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## Dharawal ceremony digitalised

By ANGELA THOMPSON

SADNESS at the "tack-on" status of ceremonies acknowledging the Illawarra's traditional landowners has inspired a new digital presentation.

The four-minute presentation of still photographs set to didgeridoo music is intended to give greater meaning to the "Acknowledgement of Dharawal Country" speeches that have become customary at the region's formal and political events.

It was developed with grant money from the University of Wollongong and unveiled on campus last night.

The brainchild of the indigenous project officer for the Faculty of Commerce, Jade Kennedy, it is intended to bring meaning to the acknowledgement ceremonies, which he said had become a "by-the-by" part of the region's officialdom.

"I'm a very proud Aboriginal man and I'm saddened that we've turned it into a practice that no longer reflects the meaning and significance of this custom," said Mr Kennedy, the son of well-known Sandon Point Aboriginal Tent Embassy identity Roy "Dootch" Kennedy.

"I feel it's become one of those things we feel like we have to tack on," he admitted.

"I'm trying to get all of us to slow down and truly recognise what this Aboriginal practice means."



**Meaning:** The presentation's creator, Jade Kennedy (right), with Susie Pratt and a mural prepared as part of the project. Picture: ORLANDO CHIODO

The presentation was made with a \$6500 community engagement grant from the university, plus an undisclosed sum from the Faculty of Commerce.

The photos are intended to comment on country, culture, kinship, journey and connectedness.

Mr Kennedy consulted Aboriginal elders and community members on the presentation content.

He chose still photographs instead of moving pictures so the images could be replaced with new ones over time, "as our relationship with the Aboriginal community grows and we're given

more insight into what sits behind these concepts".

Dharawal is the indigenous language group covering the Illawarra.

More than 100 people from indigenous groups and the university turned out for last night's launch.

The presentation is

accompanied by guidelines on how a speaker should go about delivering the acknowledgement of Dharawal Country to the pictures and music.

Its creators hope the presentation will be used at the university's student orientation ceremonies, graduations and other major events.