

## **The Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive**

The Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University was established as an independent research centre in 1994 and formally disestablished in 2012. The Centre for Women's Studies has continued in various iterations through to the present day. This archive records the many contributions of the Centre to the scholarly life of James Cook University and to the local feminist community.

The archive includes a range of formal and informal documents that exemplify the activities of the Centre for Women's Studies. The collection also features several interviews with women who contributed to the establishment of the Centre and highlights the sustained impact and value of the Centre for Women's Studies for university staff, students, and community members. The archive records the ways in which the Centre for Women's Studies was able to provide an important space, both within the university and more broadly in the community, where interdisciplinary feminist knowledge and research was highly valued and supported. The volume and quality of post-graduate research projects, many receiving national recognition and success, attests to this claim. The importance of linking with, and contributing to, the local community through vibrant national and international feminist events is highlighted as an important strategy, in sustaining the influence of the Centre for Women's Studies over a significant period.

The archive also documents the many challenges confronted by those involved in the Centre for Women's Studies including, but not limited to, the ongoing and sustained pressure to dilute and temper the focus on women by expanding the title of the Centre and its purpose to include all gender issues. The documents and interviews included in the archive describe the processes of resistance various women engaged in as they fought to preserve the women-centred focus of the Centre. One important aspect of this preservation was the integration of the Centre for Women's Studies into the social work discipline where it remains an entity long after the formal cessation of funding.

Much of the work in creating this archive was made possible by a generous bequest from Ginni Hall (1932–2020), senior lecturer in Social Work, past Director of the Centre for Women's Studies, and highly respected local feminist.

***Archive Location:***

***Folder Series located at Mabo Library, Library Archives Room 82L***

***Interview Series located in NQHeritage@JCU, see URLs in listing.***

**Detailed Listing:**

**CWS/F01 Folder 1: Establishment Documents 1993**

The establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies formally commenced in 1993 with the submission of documentation to the James Cook University Academic Board by the Centre for Women's Studies Establishment Committee. This folder includes a range of the documentation and support statements that record the establishment process. The video interview with **Dr Betty McLellan** and the audio interview with **Emeritus Professor Ros Thorpe** provide further insight.

**Folder Contents:**

- Item 1(a): Conversation with Professor Carmen Luke, First Director of Centre for Women's Studies, about the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 1(b): Overview and Rationale for the Establishment of James Cook University Centre for Women's Studies presented to Academic Board in 1993.
- Item 2: Draft Establishment document for the Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 3: Final Establishment document
- Item 4: Overview of Women (and/or Gender) Studies at James Cook University submitted to Academic Board in support of the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 5: Draft Budget for Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 6: Results of Women's Studies Unit student survey submitted to Academic Board in support of the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 7: Register identifying Australian Universities offering courses relevant to women's studies in 1993
- Item 8: Letter of support from 'Men Against Sexual Assault' (MASA) in support of the establishment of Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 9: Discussion paper authored by Peter Jones in support of the establishment of Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 10: Feedback from JCU Faculties regarding the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 11: Response from Centre for Women's Studies Establishment committee to feedback from JCU Faculties

- Item 12: Memo from Carmen Luke briefing colleagues in preparation for the presentation to Academic Board 1/11/93
- Item 13: Notes for a presentation responding to Academic Board concerns about the establishment of Centre for Women's Studies

**CWS/F02 Folder 2: Inauguration Documents 1994**

The Inauguration of the Centre of Women's Studies took place on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1994. This folder includes a range of documentation related to that Inauguration celebration.

