

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research

PEOPLE ON COUNTRY, HEALTHY LANDSCAPES AND INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC FUTURES

2012 ANNUAL REPORT

College of Arts and Social Sciences
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200

The CAEPR Mission

To undertake multidisciplinary social science research on Indigenous policy and development that is excellent by the best international and disciplinary standards and that informs intellectual understanding, public debate, policy formation and community action.

The CAEPR Vision

To set the standard of excellence in research, education and community engagement on Indigenous policy and development.

Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
Research School of Social Sciences
College of Arts and Social Sciences
Copland Building #24
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200

Telephone: +61 2 6125 0587
Facsimile: +61 2 6125 9730
Web: caepr.anu.edu.au

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The Australian National University

Compiled and edited by Annick Thomassin, CAEPR.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACEAS	Australian Centre of Ecological Analysis and Synthesis
AEGN	Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network
ANU	Australian National University
ARC	Australian Research Council
BAC	Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation
CASS	College of Arts and Social Sciences
CAEPR	Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CSIRO	Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
ESA	Ecological Society of Australia
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
KKL	Karrkad-Kandji Limited
NAILSMA	North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance
NATSISS	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey
NERP	National Environmental Research Program
NLC	Northern Land Council
NRETA	Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (Northern Territory)
NRM	Natural Resource Management
PoC	People on Country research project
RSSS	Research School of Social Sciences (ANU)
SEWPaC	Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
SRAC	Six Rivers Aboriginal Corporation
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
UNSW	University of New South Wales
VIF	Visiting Indigenous Fellowship
WALFA	West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement
WoC	Working on Country

INTRODUCTION

The People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures (PoC) action research project—which came to an end on 31 December 2012—focused on exploring the links between Indigenous wellbeing, natural resource management and new resource-based development opportunities in Indigenous communities in the Top End and Gulf Country of the Northern Territory. From its inception, the project was generously supported by the Sidney Myer Fund, the Australian National University (ANU) and the Australian Research Council (ARC).

Since 2008, People on Country's work has mainly centred on Indigenous Protected Areas and the federal government's Working on Country program, documenting the direct and indirect social and economic benefits associated with Indigenous land and sea management. Results of the monitoring activities over the past five years highlight the positive impact of the different fire abatement programs and feral animal management strategies used by the project partners, as well as the high biodiversity values of the regions studied.

While the project has come to an end after five years of productive research in collaboration with local partners, elements will live on through various projects carried by current PoC staff Jon Altman, Seán Kerins, Emilie Ens, Elisabeth Yarbakhsh, Annick Thomassin and new recruit Francis Markham. They will also continue to work with a number of our ranger partners, with support mainly provided by National Environmental Research Program (NERP), the ARC, and the ANU.

During 2012, much of the team's effort was devoted to a lasting legacy in the form of a book, *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, which features contributions from all participating partners and researchers. Two aims of the People on Country project were to inform the Australian public about the Caring for Country movement and to empower our community-based partners to carry their message to government and wider public. We believe that as a final outcome this book and the tour promoting it helped fulfil this dual goal.

Since its publication in October 2012, the book has attracted significant media coverage and buyer interest which augur well for dissemination of its key messages. In his end-of-project evaluation report, Dr Dermot Smyth noted that *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures* is 'a 2012 literary time capsule that will be used as a benchmark to judge progress in this field in succeeding decades'. In a recent review published in the *Indigenous Law Bulletin* (December 2012), Tim Rowse described the book as 'a vitally important contribution to that debate'.

In 2011–12, Dermot Smyth, author of the 2010 independent review of PoC project (see <caepr.anu.edu.au/poc/research/reports.php>) was commissioned again by the Sidney Myer Fund to undertake an end-of-project evaluation (see Annex 1). Published in November 2012, his report positively concludes: ‘The People on Country project has demonstrated the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary, action research project that combines the expertise and commitments of researchers with the knowledge, cultural obligations and aspirations of Indigenous partners’.

This 2012 Annual Report will be the last produced by the People on Country project team. We sincerely thank all our partners for collaborations and all those with whom the project has interacted in the Northern Territory, New South Wales and Canberra for their interest and participation. We especially thank our philanthropic sponsor, the Sidney Myer Fund, without whose financial support over the past five years this project would have been impossible. The Sidney Myer Fund took a risk, we hope our project has fulfilled their expectations.

RESEARCH AIMS

Since its commencement in 2008, a core objective of the People on Country project was to assist Indigenous land and sea managers to build an evidence base on how their activities contribute to Indigenous wellbeing and to the health of land and sea country. Working in partnership with traditional owners and their land and sea management organisations, the PoC project aims were to benefit Indigenous land and sea managers and strengthen Indigenous land and sea management by making influential contributions towards:

- an evidence base on the environmental outcomes from Indigenous land and sea management initiatives;
- an evidence base on the links between Indigenous land and sea management and community wellbeing;
- assisting Indigenous land and sea managers in making their voices heard in national debates on issues such as climate change, fresh water availability, fire management, wildlife use, and cultural and natural resource management;
- providing, when opportunities arise, input into government policy development to recognise and support traditional owners caring for land and sea country;
- attracting greater government, private and philanthropic investment in Indigenous land and sea management initiatives;
- building the capacity of Indigenous land and sea managers, through the learning of new skills and practices and promoting empowering relationships.

THE RESEARCH TEAM

The PoC project team members comprised a small multidisciplinary group with capabilities in social and biophysical sciences and in the development of online multimedia resources.

In 2011–12, PoC team members were as follows:

PROFESSOR JON ALTMAN

Jon has been the PoC Project Leader for the entire duration of the project. He was the Director of CAEPR from 1990–2010. He is currently the recipient of an ARC Australian Professorial Fellowship (Project No. DP0877549) working on a five-year project—‘Hybrid economic futures for remote Indigenous Australia: Linking poverty reduction and natural resource management’—that is closely linked with the PoC project. Jon is co-leading a National Environmental Research Program (NERP) ‘Northern Australian Hub’ project on Indigenous natural resource management and livelihoods with Sue Jackson from CSIRO. Beginning in October 2011, this project also builds on research carried out on the PoC project, with work to continue to 2015 with some of the PoC partners.

Jon has maintained vibrant and diverse research relations within the Arnhem Land region for over 30 years. He has also undertaken field research in north Queensland, the Torres Strait, the Kimberleys and Central Australia. Jon’s research interests include: sustainable economic development in Indigenous Australia; Indigenous people’s engagement with national and global economies; commercial utilisation of wildlife and fisheries; the Indigenous customary sector and its articulations with the market and the state; and land rights, native title and Indigenous land and sea management.

DR SEÁN KERINS

Seán came to CAEPR at the end of 2007 to work on the PoC project as a Research Fellow. For the five years prior he worked at the Northern Land Council (NLC) in Darwin as Executive Officer of the Caring for Country Unit. In this role Seán assisted Indigenous land and sea management groups to develop land and sea management plans, secure funding and training opportunities, and lobby government to increase funding for Caring for Country projects. He has also worked for 10 years on sea rights with Māori in New Zealand and with Faroese whaling communities.

DR EMILIE ENS

Emilie joined the project team in July 2008 as a Post-Doctoral Fellow and in 2010 was promoted to Research Fellow. Emilie is an ecologist whose previous research focused on understanding the ecology and impacts of invasive species with the aim of guiding land management practices. Her research for the PoC project centred on the establishment of monitoring programs that quantify the ecological outcomes of Indigenous land management activities. These programs have been developed with ranger groups and have included monitoring the impacts of feral ungulates and the outcomes of management effort, the development of local herbaria, frog surveys, ethnobotanical research, recording traditional ecological knowledge and extensive use of technologies such as CyberTracker.

DR BILL FOGARTY

Bill joined the PoC team in July 2011 to examine education and training issues associated with Indigenous land and sea management. In April 2012, he became Research Associate at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS) where he continues to research the relationship between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems and the development of sustainable education and employment pathways in remote communities, as well as the role of education and knowledge in society more generally.

