

Menzies youth training Centre honoured with Larrakia name

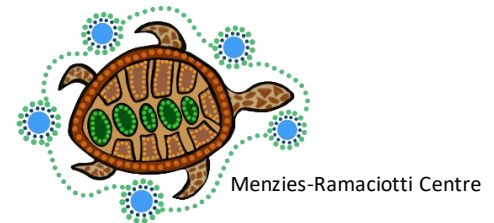
8 July 2024

This afternoon, Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies) staff and students, community collaborators and invited guests will come together for a saltwater ceremony led by Dr Richard Fejo.

Held at Casuarina Beach, this event recognises the gifting of a Larrakia name 'Dawudlirra', (pronounced *Da-wud-lirra*) meaning sea turtle, to the [Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre](#). Coinciding with the start of NAIDOC week, this marks a significant milestone in the Centre's journey.

Provided by Larrakia Elder and Centre Cultural Advisor Dr Richard Fejo and Lynette Fejo, the gifting of this name highlights the Centre's aim to embed Larrakia knowledge, values, and understandings, within a model of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership.

Dawudlirra fits directly with the Centre's logo which shows a turtle on a journey. Designed by Mark Mayo and Zoe Fitzpatrick when the Centre was established, the shapes on the turtle's back represent the Centre's values - equity, reciprocity, self-determination, mutual support and trust. The circles surrounding the turtle highlight the connections between people and how they support and protect an individual on their journey through life.



The Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre was established in 2020 with support from The Clive & Vera Ramaciotti Foundations. The Centre aims to support young Territorians into health pathways, to develop a sustainable, local and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workforce in the Northern Territory (NT).

Since its establishment, the Centre has supported over 200 youth into training, study and employment in health, and engaged with over 4,000 youth and families in regional and remote outreach activities. With funding support from the Ian Potter Foundation commencing this year, the Centre looks forward to continuing to foster a local health workforce in the NT.

The Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre is co-led by:

- Mark Mayo, Menzies Acting Deputy Director First Nations Leadership and Engagement and Melioidosis Program Manager
- Associate Professor Kalinda Griffiths, Poche SA+NT Centre Director, Flinders University; Educational Lead, Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre and Menzies Honorary Research Fellow
- Professor Heidi Smith-Vaughan, Menzies HealthLAB Head and Interim Associate Director (HDR and Ethics).

Both of the Centre's First Nations co-leads, Mark Mayo and Kalinda Griffiths, started their careers in health research as trainees at Menzies. Together, the three co-leads have over 80 person-years' experience in research, training and building workforce capability in the NT at Menzies.

Quotes attributable to Larrakia Elder and Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre Cultural Advisor, Dr Richard Fejo:

"What we as Larrakia people are doing by giving the Centre an Aboriginal name is setting an example to other organisations. 'Dawudlirra' means sea turtle in Larrakia language, and we

incorporate the wisdom of the sea turtle in spirit, in our minds and in our hearts. We honour this sacred totem through our actions.

“A central aspect of reconciliation is the acknowledgement of First Nations languages and placenames. This is about truth telling and how we as a community can support these mechanisms to empower local First Nations people”

Quotes attributable to Menzies Acting Deputy Director First Nations Leadership and Engagement, Melioidosis Program Manager and Co-lead of the Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre, [Mark Mayo](#):

“The gifting of a Larrakia name to the Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre is about elevating culture and seeing that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture is part of the DNA of who we are as Australians. We are sharing our culture, and our culture is being embraced amongst all Australians.

“This is where we are. This is who we are. And we belong to this country.”

Quote attributable to Poche SA+NT Centre Director, Flinders University; Educational Lead, Victorian Comprehensive Cancer Centre; Menzies Honorary Research Fellow and Co-lead of the Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre, [Associate Professor Kalinda Griffiths](#):

“This marks the next step in the development of the Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre - moving toward centering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values and knowledges in the way in which we understand our work and take on the complex challenges affecting regional and remote Australia.”

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Menzies School of Health Research

Menzies is one of Australia’s leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and a leader in global and tropical research. Menzies continues to translate research into effective partnerships and programs in communities across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

About the Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre Logo co-creators:

Mark Mayo is a descendent of the Gurindji (Aboriginal), from the Northern Territory, and Mabuiag and Badu (Torres Strait Island) people, from Queensland. Mark is Menzies Acting Deputy Director First Nations Leadership and Engagement, Melioidosis Program Manager and Co-lead of the Menzies-Ramaciotti Centre. Zoe Fitzpatrick is a Yanyuwa, Garrwa, Wambya, and Wanyi woman from Borroloola in the NT, a former trainee of Menzies, and nursing graduate.