**Folder Contents:**

- Item 14: Invitation to become a foundation member of Centre for Women's Studies from inaugural Director, Carmen Luke
- Item 15: Mailing list of potential foundation members
- Item 16: Letter appointing Ros Thorpe to the position of Deputy Director of Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 17: Invitation to Vice Chancellor to open Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 18: Memo to Denese Gray (Equal Opportunity Coordinator) from VC office requesting Denese write opening remarks for Vice Chancellor
- Item 19: Memo thanking Vice Chancellor for agreeing to make opening remarks
- Item 20: Flyer announcing Centre for Women's Studies Public Inauguration lectures by Professor Robyn Rowland
- Item 21: List of Attendees at Centre for Women's Studies Inauguration
- Item 22: Opening remarks by JCU Vice Chancellor at opening of Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 23: Announcement of formal establishment of Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 24: Invitation to Denese Gray to become member of Centre for Women's Studies Advisory Committee
- Item 25: Denese Gray acceptance of invitation to join Centre for Women's Studies advisory committee

**CWS/F03 Folder 3: Early Years – Administration Documents**

This folder includes examples of the documentation relevant to planning and administration of the Centre for Women's Studies from 1994-1999. This includes documents related to degree development and specific strategies aimed at increasing women's participation in university life. The video interviews with **Dr Gina Mercer and Emeritus Professor Ros Thorpe** further discuss the priorities and challenges confronted by the Centre from 1994-1999.

### **Folder Contents:**

- Item 26: Draft Strategic Plan of Centre for Women's Studies, October 1994
- Item 27: Newsletter, May 1995
- Item 28: Documentation related to attendance at UN Beijing Women's Conference
- Item 29: Centre for Women's Studies Postgraduate Award Structures, 1993
- Item 30: Documentation related to rule amendments to Masters of Women's Studies Coursework, 1999
- Item 31: Centre for Women's Studies Directors Report, 1994
- Item 32: Centre for Women's Studies Directors Report, 1995
- Item 33: Centre for Women's Studies Advisory Committee minutes 1996

### **CWS/F04 Folder 4: Handbooks**

This folder contains handbooks, student resources and website content from The Centre for Women's Studies from 1995 – 2006.

### **Folder Contents:**

- Item 34: Centre for Women's Studies Handbook 1995
- Item 35: Centre for Women's Studies Handbook 1996
- Item 36: Centre for Women's Studies Handbook 1997
- Item 37: Centre for Women's Studies Handbook Generic
- Item 38: Centre for Women's Studies Program Brochure
- Item 39: Centre for Women's Studies, Tips for Mature Age Women Students
- Item 40: Hard copy of Centre for Women's Studies website, 2007

### **CWS/F05 Folder 5: General Administration Documents, 2004 – 2012**

This folder includes documents that describe events and administrative tasks related to the Centre for Women's Studies from 2004 – 2012 including the many celebratory and scholarly events that occurred under the auspices of the CWS during this period. The final document in this folder is the application to establish the Centre for Women's Studies as a Level 1 or Level 2 Research Centre. This application was unsuccessful and subsequently the Centre for Women's Studies was formally disestablished by James Cook University in 2012. This period in the history of the Centre is also discussed in the video interview with **Professor Debra Miles**.

### **Folder Contents:**

- Item 41: Role Description of Director of Centre for Women's Studies
- Item 42: Status of Centre for Women's Studies 2006
- Item 43: Women's Studies Bursary Fund
- Item 44: Statement of Achievements and Strengths of the Centre for Women's Studies, 2006
- Item 45: Centre for Women's Studies Schedule of Events, 2006
- Item 46: Invitation to a celebration of Women's Studies at JCU
- Item 47: Application to establish Centre for Women's Studies as a formal Research Centre, 2012. This application was unsuccessful.

### **CWS/F06 Folder 6: Reflections from Women's Studies' Students**

Included in this folder are reflections from an international post-graduate student and an under-graduate student cohort undertaking courses offered through Centre for Women's Studies. The importance and ongoing impact of the Centre for Women's Studies courses) is highlighted in video interviews with past students, **Dr. Ryl Harrison and Elodie Oxenham**.

### **Folder Contents:**

- Item 48: Paper presented at International Women's Conference, 2002 – Revolution in the Classroom- Understanding the transformation of women's studies students to a feminist identity
- Item 49: Guided reflection with Relyn Elbanbuena (Norbe), Centre for Women's Studies masters student 2001

### **CWS/F07 Folder 7: Centre for Women's Studies resources and subject content examples**

This folder includes examples of women's studies course descriptions, subject lists, subject outlines, and undergraduate and postgraduate subject content. It includes a list of Women's Studies' and Feminist Research Theses titles and authors. The impact of women's studies as an academic discipline is extrapolated further in the interview with **Sandra Croaker**.