MS GILLIAN TOWLER

Gill has over 15 years botanical experience curating and developing the preserved collections of the National Herbarium of New South Wales and living collections of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. She recently completed a temporary appointment at the Centre for Australian National Biodiversity Research in Canberra working on the Australian Plant Census, an online resource providing a nationally-agreed list of scientific names for native and naturalised vascular plants in Australia. Gill has provided technical and field support on a number of plant systematics and ecological research projects. She joined Emilie Ens in 2009 to assist with biodiversity monitoring training and ethnobotanical recording as part of the People on Country Project.

MS ELISABETH YARBAKSH

Elisabeth joined CAEPR in February 2012. As a Research Assistant she has provided support for the PoC and NERP projects. Much of her focus over the past months has been on preparing the book *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures* which went to press in September 2012. Elisabeth has a background in anthropology, having completed her Honours at ANU in 2011.

Ms ANNICK THOMASSIN

Annick is a PhD candidate from the Department of Anthropology at McGill University who has been a visiting student at CAEPR since March 2010. Her post-graduate research has focused on the politics of marine resource management in Vietnam (2004) and Torres Strait (current). In 2011 Annick replaced Katherine May as the editor of the PoC Project's reports and newsletters and assisted with administration and information dissemination on a part-time basis.

Ms GILLIAN COSGROVE

After studying linguistics and English literature, Gillian moved into the world of books, type and publishing. She has worked as a graphic designer and editor in private firms, and in the public and tertiary sectors for 15 years. She currently works part-time in the publications unit at CAEPR.

Mr JOHN HUGHES

John is CAEPR's publications editor and e-publisher. He has been at CAEPR since 2003 and works in a supporting role for the PoC project on publications, mapping, graphics and website management.

PROJECT PARTNERS

In 2012, PoC project staff have continued to consolidate their partnerships with seven land and sea management groups. These groups reflect the diversity of Indigenous land and sea management organisations, their various stages of development, governance arrangements, geography, management issues and priorities, and the tenures that traditional owners have over land and sea country.

These partners were:

Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation (north-east Arnhem Land).

Djelk Rangers (western Arnhem Land)

Garawa Rangers (southern Gulf of Carpentaria)

Waanyi/Garawa Rangers (southern Gulf of Carpentaria)

Warddeken Land Management (western Arnhem Land)

Yirralka Rangers (north-east Arnhem Land)

Yugul Mangi Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Corporation (south-east Arnhem Land)



STEERING COMMITTEE

The PoC Steering Committee was established in 2008. The 2012 Steering Committee meeting—the fifth since the project began—was held in Darwin on 17 October. The Steering Committee continues to provide ongoing links with key staff within Indigenous representative organisations, government agencies and with academic colleagues. In 2012, the members of the committee were:

Mr Dan Gillespie – Independent Chair

Dr Benedict Scambary – Northern Territory Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA)

Dr Sue Jackson CSIRO

Ms Kirsty Allen – The Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund

Ms Jackie Halsey for Mr Bruce Edwards – Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC)

Mr Brooke Watson for Greg Woodruff, Northern Land Council

Dr Peter Whitehead – Independent consultant, formally at the Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport (NRETAS)

Professor Jon Altman – Ex-officio, CAEPR, ANU

Dr Seán Kerins – Ex-officio, CAEPR, ANU

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS

In addition to the partnerships that have been developed with the seven Indigenous land and sea management groups, in 2012 the PoC project team has also established and maintained important research partnerships and collaborations with other researchers and projects, government agencies, private sector companies and non-government organisations. These included:

ANU Climate Change Institute

Australian Centre for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (ACEAS, part of the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN))

Bushfires NT

Climate Change Research Centre at the University of New South Wales (UNSW)

CSIRO Tropical Ecosystems Research Centre, Darwin

Ecological Society of Australia

Fenner School of Environment and Society (ANU)

Greening Australia NT

Karrkad-Kandji Limited (KKL)

Macquarie University (Indigenous Bio-Resources Group and National Indigenous Science Education Program)

National Environmental Research Program (NERP)

National Herbarium of NSW

Natural resource management and enterprise development (ARC Linkage Project), CDU

North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA)

Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Government (Formally DECCW)

PEW Foundation Wild Australia Program

School for Environmental Research, CDU

Supervising Scientist Division, SEWPaC

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN)

West Arnhem Land Fire Abatement (WALFA) project

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH PROJECTS AT CAEPR IN 2012

There are a variety of research projects currently underway at CAEPR that have linked directly to the PoC project. These linkages have bolstered the PoC project by providing input about different facets of Indigenous land and sea management in different contexts. The main collaborative projects were:

Hybrid economic futures for remote Indigenous Australia

Jon Altman's ARC Discovery Project 'Hybrid Economic Futures for Remote Indigenous Australia', is closely linked to the PoC project. Work on this project is currently focusing on issues related to water rights and climate change and the utilisation of wildlife resources. Geoff Buchanan is a PhD student on this project. He completed 12 months of fieldwork in May 2011, having worked with Bardi Jawi Rangers in the West Kimberley and with Djelk Rangers in Arnhem Land. Geoff's PhD is exploring the economic development of caring for country in remote Indigenous Australia.

In 2012, Jon's work on this project has continued to mesh productively with the People on Country project with the completion of a number of publications that highlight the role that working on country can play as a part of Indigenous hybrid economies in remote Australia. In particular, Jon co-convened an international workshop *Domestic Moral Economy: Rethinking kinship and economy in contemporary Oceania* sponsored by the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia, the Economic and Social Research Council (UK) and CAEPR. Jon also continued his research on the negative impact of 'reform' to the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) on Aboriginal livelihoods in western Arnhem Land undertaking a period of fieldwork in July 2012.

Social benefits of Indigenous engagement in natural resource management in NSW

Dr Janet Hunt, Fellow at CAEPR is investigating the links between Aboriginal involvement in sustainable management of country and Indigenous wellbeing in New South Wales (NSW). The research is sponsored by a grant provided to CAEPR by the Office of Environment and Heritage, Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Government (formally DECCW). Janet is working with Aboriginal groups at a number of sites throughout NSW to document the social, economic and environmental benefits of Aboriginal involvement in natural resource management activities and the necessary conditions to achieve these benefits more broadly.

In 2012, Janet continued her ongoing fieldwork with Eden's Local Aboriginal Land Council. She is currently completing the case study of the Eden LALC's Land and Sea Country Plan.

In June 2012, she made a submission in response to the *Independent Audit Report on Marine Parks*, emphasising the importance of embedding Indigenous people and their knowledge into all aspects of marine management in any new governance arrangements for the NSW marine estate. Janet also participated in a telephone meeting with various Aboriginal stakeholders in relation to this Audit, and assisted a NSW coastal community close to a Marine Park to make a short submission responding to the Audit Report.

Janet's research in NSW led to the following book chapter:

Hunt, J., 2012, 'North to south?', in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country: Vital Landscapes Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 94-114.

Her work in collaboration with Tanya Patterson, a Bambai woman from Guyra (NSW) and manager of Bambai Business Enterprises translated into a second chapter:

Patterson, T. (facilitated by Janet Hunt), 2012, 'Reconnecting with culture for future generations', in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 202-212.

Custom based land and resource management and the educational and social re-engagement of Indigenous youth in the Northern Territory

This linkage project through the ARC was conducted at CAEPR by Dr Jerry Schwab and Bill Fogarty in partnership with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (BAC), The Northern Land Council (NLC) and The Department of Education and Training in the Northern Territory. The project has now been completed. Throughout this research, Bill Fogarty has worked closely with the People on Country project and a number of its partners, especially the BAC Djelk Rangers. One of the major outputs from this collaborative project was the production of Bill's thesis *Learning through Country: Competing knowledge systems and place based pedagogy*.

Bill has been continuing his work on remote education, learning on country and pedagogies of place as part of his new role at the National Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS). Most recently he has been working with the People on Country project to review and reinvigorate the education service to 14 remote outstations in the Maningrida region. This work is in partnership with the Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, which auspices the Djelk Ranger program and the NT Department of Education and Training.

