



MEDIA RELEASE

July 2016

## **Geraldton Universities Centre unveils Birndu Nyina Garden in honour of Aboriginal graduates and award winning students.**

Geraldton Universities Centre unveiled the Birndu Nyina Garden with a NAIDOC Week morning tea on Friday 8 July, from 10.30am-12noon.

Birndu Nyina means to sit quietly in Wajarri language, with the extended title; *Birndu nyinamanha, nganggun-nganggunmanha* meaning to sit quietly thinking, to ponder.

Overlooking Geraldton CBD, the secluded native garden is a commemorative and meeting space celebrating the achievements and contributions of Aboriginal students who have graduated in Geraldton and those that have been awarded scholarships through organisations supporting the Hollomby Foundation.

Featuring a central sitting place where a native tree will grow - shading the area - will be plaques of the names of alumni Aboriginal students, supporting organisations and the scholarship recipients.

"Building aspiration and increasing the numbers of Aboriginal students at GUC to reflect the percentage of Aboriginal people in our wider population is a key aim at GUC. This garden will be a special place for students to come and relax and take in the beautiful surrounds, but also a place to recognise the wonderful achievements of Aboriginal students who have graduated out of programs here" GUC Chair Steve Douglas said.

To date there have been 14 Aboriginal graduates in programs such as Nursing, Social Science, Indigenous Sector Management, Business Accounting, Early Childhood and Primary Education. Over the last 4 years 9 Aboriginal students have been awarded scholarship through the Hollomby Foundation, including recent recipient, Dainira Papertalk, who was awarded the inaugural Ku' Arlu Nursing scholarship and industry placement at the St John of God Hospital Geraldton, as well as the Yanburi scholarship through Sinosteel Midwest Corporation.

Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation is an integral long-term donor through the Hollomby Foundation and has supported scholarships for Aboriginal students, with the current recipient in 2016 being Rianna Pension.

Currently, 18 Aboriginal students are enrolled in programs at GUC across all the programs currently offered; Bridging, Accounting, Business, Education, Engineering Nursing, Psychological Science and Social Work.

GUC acknowledges the financial support from Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community Aboriginal Corporation to host this event during NAIDOC Week 2016, and the language support from Irra Wangga Language Centre.

**Ends** For further information please contact the GUC on 9920 4400



# geraldton universities centre

**Photo Caption:** Tiambra Calvin (GUC Student Support Officer), Ross Oakley (Graduate and Bundiyarra Chair), Paul Brown (MLC, Member for Agricultural Region), Steve Douglas GUC Chair), Natalie Nelmes (GUC Director and Ian Blayney (MP, Member for Geraldton)