



**The Anthropological Society of South Australia invites you to attend the 2016
Norman Tindale Memorial Lecture**

*Anthropology to the rescue!
Australian anthropology's pursuit of social and academic impact in the era of native title*

by

Dr Pamela McGrath

- Where:** Flinders in the City, Room 1 (182 Victoria Square [the old Reserve Bank Building]) - enter from Flinders Street or Victoria Square)
When: Friday, 12th of August, 6:00-8:00pm
What: Drinks and nibbles will be provided
RSVP: Amy Roberts (amy.roberts@flinders.edu.au)
Cost: Gold Coin Donation

Abstract

In many respects, Norman B. Tindale was the quintessential public anthropologist. A tireless fieldworker who was trained on the job, he had wide-ranging intellectual interests and was interdisciplinary long before the term was invented. He had an awesome publication record but also exerted considerable influence outside of the academy. He wrote newspaper articles and children's books, made films, gave public lectures, and helped shape law and government policy. In short, 'Tinny' was everything that the anthropologists of today are expected to be: an engaged, enlightened and influential expert.

Decades later, much of the discourse around the current state of Australian anthropology suggests many of us are overwhelmed by the challenge of achieving this balance between scholarly success and public relevance that Tindale made seem so effortless. Drawing on findings from a recent survey of national practice conducted by the Australian Anthropological Society, this lecture takes a look at what we currently know about the state of our discipline and our ongoing struggle to prove our worth, from the fundamentals of who we are and what we do, to more thorny questions of moral action and social impact. The survey confirms that anthropology in Australia today remains a broad church, but one that is lacking both collegiality and unified sense of purpose. As one respondent put it, 'We are our own worst enemies'.

Nowhere are these tensions about our responsibilities to society and each other more apparent than in the realm of native title. Arguments between anthropologists about the role of anthropologists in native title claims have, I argue, dominated discourse to the detriment our collective ethnographic curiosity about the social phenomenon of native title itself, undermining our potential to influence this important area of social policy.

Biography

Pamela Faye McGrath is Research Director at the National Native Title Tribunal. An applied anthropologist by profession, Pamela is also a historian of Indigenous-settler engagements on some of Australia's most remote desert frontiers and recently published an account of filming and photography during the 1935 Board of Anthropological Research expedition to the Warburton Range. Pamela has been involved with native title research, policy analysis and teaching for over 15 years. She has led and convened many collaborative research projects, seminars and professional development initiatives in the areas of knowledge management, Indigenous heritage and future acts, and PBC governance. Pamela currently holds the office of President of the Australian Anthropological Society.

Supported by:

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