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS

Jon Altman participated in two international projects in 2012. The first, mentioned above, was the *Domestic Moral Economy* workshop in Canberra 3–4 September 2012. The second was his participation at the *Values of Domination and Difference International Colloquium* organised by the Cairns Institute in collaboration with the Universities of Aarhus (Denmark) and Bergen (Norway) and the TransOceanic International Association laboratory, CNRS, EHESS, Collège de France where he presented the paper *Moral restructuring and values contestation over work: Kuninjkun responses to neoliberal governmentality in the Maningrida region, Northern Territory*. In November Jon participated in the American Anthropological Association (AAA) conference in San Francisco where he met with a number of international scholars with whom he engages on Indigenous natural and cultural resource management and development issues.

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

Project partners

The next section provides highlights of the main activities undertaken with each of the seven PoC project partners during 2012.

Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation

Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation (Dhimurru) is a community-based natural and cultural resource management agency established in 1992 by the Yolngu traditional owners of land and sea estates in the Gove Peninsula region of North East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory.

In late 2011, Mandaka Marika and Steve Roeger (Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation) began working on a chapter for the People on Country book project. Their chapter is part of the recently published, *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*:

Marika, M. and Roeger, S., 2012, 'Dhimurru wind bringing change', in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 119–131.

Djelk Rangers

The Djelk Rangers operate in the area around Maningrida in the north east of the Northern Territory, an enormous area of approximately 10,000 km² located entirely within the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust.

The Djelk women (Felina Campion, Selma Campion, Jodie Kelly and Tara Rostron) attended the CAEPR Indigenous Women Rangers Workshop II held in Canberra in April 2012. They participated in skill development workshops with Emilie Ens, Annick Thomassin, Gill Cosgrove and Dr Inge Kral to produce a short video of their work and contribute to the booklet *Indigenous Women Rangers Talking—Sharing ideas and information about women rangers' work*. This booklet can be downloaded from:

caepr.anu.edu.au/others/Report-1347254188.php.

In late 2011, Victor Rostron, Wesley Campion and Ivan Namarnyilk, in collaboration with Bill Fogarty began working on a chapter for the People on Country book project. This chapter has been published in October 2012 as:

Rostron, V., Campion, W. and Namarnyilk, I. (facilitated by Bill Fogarty), 2012 'Countrymen standing together', in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 162–173.

Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers

The Garawa are the traditional owners of country in the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria: their country covers approximately 30,000 km². Garawa estates also include sea country in the southwest Gulf. On the Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust (ALT) there is the community of Robinson River with approximately 150 people resident, and six outstations.

The traditional owners of the Waanyi/Garawa ALT (also known as the Nicholson Block) are the Waanyi and Garawa peoples. The land trust is approximately 60 km from the coast in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria and abuts the Northern Territory/Queensland border, and is approximately 12,000 km² in area.

In July 2012, land owners of the Waanyi/Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust continued to develop an Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management for their land with a planning meeting held at Nudjabarra Homelands. The meeting focussed on visiting sites situated within the China Wall region, designated an important site of conservation for its geographic and biodiversity significance. The site, a region of about 3,485 km², includes the linear escarpments of the China Wall and the headwaters of Settlement Creek, and is one of a few areas that exceed 300 metres elevation in the Top End of the Northern Territory. The hills of China Wall are covered in open eucalypt woodland with an understorey of tussock-grasses. In some places the vegetation has been severely affected by repetitive wildfires, which the Waanyi/Garawa Rangers have been alleviating through their Fire Abatement Project. Despite some areas degraded by wildfire, within the ranges of China Wall there are networks of gorges protecting rainforest remnants and rare and endemic fauna, including many sandstone species. Permanent lagoons and springs add to the diversity of habitats across the site. The gorges provide a significant refuge from



Top: Visiting Country, Estelle George, Terrance George and Geraldine Johnny—land owners for the Waanyi/Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust—with family on site visits to the China Wall, a national site of conservation significance. Middle: Waanyi/Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust as seen from the jump-up on China Wall in the northern region of the land trust. Bottom: Waanyi and Garawa land owners meeting at Nudjubarra on the Waanyi/Garawa Aboriginal Land Trust developing their Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management. –PHOTOS: Seán Kerins

fire with the permanently available water within them providing important habitat for freshwater crocodile, fish, frogs and other species in an otherwise seasonally harsh semi-arid savannah. Permanent water also makes them attractive for feral animals such as cattle and horses, which are significantly damaging the fragile habitats. Land owners visited several rainforest remnants and other important sites to look at ways of protecting them and their biodiversity.

Some land owners, now resident in Mount Isa, had not visited the country where they grew up for more than 15 years. They took the opportunity to bring their children to the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) meeting so they could learn about their country. Indigenous Protected Area planning meetings play an important role in facilitating visits for younger people to their ancestral land enabling them to see their country, sometimes for the first time and to begin to learn about its cultural, historical, ecological and conservation significance.

Indigenous Protected Area meetings are highly valued by many land owners as they present one of the few opportunities where they are able to meet to progress their own aspirations without being under pressure to quickly agree to external proposals to use their land.

In late 2011 the Waanyi/Garawa Rangers won the Leighton Holdings Indigenous Award for their Caring for Country projects, in the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria. Through their work and with lots of help from land owners who also work on the projects, Waanyi and Garawa Rangers remain committed to re-establishing a fine scale mosaic of smaller cool fires across the region. Relative to five year 2004–2008 baseline data, in 2010 the Waanyi/Garawa and Garawa Land Trusts achieved a 63 per cent reduction (110,709 tonnes) in carbon emissions.

Waanyi/Garawa and Garawa Rangers were one of 88 finalists in the National Landcare Awards in Sydney on 4 September, 2012.

From November 2011, Jack Green and Jimmy Morrison worked in collaboration with Seán Kerins on a chapter for the People on Country book project.

Green, J. and Morrison, J. (facilitated by Seán Kerins), 2012, 'No more yardin' us up like cattle', in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 190–201.

Warddeken Land Management Limited (LML)

Warddeken Land Management Limited cares for country within the west Arnhem plateau of the Northern Territory, immediately east of Kakadu National Park.

For two weeks in April and six weeks in November-December, casual Manwurrk Ranger Emmanuel Namarnyilk, was a Visiting Indigenous Fellow at CAEPR as Research Assistant for Emilie Ens. Together they worked on editing video footage taken at Kamarrkawan by Emmanuel, Emilie, Gill Towler and about 30 other community members in November 2011 which captured Indigenous knowledge of local species and places. Emmanuel translated language, edited clips, added still photos and subtitles to the footage. They are producing a video of useful plants in *Gunemeleng* (build up season) and have made a stand-alone 30 minute video detailing the preparation of *manyawok* (Cheeky Yam, *Dioscorea* spp.).

In November Emmanuel joined Emilie in the first Australian Centre for Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (ACEAS) working group on Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge for a week on North Stradbroke Island, Qld. This working group will prepare an overview of documentation on Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge in Australia following a second meeting in Cairns in April 2013.

In December 2012, Emmanuel and Emilie also gave a presentation on their recent work at the Ecological Society of Australia (ESA) conference's Indigenous symposium. The presentation was very well received and Emmanuel

was very interested to hear about all the ecological projects going on around Australia. Emmanuel received an ESA Indigenous Travel Grant to participate in the conference.

In April, several Manwurrk women rangers (Sarah Biliss, Lisa Miller, Libby Malibirr and Vietta Bangarr) attended the CAEPR Indigenous Women Rangers Workshop II in Canberra. They participated in skill development workshops with Emilie, Annick Thomassin, Gill Cosgrove and Dr Inge Kral to produce a short video of their work and contribute to the booklet *Indigenous Women Rangers Talking – Sharing ideas and information about women rangers’ work* available at: caepr.anu.edu.au/others/Report-1347254188.php.

From late 2011, Peter Cooke worked on a chapter for the People on Country book published in October 2012.

Cooke, P., 2012, ‘A long walk home to the warddewardde’, in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 146–161.

Yirralka Rangers

The Yirralka Rangers in association with Yolngu traditional owners manage both land and sea in the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area (IPA), which covers 6,900 km² in North East Arnhem Land, extending south from the Gove Peninsula to Blue Mud Bay.

