VC’s welcome to Inaugural David Unaipon Lecture

Time: 6:30pm – 8:30pm
Date: Monday 18 September, 2017
Place: Kings College, London
• Good evening

• My name is David Lloyd and I am Vice Chancellor and President of the University of South Australia

• and just so that you know a little about us, the Times Higher Education rankings just last week ranked us as one of the top 10 universities in Australia,

• (number nine in fact)

• and the youngest Australian institution in the world’s top 250.

• Just last year we celebrated our 25th birthday so you can appreciate the kind of passion and energy we put in to building a young and vibrant global university.

• We are Australia’s University of Enterprise,
• an institution that values our community engagement as much as we do our teaching and research credentials.

• When we became a university just 26 years ago, our founding legislation committed us to provide the tertiary education programs that we consider appropriate to meet the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

• We were the first Australian university to make a formal commitment to reconciliation,

• and we have worked at building the cultural change, and supporting the projects that will deliver better opportunities and outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff and students and through them, their communities.
Tonight I would like to welcome you all to the inaugural David Unaipon Lecture

presented by my colleague Professor Lester Irabinna Rigney.

Professor Rigney is one of Australia’s most prominent Aboriginal educators and has worked in Aboriginal Education for over 20 years.

Before he joined the University of South Australia he was Dean of Indigenous Education at the University of Adelaide, Director of Wirltu Yarlu Aboriginal Education and the Director of the Yunggorendi First Nations Centre at Flinders University.

A descendant of the Narungga, (NAR UNGA) Kaurna (GARNA) and Ngarrindjeri (GARRIN JERRI) peoples of South Australia, he has a Doctorate PhD by Research and is a Professor of Education.
• His professional standing in education saw him inducted into the Australian College of Educators (ACE) in 1998.

• He is recognised as a national and international authority in the area of Indigenist Research Methodologies.

• Interest in his work by National and International universities has seen him take up several prestigious Visiting Scholar invitations, including
  
  o Cambridge University, here in the United Kingdom;
  o Fort Hare University in South Africa; and
  o the University of British Columbia in Canada.

• His topic tonight, – Decolonizing Pacific Schools: Toward an Australian Culturally Responsive Pedagogy? – will focus on poor educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and the need for new teaching methods.
• He believes that despite Australia promising to fix the ‘curriculum alienation’ and teaching methods, learning outcomes for Aboriginal children have not improved since 2008 when national and state government strategies were implemented in a program called Closing The Gap.

• This was a multifaceted strategy that aimed to reduce disadvantage among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in life expectancy, child mortality, access to early childhood education, educational achievement, and employment outcomes.
• The 2017 report on Closing The Gap targets, according to Lester, shows that Australia has failed on six out of seven key measures to bridge the gap between Indigenous children and other Australians, including child mortality, early childhood education, school attendance, employment, and students’ reading and numeracy skills.

• It is an academic divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student success at school that is an urgent international problem in the Pacific yet there has been no comprehensive review of the teaching methods.

• This is despite a growing body of evidence that shows culturally responsive teaching improves academic success for Indigenous people in countries such as the US, Canada and New Zealand.
• Professor Rigney’s lecture will examine how culturally responsive teaching can be implemented in Australian schools with high student diversity, drawing on the experiences that students bring to school classrooms.

• Please join me in welcoming Professor Lester Irabinna Rigney.