### **Folder Contents:**

- Item 50: Post Graduate Subject Listing 2009
- Item 51: Example of Women's Studies research interests
- Item 52: Post Graduate Research Degrees' Flyer

- Item 53: Centre for Women's Studies subject resources – Video List
- Item 54: Undergraduate subjects relevant to Women's Studies
- Item 55: Example of WC:1001 Australian Women's Studies subject outline, 2005
- Item 56: WC1001 Australian Women's Studies Distance Education Study Guide, 1999
- Item 57: WC5003 Advanced Women's Studies Distance Education Study Guide, Module One, 1999
- Item 58: WC5003 Advance Women's Studies Distance Education Study Guide, Module Two, 1999
- Item 59: WC5003 Advance Women's Studies Distance Education Study Guide, Module Three, 1999
- Item 60: WC5001 Introduction to Women's Studies subject outline, 2002
- Item 61: Women's Studies' and Feminist Post-Graduate Research Theses titles and authors (1997-2024) in the disciplines of Women's Studies, Social Work and Social Policy.

### **CWS/F08 Folder 8: Community Engagement**

This folder includes examples of the diverse community engagement activities undertaken by the Centre for Women's Studies including conference programs, visiting scholar presentations, feminist-in-residence reflections and a journal article documenting the story of the Centre. The interviews with **Associate Professor Nonie Harris and Dr Joanne Baker** highlight the central nature of this community engagement to the outcomes achieved by the Centre for Women's Studies at JCU.

#### **Folder Contents:**

- Item 62: Reflections of Coralie Mclean, Centre for Women's Studies' Feminist-in-Residence, 1998.
- Item 63: Centre for Women's Studies Schedule of Events, 2006
- Item 64: Flyer for presentation by Professor Cressida Hayes, Centre for Women's Studies Visiting Scholar, 2006.
- Item 65: Documentation regarding Dr. Cindy Davis, Centre for Women's Studies Visiting Scholar, 2007
- Item 66: Harris, N. & Baker, J. (2008) Connecting Collaborating and Surviving: The Story of a Women's Studies Centre in the Australian Tropics. Outskirts, Volume 19.
- Item 67: Advanced Notice Flyer, Winter Institute for Women, 2004
- Item 68: Reclaim the Night speech, Nonie Harris, 2009
- Item 69: Information regarding International Women's Conference, 2012

Item 70: Book of Abstracts and Conference Program, International Women's Conference, 2012

**CWS/F09 Folder 9: Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive Project, 2022-2024: Stage One - Rehoming the "Ginni Hall Collection" (Centre for Women's Studies Library)**

The process to archive the unique history of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University began with a project to preserve and rehome the Centre's feminist library; work made possible through a bequest from past Director, Ginni Hall OAM. This folder includes reflections on that process and a catalogue of the library collection.

**Folder Contents:**

- Item 71: Speech by Nonie Harris at the Rehoming Celebration, 2023
- Item 72: Reflections by Coralie McLean - Making the Library Re-homing happen, 2022-2023
- Item 73: Invitation to Library Re-homing at Townsville Women's Centre
- Item 74: Biographical summary, Ginni Hall OAM.
- Item 75: Library catalogue, "The Ginni Hall Collection" (Centre for Women's Studies Library) now housed at Townsville Women's Centre

**CWS/F10 Folder 10: Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive Project, 2022-2024; Stage Two - Creating and launching the archive**

This folder records the creation of the Centre for Women's Studies at JCU Archive. The folder includes reflections on the project and documents related to the launch of the archive. The folder includes video memories of the archive launch celebration in 2024, thirty years after the inauguration of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University.

**Folder Contents:**

- Item 76: Launch of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive – MC Notes. Professor Debra Miles as MC.
- Item 77: Launch of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive – Welcome from Professor Jenny Seddon, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research.
- Item 78: Launch of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive – JCU Women's Studies Program 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Women's Studies Matters. Speech by Carmen Luke.