In late 2011, Seán Kerins visited the Laynhapuy Homelands to work with Banduk Marika, Banul Munyarryun, Buwathay Munyarryun, Napunda Marawili and Wanyubi Marika on a chapter for the *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures* book. Seán held discussions with the authors about caring for country on the Laynhapuy Homelands and what each of the authors wanted to focus on in the chapter.

This collaborative work resulted in:

Marika, B., Munyarryun, B., Munyarryun, B., Marawili, N and Marika, W., facilitated by Kerins, S., 2012, ‘Ranger djäma? Manymak!’, in J. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, Australia.

Several Yirralka Miyalk (women) rangers (Gurrundul Marika, Gurrundul Marawili and Dindirrk Munungurr) attended the CAEPR Indigenous Women Rangers Workshop II in Canberra, April 2012. They participated in skill development workshops with Emilie Ens, Annick Thomassin, Gill Cosgrove, and Dr Inge Kral (Indigenous education expert) to produce a short video of their work and contribute to the Women Rangers Toolkit booklet.

Emilie Ens also worked on an *Inspiring Australia* grant application to continue work with the Yirralka Rangers. Unfortunately, it was not successful.

Yugul Mangi Land and Sea Management Corporation

The Yugul Mangi Land and Sea Management Corporation is based in Ngukurr in south east Arnhem Land. The area of operation is approximately 20,000 km² and includes the Roper River and sea country as far north as Wuyagiba to Limmen Bight in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria. The rangers also work inland as far as Womena.

Two Yugul Mangi women rangers (Edna Nelson and Priscilla Dixon) attended the CAEPR Indigenous Women Rangers Workshop II in Canberra, April 2012. They participated in skill development workshops with Emilie Ens, Annick Thomassin, Gill Cosgrove and Dr Inge Kral (Indigenous education expert) to produce a short video of their work and contribute to the Women Rangers Toolkit booklet.

In July, Emilie, Gill and Mandy Yap (CAEPR Research Officer and PhD student) went to Ngukurr for two weeks to continue monitoring of the feral animal exclusion fence project. After three years, the recovery of the billabongs is really starting to show, particularly at Nalawan, where the lily cover has gone from one to 70 per cent of the water surface! We also started Edna Nelson's Traditional Owner interview project which she developed late in 2011 after participating in the Ecological Society of Australia conference with Emilie in Hobart. Edna conducted semi-structured interviews with key Traditional Owners of the areas where we have erected the feral animal exclusion fences. This project will continue post PoC funding.

In September, Edna and Emilie presented some findings of the feral animal exclusion project at the Oceania chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology conference in Darwin. The project was well received and other researchers have since asked if they can work with them to expand the project to include carbon accounting.



Left: Concreting paths for the Yugul Mangi nursery. Right: Gill Towler, Edris Daniels and Mandy Yap fixing permanent photo point picket at Costello. –PHOTOS: Emilie Ens

Following the conference, Edna and Emilie also met with Geoff Lipsett-Moore and NLC staff to discuss a collaborative flora and fauna survey in the proposed Yugul Mangi IPA. As a result, Emilie has been contracted in early 2013 by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to work with the Yugul Mangi Rangers to collect baseline data for the imminent declaration of their IPA. This data will focus on species and places of significance to the Rangers and local community.

The Yugul Mangi plant nursery project continued progressing. The Rangers have started working with groups of school children to enhance this project. Gill Towler, has been working with Senior Ranger and plant enthusiast, Julie Roy, to collect, identify and propagate Acacia and Grevillea species of interest to Julie.

In late 2012 Emilie was also asked to co-supervise a PhD student from CDU, Sharon Every. Sharon will conduct two-way ecological research with the Yugul Mangi Rangers and Ngukurr community to better understand the status and threats to euryhaline elasmobranchs of the Roper River including freshwater sharks, whip rays and threatened sawfish.

From late 2011, Cherry Daniels, Edna Nelson, Julie Roy, Priscilla Dixon, Emilie Ens and Gill Towler have worked at the chapter 'Commitment to our country', which was published in October 2012 in the People on Country book:

Daniels, C., Nelson, E., Roy, J., Dixon, P. (with Emilie Ens and Gill Towler), 2012, 'Commitment to our country', in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 174–189.

RESEARCH PROJECTS

The main activities and outcomes associated with each of the six research projects in 2012 are detailed below:

Supporting Indigenous environmental management and monitoring

This research aimed to assist in the monitoring and management of impacts of feral animals and invasive weeds on Indigenous land by Indigenous land and sea managers. During the past five years, PoC staff have been working with a number of project partners to develop a variety of ecological monitoring projects, management strategies, practical resources and training activities. The focus of PoC project activities on this particular project reflected the concerns of traditional owners and land and sea management groups about the impacts of feral and invasive species including buffalo, pigs and horses, on their country and its resources, particularly food resources.

Since 2008, Emilie Ens has variably worked with Yirralka, Djelk, Warddeken and Yugul Mangi to collect baseline data which can be used to assess the impacts of feral ungulate (buffalo, pigs, horses) control. Most Land and Sea management groups are still in the early stages of developing or implementing systematic feral ungulate control programs, so this data will primarily be of use some time after the control effort has taken place. One difference is the Yugul Mangi project involved using feral animal exclusion fences to protect three sacred billabongs. The information from this project is already being used to inform the community about the natural and cultural impacts of feral ungulates and will later be used to inform feral animal management planning.

Over the last few years Emilie has also been developing local baseline flora and fauna inventories with Ranger groups (see past PoC Annual Reports). This work will continue to be built on by the Rangers and other scientists and staff who work with them. These inventories include both non-Indigenous and Indigenous classifications (names) and other information such as uses, locations and conservation status (e.g. rare or vulnerable). There is very little documented baseline biological data for Arnhem Land so continued development of these projects, and others like them will go a long way to supporting evidence based management of this region. The PoC team has advocated, promoted and supported increased investment in baseline data collection for this region and other remote parts of Australia. Emilie has been working at national to regional levels across Australia to this end in a number of ways: through the establishment of annual Indigenous symposia at the Ecological Society of Australia conference; presentations to the national Terrestrial Ecosystem Research network (TERN); presentations and meetings with government and non-government organisations; publications in scholarly journals and books; and more recently, through establishment of the Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge working group of the Australian Centre of Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (see <www.aceas.org.au>).

Emilie has worked on a number of national level projects to further support and promote Indigenous natural and cultural resource management. These include production of a special issue of Australian journal *Ecological Management and Restoration* in January 2012, which highlighted the work of 14 projects from around Australia. This special issue was sponsored by the Ecological Society of Australia, The Nature Conservancy and the Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities (SEWPaC). Emilie has also continued to organise annual Indigenous symposia at national Ecology conferences and gain financial support to fund the involvement of over 30 Indigenous presenters. This initiative is helping to bridge the gap and facilitate better understanding between Indigenous and western scientific philosophy, ecology and management.

CyberTracker applications for Indigenous land and sea management

This overarching research project explored the use of CyberTracker software, handheld computers, global positioning systems (GPS) and geographic information systems (GIS) by Indigenous land and sea management organisations. PoC staff have assisted with training in the use of CyberTracker with project partners and have designed a number of location specific programs with them and senior Traditional Owners to assist with the collection of operational and environmental monitoring information.

Emilie Ens continued to work with groups to develop their CyberTracker skills. She has particularly worked with Yugul Mangi on sequence development skills for weeds and feral animals and mapping.

Emilie and
Gershom Hall.
Training the next
generation of
rangers (Ngukurr)–
PHOTO: Emmanuel
Namarnyilk



Governance of Indigenous land and sea management

The primary aim of this project was to assist embryonic Indigenous land and sea management organisations that had little formalised governance to establish effective and appropriate governance arrangements. The inclusion of a diverse range of Indigenous land and sea management organisations as PoC project partners has meant that the experiences of more established groups with strong governance arrangements can help inform the development of emergent groups.

