queensland in his more than 40 years in academic life. His foundational doctoral research, set in the Gulf Country of northern Australia, was a groundbreaking study of relations of resistance and accommodation among Aboriginal people and missionaries that helped move Aboriginalist anthropology towards the study of contemporary intercultural relations and away from an earlier dominant focus on the nature of classical cultures. It resulted in his influential monograph, *Whitefella comin': Aboriginal responses to colonialism in northern Australia* published in 1992 by Cambridge University Press.

David's work is known for its ethnographic breadth ranging from Indigenous systems of land tenure to the meanings attributed to land and nature across diverse sectors of society, including the comparison of pro-development, environmentalist and Aboriginal perspectives on land and nature (see his co-edited volume *Disputed territories: land, culture and identity in settler societies*. Hong Kong University Press, 2003) and the study of 'nature, culture and belonging' in urban city environments. He has a particular interest in the issue of 'nativeness' and 'invasiveness' as understood in both nature and society, with implications for issues of land, cultural identity and environmental management.

Throughout his career David has had a deep involvement in applied anthropological research from Aboriginal land and native title claims, to cultural heritage surveys, and resource development negotiations, as well as appearing in a range of court cases as an expert witness, resulting in more than fifty substantial applied research reports in relation to this work. He has also been a powerful advocate for the theoretical and ethnographic significance of applied work leading to the establishment of an innovative Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Applied Anthropology (Native Title & Cultural Heritage) at the University of Western Australia which was taught largely on line to cater for students working in this area and in 2008 he was awarded a research grant from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department to improve research capacity among young anthropologists working in researching Aboriginal native title cases.

David Trigger was President of the Australian Anthropological Society during 1999-2000 and currently co-chairs with Dr Katie Glaskin the Berndt Research Foundation at UWA. All in all it would be difficult to find a person more committed to dialogue between the academy and those working in the applied field, to furthering the conversation between anthropologists and lawyers and passing on the skills of native title practice.