- Item 79: Launch of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive – Archive launch speech. Speech by Associate Professor Nonie Harris.
- Item 80: Launch of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive – High Expectations, Low Resources. Speech by Emeritus Professor Ros Thorpe.
- Item 81: Launch of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive – Presentation script. Speech by Bronwyn McBurnie, Manager, Special Collections, James Cook University Library.
- Item 82: Launch of the Centre for Women's Studies at James Cook University Archive held by JCU Library Special Collections – Video. Available online at <https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/984/>

### **The Centre for Women's Studies at JCU Interview Series**

#### **Interview 1: Dr Joanne Baker**

Dr Joanne Baker was Director of the Centre for Women's Studies from 2007 to 2009. Joanne discusses the purpose and impact of the Centre for Women's Studies. She describes the challenges she faced in keeping women central to work of the Centre and the many vibrant community events made possible through the collaborative processes of the Centre for Women's Studies.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/978/>

#### **Interview 2: Ms Sandra Croaker**

Ms Sandra Croaker was the lecturer in the undergraduate subject Australian Women's Studies which was offered under the auspice of the Centre for Women's Studies. Here Sandra discusses the value of learning about the core concepts in women's studies. She highlights the value of a feminist lens in understanding women's individual lives and the position of women in society.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/972/>

#### **Interview 3: Associate Professor Nonie Harris**

Associate Professor Nonie Harris was Director of the Centre for Women's Studies from 1999 to 2006. Nonie talks about the Centre's challenges and opportunities at that time and, particularly, the benefit of collaborating with the Townsville feminist community.



<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/976/>

#### Interview 4: Dr Ryl Harrison

Dr Ryl Harrison was an undergraduate and postgraduate Women's Studies' student. Ryl speaks in detail about the impact of her education on her role as a JCU Strategic Policy Advisor. Ryl notes that the Centre lives on in the DNA and fabric of JCU.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/971/>

#### Interview 5: Dr Ryl Harrison

Dr Ryl Harrison was an undergraduate and postgraduate Women's Studies' student. Ryl speaks in detail about the impact of her education on her role as a JCU Strategic Policy Advisor. Ryl notes that the Centre lives on in the DNA and fabric of JCU.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/975/>

#### Interview 6: Dr Betty McLellan

Dr Betty McLellan was a community member of the Centre for Women's Studies' Establishment Committee in 1993 and 1994. Betty talks about the importance of collaboration between women in the community and women in the academy, and the history of this collaborative engagement.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/974/>

#### Interview 7: Dr Gina Mercer

Dr Gina Mercer was Director of the Centre for Women's Studies in 1996. Gina discusses the early years of the Centre, emphasising the importance of positive JCU senior management support. Gina explores the impact of neo-liberalism on the Centre and the Centre's consequent move from independent entity to its location within the Department of Social Work and Community Welfare.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/970/>

#### Interview 8: Professor Debra Miles

Professor Debra Miles was Director of the Centre for Women's Studies from 2010 to 2013. Debra reflects on the issues and challenges in maintaining the Centre for Women's Studies highlighting the value and impact of the Centre for different women.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/977/>

Interview 9: Ms Elodie Oxenham

Ms Elodie Oxenham was an undergraduate Women's Studies' student. Elodie reflects on what it meant to be enrolled in an undergraduate tertiary subject that focussed on the experiences of women and provided her with a feminist foundation for making sense of the world.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/969/>

Interview 10: Emeritus Professor Ros Thorpe

Emeritus Professor Ros Thorpe was Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the time of the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies in 1994. In this video Ros discusses the formal establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies and the impact for James Cook University staff, students and community.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/973/>

Interview 11: Emeritus Professor Ros Thorpe

Emeritus Professor Ros Thorpe was Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the time of the establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies in 1994. In this video Ros discusses the formal establishment of the Centre for Women's Studies and the impact for James Cook University staff, students and community.

<https://nqheritage.jcu.edu.au/979/>