As part of developing an Indigenous Protected Area Plan of Management Waanyi/Garawa land owners have been discussing what type of organisation may be best suited to manage and continue to grow their emerging caring for country work.

Through the People on Country research project Allens, a Melbourne based law firm, have offered to provide pro bono legal work on the most appropriate type of organisation. This work will extend past the life of the People on Country project.

Wellbeing and socioeconomics associated with Indigenous land and sea management

This research aimed to document the contribution that land and sea management projects make to Indigenous wellbeing. The objective is to explore Indigenous notions of wellbeing and to document both the direct and indirect benefits of living on, and caring for country. This research also contributed to the evidence base on the socioeconomic outcomes from, and the sustainability of, customary and commercial utilisation of wild resources.

In July Jon Altman continued research in western Arnhem Land both with rangers but also with people working and living on country at outstations. Much of this research has focused on issues that are arising for regional resource organisations that host community-based ranger groups adjusting to changes in government policy around employment programs like CDEP. In particular, this research has identified the important linkages between ranger work that can be centralised in townships and people being enabled to live in a decentralised manner on their ancestral lands. It is noteworthy that in the lead up to the Northern Territory election in August, both major political parties articulated a new commitment to support decentralised communities with financial support also provided by the Australian government.

Strengthening policies and investment for Indigenous land and sea management

This overarching research project aimed to identify and analyse support for Indigenous land and sea management. The focus has been on government funded programs such as the Australian Government's IPA and Working on Country (WoC) programs as well as on support from philanthropies, NGOs and the private sector.

To be able to continue growing caring for country projects in the southwest Gulf of Carpentaria and to increase investment to provide greater management capabilities Waanyi/Garawa land owners have been developing an Indigenous Protected Area plan of management. This project has been experiencing a number of difficulties arising from the lack of institutional support which has focussed land owners' attention on improved governance structures.

Jon Altman has continued as a foundation director and secretary (to October 2012) of Karrkad-Kanjdi Limited that is now moving into an exciting fund raising phase in its development. The company is looking to raise significant funding

in the next five years for two of our partners the Djelk and Warddeken IPAs to simultaneously enhance funds provided from other public and private sources but to also reduce state dependence and ensure longer-term sustainability of land and resource management activities.

Jon and Elisabeth Yarbakhsh also collaborated actively with the Australian Environmental Grantmakers Network (AEGN) as they developed material to encourage philanthropic giving for environmental groups. They assisted AEGN by drafting the Giving Green Briefing Note–Indigenous Land and Sea Management, which can be downloaded from: <www.aegn.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/1000_AEGN_ISP-IssSusIndigLand_v3.pdf>.

In June, the AEGN released *Giving Green: An Introduction for Grantmakers* which utilises much of Jon and Elisabeth material. This guide details the need for environmental funding in Australia, and also provides an overview of the environmental issues our country faces today. Download the full document from: <www.aegn.org.au/green-giving-tools/>.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

National Environmental Research Program (NERP): Northern Australia Hub

This new project will build on research carried out on the PoC project and will allow a continuation of work on livelihood possibilities associated with natural resource management (NRM) with at least three of our PoC partners from October 2011 until 2015.

As part of the continuation plan for the people on Country project, Jon Altman has secured some funding from the NERP Northern Australian Hub consortium for Seán Kerins, Elisabeth Yarbakhsh (until late February 2013), Annick Thomassin, Francis Markham and himself to continue work for another two years with some of our current partners, in particular the Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa rangers, Yirralka rangers, and Djelk and Warddeken IPAs.

Women Rangers Workshop 2012

Indigenous women are becoming more involved in ranger work across Australia. However they often face a number of difficulties and challenges in terms of recognition, access to resources and community support. In June 2011, PoC project staff organised a first women rangers workshop, bringing together for the first time women rangers from PoC's partner organisations so they could exchange their views, aspirations and frustrations related to their work. The ideas discussed during this inaugural workshop were documented and filmed by the participants.



2012 Indigenous
women rangers
workshop participants
-PHOTO: Jon Altman

On 23–27 April 2012, a second Indigenous women rangers workshop was held at the ANU (Canberra). Seventeen Indigenous women rangers from four ranger group partners as well as rangers from the Ngaanyatjarra Lands (Western Australia) attended. This time, the purpose of the workshop was to collaboratively produce a booklet and a DVD using the material collected the previous year. Targeted to inform the funding bodies, government agencies and broader community, this booklet and DVD aim at improving Indigenous women rangers' opportunities and outcomes by promoting and raising awareness about their work, realisations, challenges and aspirations.

At the workshop, each ranger group first gave a short presentation about their work and then, with assistance from Emilie Ens and Annick Thomassin, learned how to use word processing and film editing software (on PC and Mac) by producing their own book and film. Other CAEPR staff members also gave seminars about document and film production. Gillian Cosgrove, CAEPR's publication team, spoke about developing documents in Microsoft Word using images, colours and clever design. Dr Inge Kral spoke about adult learning and use of multimedia techniques to convey messages or stories.

During the week, team-building activities were undertaken so the rangers could also experience Canberra. Each group also spent time at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) searching the archival databases for images, documents, sound and film of their families, communities and country.

While the production of the DVD is still ongoing, the booklet *Indigenous Women Rangers Talking* produced during this second workshop can be downloaded from: caepr.anu.edu.au/others/Report-1347254188.php.

Funding was provided by CAEPR, the Sidney Myer Fund and the ANU Research School of Social Sciences (RSSH). All participants' travel, accommodation, food and workshop equipment was funded by ANU RSSH conference grants and the CAEPR Visiting Indigenous Fellowship Scheme. Thanks to ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS) for providing the workshop spaces.

Meetings

On 13 March, Seán Kerins met with Jess Abrahams of the Australian Marine Conservation Society (AMCS) to discuss caring for sea country issues and how AMCS may be able to assist Indigenous Australians better manage their sea country.

Jon Altman, Seán Kerins and Elisabeth Yarbakhsh met with staff from the Indigenous Protected Areas Section of SEWPaC to discuss governance of Indigenous Protected Areas, especially in areas where there are few organisations with the capabilities to host or administer IPA projects.

Jon, Seán and Elisabeth met with staff from Indigenous Policy Branch of SEWPaC to discuss findings of the People on Country research project.

Seán met with staff at Bush Heritage Australia regarding developing collaborative partnerships with Waanyi and Garawa people in the southwest Gulf. This resulted in facilitating a meeting between Justin McCaul, the Indigenous Programs Manager, and Waanyi and Garawa Rangers in April 2012. As well as briefing Pip Walsh, senior manager with Bush Heritage Australian in Melbourne, June 12. In July Justin, Pip and Emma Ignjic, Indigenous Programs Officer (North Australia), participated in the Waanyi/Garawa Indigenous Protected Area meeting on the Nicholson to further discuss a collaborative partnerships with land owners.

Seán, as part of CAEPR's in-kind contribution to the Waanyi/Garawa Indigenous Protected Area funding application, has been liaising with Allens, a Melbourne based law firm, regarding pro bono legal work to develop a southwest Gulf Aboriginal not-for-profit company to assist land owners further grow their caring for country projects. This work is expected to take 18 months to two years.

On 10–12 July Jon attended a joint meeting of the Djelk Rangers and Warddeken Rangers at Kulngnuki near Kabulwarnamyo in the Warddeken Indigenous Protected Area to discuss the operations of the Karrdkad-Kanjdi Trust. A meeting of the Board of Directors of Karrdkad-Kanjdi Ltd was convened on 12 July.

Funding applications

Emilie Ens successfully secured an ARC Discovery Early Career Research Award to continue work with some of PoC Ranger group partners over the next three years. The project is centered on conducting two-way ecological research to better understand the values and threats to freshwater wetlands in Arnhem Land. This funding will allow Emilie to work more closely with ranger groups and take people out on country to participate in the research.



Emilie Ens, Edna Nelson and Cherry Daniels planning their next project.
-PHOTO: Gill Towler

In 2013 she will also work on a small TNC funded project to assist the Yugul Mangi Rangers in the collection of some baseline data prior to establishing an IPA.

