

Ms Jen **Puch-Bouwman**

Charles Darwin University

Stream D: Indigenous Futures and Cultural Response

Title: Epistemic Colonialism: non-western Knowledges in the Academy

Abstract: Colonialism has exacted an extremely high toll on colonised nations, and its aftermath is still around us worldwide. It has affected not only lands, livelihoods and bodies but also cultures, customs, identities and knowledge systems. Related to cultural colonialism are issues of epistemic colonialism, i.e. the loss, destruction, marginalisation or belittling of non-western knowledge systems. In addition, the recent global, neoliberal turn is privileging specific epistemic notions, ideologies and practices while further marginalising others. Universities and the academy are active agents in these processes, and scholars from Indigenous and marginalised nations lament an ongoing academic imperialism and the resulting academic dependency. Indigenous and other non-western knowledges are often enclosed and need to comply within eurocentric academic systems. Decolonising the university is an arduous task that requires awareness, action and cooperation of Indigenous, non-western scholars and western allies. This paper outlines a few directions for such decolonising action in relation to the geo-politics of global academic knowledge production.

Bio: My name is Jen Puch-Bouwman and I am a Lecturer in Psychology in the College of Health and Human Sciences at CDU. I specialise in social, cultural and community psychology. I am interested in human wellness, promoting recovery in mental health, theory and critique in psychology, colonialism and knowledge recovery. More specifically, my work examines the interactions of western knowledges with non-western knowledges and cultures, and the richness of cultures. My main interest is in acts of rectification and healing for colonial, intercultural and other global, community and individual issues. When not at work, I can be found in community and arts projects and in poetry readings.