Emilie has also received funding through the Australian Centre of Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (ACEAS) to develop a national Indigenous bio-cultural knowledge working group to map the status, strengths and gaps in documented and living Indigenous knowledge. This information will be used to lobby for increased investment in the maintenance of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous natural and cultural resource management (NCRM) as well as to promote Indigenous ecology through the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN). Members of the working group include Dr Beth Gott, Dr Rosemary Hill, Gerry Turpin, Dr Petina Pert, Professor Max Finlayson, Dr Bruce Doran, Dr Jocelyn Davies, Glenn Wightman, Dr Sue Jackson, Professor Marcia Langton, Tina Bain, Sonia Leonard, Joanne Packer, Jitendra Gaikwad and Emmanuel Namarnyilk.

Australian Centre of Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (ACEAS) Indigenous bio-cultural working group. Left to right: Petina Pert, Tina Bain, Beth Gott, Gerry Turpin, Joanne Packer, Bruce Doran, Emmanuel Namarnyilk, Emilie Ens and Jitendra Gaikwad.
-PHOTO: Alison Specht



Emmanuel Namarnyilk showing Bruce Doran his country at the Australian Centre of Ecological Analysis and Synthesis (ACEAS) workshop.
-PHOTO: Emilie Ens



The PoC Indigenous Women Rangers Workshop 2012 was once again funded by the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences (CASS). PoC received \$8,000 through a competitive grants scheme which was supplemented by funding from CAEPR and CAEPR's Visiting Indigenous Fellowship scheme to bring 20 women to Canberra for the event. Six guests from Ngaanyatjarra Lands also attended the workshop. Outputs from the workshop included Ranger group DVDs of their work and an Indigenous Women Rangers booklet which can be downloaded from the CAEPR website <caepr.anu.edu.au>.

Emilie Ens also won a CASS conference travel grant to attend the 2012 Ecological Society of Australia conference in Melbourne.

Inaugural Indigenous Science Event, National Science Week, Australian Museum

Emilie Ens and the Yugul Mangi Rangers were invited to present some of their research at the Inaugural Indigenous Science Event of National Science Week in August 2012. The program was run by Macquarie University's National Indigenous Science Education Program (NISEP) and the Yugul Mangi Rangers participation was generously supported by the Yugul Mangi Aboriginal Development Corporation and the Dusseldorp Skills Forum.



Left: Group photo of the Indigenous Science Event—schools day. – PHOTO: Emilie Ens
Right: Boat tour of Ku-ring-gai rock arts sites with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Rangers. –PHOTO: Peter Bergman

Edna Nelson, Cherryann Daniels, Karmelina Daniels, Edris Lingiari and Mark Lingiari came to Sydney to present some of the collaborative research being done with the PoC team as well as perspectives on land and sea management from Arnhem Land to the hundreds of attendees. Emilie and the Yugul Mangi Rangers gave their presentation to over 200 Sydney school children, they also gave a public seminar and participated in the Science Show at Redfern Community Centre. The Yugul Mangi Rangers had a great time teaching other Indigenous groups from around Australia what they and their community are doing and also learning from others. Indigenous rangers from NSW National Parks and Wildlife gave them a

personal boat tour of culturally significant sites in Ku-ring-gai National Park. A 13 minute DVD was made of their experience which will soon be available from the CAEPR website.

Ecological Society of Australia Conference 2012

As a founding member and driver of the ESA Indigenous working group, Emilie Ens ran the third Indigenous symposium at this year's ESA conference in collaboration with Wayne Barbour and Christine Schlesinger. Entitled *Back to fundamentals: Linking Indigenous and Western Ecologies*, the conference was held in Melbourne from 3-7 December (see <esa2012.org.au/Symposia> for further information). Emilie has gained an additional three years Indigenous Travel Grant (ITG) funding from the ESA, which will support greater Indigenous involvement in the symposia.

Wayne Barbour and Oliver Costello, Indigenous speakers at previous ESA Indigenous symposia, hosted this year's event. ITG winners for 2012 included Clive Aitken and Dave Colnan (Banuba Rangers, Fitzroy Crossing, WA), Chris Sampi (Bardi Jawi Rangers, WA), Ray Ah Mat (Yorta Yorta, Victoria Parks Ranger), Rebecca Philips (IEK coordinator Victoria Parks), Oliver Costello (Nature Conservation Council NSW, northern NSW), Doug Williams (Githabul Rangers, Kyogle, NSW), Emmanuel Namarnyilk (Warddeken, Arnhem Land), Gerry Turpin (Indigenous

Rebecca Philips
showing Emmanuel
Namarnyilk stone
axe artefacts of
Dja Dja Wurrung
country on the
ESA conference
Indigenous field trip.
-PHOTO: Emile Ens



Ethnobotany Centre, Cairns) and Eric Abbott (Warru Rangers, APY Lands, SA). After the conference, Indigenous participants were taken on a field trip by Rebecca Philips to Dja Dja Wurrung country around Bendigo.

Partners' Annual Reports

Since 2009, PoC's team and partner members have collaborated in the production and design of annual reports to promote information dissemination and public education. Drawing on this collaboration, both Warddeken Land Management Limited and Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation have recently published their 2012 Annual Report.

COMMUNICATING THE PROJECT

The PoC project used a variety of means to communicate its findings in order to inform the policy, Indigenous, academic and broader communities about the project and the important issues that it deals with. This has been done through:

- Project reports and newsletters
- Books, book chapters and articles
- Reports and project documents
- Submissions and evidence to inquiries
- Seminars, conferences, workshops and other presentations
- Engagement with the media
- PoC Project website

PoC Project Reports and Newsletters

Final Evaluation Report –

People on Country end of project evaluation, November 2012,

Prepared by Dr Dermot Smyth (see Annexe 1)

People on Country Newsletter Vol.4 No. 2, September 2012,

Compiled and edited by Annick Thomassin

<caepr.anu.edu.au/poc/research/newsletters.php>

People on Country Newsletter Vol.4 No. 1, Feb 2012,

Compiled and edited by Annick Thomassin

<caepr.anu.edu.au/poc/research/newsletters.php>

People on Country 2011 Annual Report,

Compiled and edited by Annick Thomassin

<caepr.anu.edu.au/poc/research/reports.php>

Books, book chapters, and articles

JON ALTMAN AND SEÁN KERINS (EDS)

People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures, The Federation Press, Sydney, Australia.

JON ALTMAN

‘Indigenous rights, mining corporations and the Australian state’, in S. Sawyer and T. Gomez (eds) *The Politics of Resource Extraction: Indigenous Peoples, Multinational Corporation and the State*, Palgrave, London, 46–64.

‘Land rights and development in Australia: Caring for, benefiting from and governing the indigenous estate’, in T. Rowse and L. Ford (eds) *Between Indigenous and Settler Governance*, Routledge, London, 121–134.

‘Foreword’, in N. Fijn, I. Keen, C. Lloyd and M. Pickering (eds) *Indigenous Participation in Australian Economies II: Historical engagements and current enterprises*, ANU E Press, Canberra, xiii–xviii.

‘People on country as alternate development’, in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 1–22.

‘Indigenous futures on country’, in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 213–231.

‘Income management: Government intervention to discipline expenditure ‘in the name of the child’, in S. Madisson and R. Denniss, *An Introduction to Australian Public Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.

JON ALTMAN, NICHOLAS BIDDLE AND GEOFF BUCHANAN

‘The Indigenous hybrid economy: Can the NATSISS adequately recognise productive difference?’, in B. Hunter and N. Biddle (eds) *Social Science Perspectives on the 2008 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 163–191.

JON ALTMAN AND SUSIE RUSSELL

‘Too much Dreaming: evaluation of the Northern Territory National Emergency Response Intervention 2007–2012’, *Evidence Base*, Issue 3, 2012.
<caepr.anu.edu.au/announces/anc12_12_19_4860.php>.

SEÁN KERINS

'Caring for Country to Working on Country', in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, Federation Press, Sydney, Australia.

'Policing the Frontier: Christmas in Borroloola', *CAEPR Topical Issue 3/2013*, 5 pp.
<caepr.anu.edu.au/Publications/topical/2013TI3.php-0>

'The essential role of Indigenous Peoples in Australia's sustainable development', in R. G. Craven, A. Dillon and N. Parbury (eds), *In Black and White: Indigenous Issues at the Crossroads*, University of Western Sydney, Connor Court Press (forthcoming).

'Building from the Bottom-Up: Indigenous Development Initiatives in the South-west Gulf of Carpentaria, Australia'. Proceedings of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga International Indigenous Development Research Conference, Auckland, New Zealand.

EMILIE ENS

Monitoring outcomes of environmental service provision in low socio-economic Indigenous Australia using innovative CyberTracker technology', *Conservation and Society* 10(1): 42-52.

'Two-way ecological research', in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 45–64.

EMILIE ENS AND TEIN MACDONALD

'Caring for country: Australian natural and cultural resource management', *Ecological Management and Restoration*, 13 (1): 1.

EMILIE ENS, GILL TOWLER, CHERRY DANIELS, YUGUL MANGI RANGERS AND MANWURRK RANGERS

'Looking back to move forward: Collaborative ecological monitoring in remote Arnhem Land', *Ecological Management and Restoration*, 13 (1): 26–35.

EMILIE ENS, MAX FINLAYSON, KARISSA PREUSS, SUE JACKSON AND SARAH HOLCOMBE.

'Australian approaches for managing 'country' using Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge', *Ecological Management and Restoration*, 13 (1): 100–107.

EMILIES ENS, EMMA BURNS, BEN SPARROW, JEREMY RUSSELL-SMITH, AND GLENDA WARDLE.

‘The cultural imperative: making long-term ecological monitoring and the environment relevant’, in D. Lindenmeyer, E. Burns, A. Lowe and N. Thurgate (eds) *Monitoring the Australian Environment*, CSIRO Publishing, Melbourne (due for publication early 2013).

JANET HUNT

Protecting Aboriginal Heritage in New South Wales, CAEPR Topical Issue 3/2012

‘North to south?’, in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country: Vital Landscapes Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 94–114.

‘Caring for Country: a review of Aboriginal engagement in environmental management in New South Wales’, *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management* 19 (4): 213–226.

Looking after Country in New South Wales: Implementing a Land and Sea Country Plan on the Far South Coast, CAEPR Working Paper (forthcoming).

BANDUK MARIKA, BANUL MUNYARRYUN, BUWATHAY MUNYARRYUN, NAPUNDA MARAWILI AND WANYUBI MARIKA (FACILITATED BY SEÁN KERINS)

‘Ranger djäma? Manymak!’, in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, Australia.

CRAIG MORITZ, SALLY POTTER AND EMILIE ENS

‘The Australian monsoonal tropics: A remarkable opportunity to secure Aboriginal community and biological benefits through conservation’. *Pacific Conservation Biology Special Issue* (invited paper).

BILL FOGARTY

‘Country as classroom’, in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 82–93.

GEOFF BUCHANAN AND KATHERINE MAY

‘Indigenous rangers and the customary economy’, in J.C. Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 65–81.

MANDAKA MARIKA AND STEVE ROEGER

‘Dhimurru wind bringing change’, in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 119–131.

PETER COOKE

‘A long walk home to the warddewardde’, in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 146–161.

VICTOR ROSTRON, WESLEY CAMPION AND IVAN NAMARNYILK (FACILITATED BY BILL FOGARTY)

‘Countrymen standing together’, in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 162–173.

JACK GREEN AND JIMMY MORRISON (FACILITATED BY SEAN KERINS)

‘No more yardin’ us up like cattle’, in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 190–201.

TANYA PATTERSON (FACILITATED BY JANET HUNT)

‘Reconnecting with culture for future generations’, in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 202–212.

CHERRY DANIELS, EDNA NELSON, JULIE ROY, PRISCILLA DIXON (WITH EMILIE ENS AND GILL TOWLER)

‘Commitment to our country’, in J.C Altman and S. Kerins (eds) *People on Country, Vital landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, The Federation Press, Sydney, 174–189.

Reports and project documents

**CHERRY DANIELS AND WOMEN RANGERS WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS 2011-2012
(FACILITATED BY EMILY ENS, KATHERINE MAY AND ANNICK THOMASSIN)**

Indigenous Women Rangers Talking – Sharing ideas and information about women rangers’ work, <caepr.anu.edu.au/others/Report-1347254188.php>.

Submissions and evidence to enquiries

JON ALTMAN

Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Standing Committee Inquiry into the Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory and Social Security Amendment Bills 2011, Submission No. 360, available from:

<www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=clac_ctte/strong_future_nt_11/submissions.htm>.

Submission to the Treasury Inquiry into the Tax treatment of Native Title Benefits <www.treasury.gov.au/ConsultationsandReviews/Submissions/2012/Tax-treatment-of-native-title-benefits/Submissions>.

JANET HUNT

Submission in Response to the Independent Scientific Audit of Marine Parks, NSW, 19 June 2012.

Seminars, conferences, workshops and other presentations

JON ALTMAN

Parliament House panellist, Our Generation Film Screening and Panel Discussion, sponsored by Australian Lawyers Alliance, Canberra, 27 February.

'Frameworks for evaluation: theoretical and methodological possibilities in understanding and articulating 'outcome', 'impact' and 'value' in remote arts enterprises' at the *Valuing Art: Researching Cultural and Economic Value within the Aboriginal Art Sector* at AIATSIS, AIATSIS, Canberra, 6 March.

Our Generation panellist, Our Generation Film Screening and Panel Discussion at the ANU Food Coop, Canberra, 5 April.

'Land Rights, Native Title and contested Indigenous Futures in the MAAPD course Indigenous policy', Masters in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development (MAAPD) lecture, ANU, Canberra, 9 May.

'Extraction economies and Indigenous transformations', Seminar at the Department of Gender and Cultural Studies, University of Sydney, Sydney, 18 May, <sydney.edu.au/arts/sophi/news_events/events.shtml?id=1463>.

'Indigenous economic participation and government policy in remote Australia', *Burgmann-Doomadgee Partnership series*, Burgmann College, ANU campus, 23 May.

'Observing the Human Economy', *Anthropology Network Methodology Workshop*, 29 May.

Arena panellist, launch of Arena Magazine no. 118 'Intervention', Melbourne, 21 June, <www.arena.org.au/project-space/project-space-gallery/>.

'Indigenous economy in the 21st century: Contestations over land and property rights' paper presented at the *1st Symposium for Cambridge Economic History of Australia* workshop, ANU, Canberra. 2–3 July.

'People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures: Personal Reflections on a five year research project', CDU, Darwin, 6 July, <riel.cdu.edu.au/events/2012/people-country-vital-landscapes-indigenous-futures>.

'Moral restructuring and values contestation over work: Kuninjku responses to neoliberal governmentality in the Maningrida region, Northern Territory', *Values of Domination and Difference International Colloquium*, Cairns Institute in collaboration with the Universities of Aarhus (Denmark) and Bergen (Norway) and the TransOceanic International Association laboratory, CNRS, EHESS, Collège de France, Cairns, August.

'Too Much Dreaming: Evaluating the Northern Territory Emergency Response Intervention 2007-2012' Lecture in the course Policy and Programme Evaluation, Sociology 3123, 23 August.

'Of pizza ovens in Arnhem Land: The latest state quest to morally restructure remote living Aboriginal subjects', Domestic moral economy: rethinking kinship and economy in contemporary Oceania, Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia workshop, ANU, Canberra, 3 September.

'Alternative development for difference: How to close livelihood gaps in remote Australia', Masters in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development (MAAPD) lecture, ANU, Canberra, 5 September.

'People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures: Personal Reflections on a five year research team project', CAEPR Seminar Series, ANU, Canberra, 19 September, <caepr.anu.edu.au/Seminars/12/Seminar-Topics%E2%80%94Series-2/19_9_Seminar.php>.

'Too Much Dreaming: Evaluations of the NTER Intervention 2007–2012', seminar at the Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman, 22 October.

'People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures', Stronger, Wiser, Bolder – The Diversity Session - new learnings for Renaissance Practitioners, *Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand 25th annual conference*, Sydney, 25 October.

Panellist, Media and Indigenous Policy Forum: How News Media reporting and mediatized practice impact on Indigenous Policy, University of Canberra, Canberra, 23 November.

'BAC is Bankrupt: Neoliberal over-reach and the great crash', seminar at the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, 6 December.

SEÁN KERINS

'Southwest Gulf of Carpentaria Fire Abatement Project', lecture in Environmental Management and Indigenous Peoples in the Master of Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development (MAAPD) program, ANU, 22 March.

'Indigenous Cultural and Natural Resource Management', lecture in the course Resources, Environment and Society: Geography of Sustainability program (ENVS1001), Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU, 8 June.

'People on Country', lecture in the Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Futures course at the University of Canberra, 23 August.

'Cultural and Natural Resource Management: A Case Study', lecture in Indigenous Development in the Masters in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development (MAAPD) program, ANU, 26 September.

'Building for the Bottom-Up, Indigenous Development Initiatives from the Southwest Gulf of Carpentaria, Northern Territory, Australia', conference paper presented to Nga Pae o te Maramatanga (New Zealand's Indigenous Centre of Research Excellence), International Indigenous Development Research Conference 2012, The University of Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

EMILIE ENS

'Two-way ecological research with women rangers in Arnhem land', Invited presentation to Tjuwanpa Women Rangers Regional Initiatives and Peer learning workshop. Alice Springs, June 2012.

'Two-way research with Indigenous rangers in remote Australia', Guest lecture, Complex Systems Course, Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU.

EMILIE ENS, EDNA NELSON AND CHERRY DANIELS

'Protecting significant billabongs in south eastern Arnhem land using Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge and techniques', National Science Week, Indigenous Event, Australian Museum, August 2012.

'Two-way research to inform management of feral animals in south eastern Arnhem Land', Oceania chapter of the Society of Conservation Biology conference, Darwin, September 2012.

EMILIE ENS AND EMMANUEL NAMARNYILK

'Indigenous knowledge is fundamental to management of Indigenous owned land: Case study from Arnhem Land.' Ecological Society of Australia conference, Melbourne, November 2012.

Media engagement

In 2012, the team contributed with outputs in numerous newspapers including the Canberra Times, The Australian and online media like Crikey and Indigenous media like the monthly magazine Tracker where Jon Altman has a regular column 'Evidently'. The work of Djelk and Warrdeken ranger groups, and of PoC's ecologist Emilie Ens recieved coverage in the article 'Return to Country', Australian Geographic, no. 110 sep-oct 2012.

Written press

JON ALTMAN

'Advance Australia Fair?', *Tracker*, February 2012: 37 also 'Will Constitutional recognition Advance Australia fair?', *Crikey*, 10 February 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/02/10/will-constitutional-recognition-advance-australia-fair/>.

'Policy by numbers a dangerous charade', *Tracker*, March 2012 also 'Closing the gap: policy by numbers a dangerous charade', *Crikey*, 6 March 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/03/06/closing-the-gap-policy-by-numbers-a-dangerous-charade/>.

'Stronger Futures juggernaut hits a few potholes', *Tracker*, April 2012:16–17 also 'Stronger Futures juggernaut hits some potholes', *Crikey*, 2 April 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/04/02/stronger-futures-juggernaut-hits-some-potholes/>.

'Another decade for homelands policy debacle', *Tracker*, May 2012: 22–23 also 'Homelands policy debacle set to continue for a decade', *Crikey*, 9 May 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/05/09/homelands-policy-debacle-set-to-continue-for-a-decade/>.

‘Five years on... NT communities are still not normalised’, *Tracker*, June 2012: 42–43 also ‘NT prescribed communities: not normalised, exited, eliminated’, *Crikey*, 12 June 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/06/12/nt-prescribed-communities-not-normalised-exited-eliminated/>.

‘In for a penny, in for a pound’, *Tracker*, July 2012: 34–35 also ‘NT Intervention: What happened to outcomes?’, *Crikey*, 12 July 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/07/12/nt-intervention-what-happened-to-outcomes/>.

‘Rethinking the black jobs dilemma’, *Tracker*, August 2012: 36–37 also ‘Rethinking the persistent indigenous employment problem’, *Crikey*, 10 August 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/08/10/rethinking-the-persistent-indigenous-employment-problem/>.

‘Aboriginal expenditure: It’s a white thing’, *Tracker*, September 2012: 20–21 also ‘Black government expenditure—it’s a white thing’, *Crikey*, 25 September 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/09/25/black-government-expenditure-its-a-white-thing/>.

‘Rudd’s quiet revolution gets noisier’, *Tracker*, October 2012: 28–29 also ‘Rudd era indigenous truce collapses as governments collide’, *Crikey*, 30 October 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/10/30/rudd-era-indigenous-truce-collapses-as-governments-collide/>.

‘No corner turned on Indigenous housing’, *Crikey*, 15 June 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/06/15/no-corner-turned-on-indigenous-housing/>.

JON ALTMAN AND MELINDA HINKSON

‘NT Intervention five years on: no dent in Indigenous disadvantage’, *Crikey*, 21 June, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/06/21/nt-intervention-five-years-on-no-dent-in-indigenous-disadvantage/>.

SEÁN KERINS

‘No room at the inn for Aboriginal customers in Borroloola’, *Crikey*, 24 December 2012, <www.crikey.com.au/2012/12/24/no-room-at-the-inn-for-aboriginal-customers-in-borroloola/>.

BILL FOGARTY

‘Recognising a wicked problem’, *Australian Policy Online*, 29 June, <apo.org.au/commentary/recognising-wicked-problem>.

'Indigenous education report misses the big picture' *The Conversation*, 3 July, <theconversation.edu.au/indigenous-education-report-misses-the-big-picture-8024>.

TV/radio

SEÁN KERINS

Interviewed to discuss the NT Government's announcement of an invest of \$300m in Aboriginal homelands, on Radio Adelaide, 6 August (also on 98.9FM (Brisbane), 8 August).

BOOK LAUNCH

In October, the People on Country team has embarked in a road show around the country to launch and promote *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, published by The Federation Press. The team and some Aboriginal authors from PoC's ranger group partners launched the book in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Darwin.

Jon Altman appeared on various radio shows to promote the book. Jon appeared notably on:

Phillip Adams's Late Night Live, ABC Radio National, 18 September, <www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/caring-for-country/4268376>.

Jonathan Green, Sunday Extra, ABC Radio National, 14 October;

Luke Taylor, RRR Melbourne Independent Radio, 11 October;

Emma Masters, ABC Radio, Darwin 15 October.

Outreach

In June, In June 2012 the AEGN released *Giving green: An introduction for grantmakers* which use information provided by Jon Altman and Elisabeth Yarbakhsh. This guide details the need for environmental funding in Australia, and also provides an overview of the environmental issues our country faces today. <www.aegn.org.au/green-giving-tools/>.

Jon Altman has continued as a foundation director and secretary of Karrkad-Kanjdi Limited that is now moving into an exciting fund raising phase in its development. The company is looking to raise significant funding in the next five years for two of our partners the Djelk and Warddeken IPAs to both enhance funds provided from other public and private sources but to also reduce state dependence and ensure longer-term sustainability of land and resource management activities.

PoC Project website

Since 2008, the PoC website has been a key component of the project's communications strategy. It has served as a vehicle for the rapid dissemination of project research outputs, newsletters, and related documents. It also served as a resource for project partners, developed in cooperation with them, to assist in establishing and expanding their web presence, and ensuring that they can be seen and heard by policy makers, other land and sea managers, researchers, students and the general public.

The PoC website includes extensive resource libraries that make a variety of project related material available for free download, including topic guides, partner organisation briefs, user manuals, and newsletters. The site also features streaming video from PoC partners working on country and carrying out PoC fieldwork activities; slide galleries of ranger work; and audio podcasts of CAEPR seminars.

While the PoC project has ended, the website and its content will remain available in order to share the resources developed.

[<caepr.anu.edu.au/poc/index.php>](http://caepr.anu.edu.au/poc/index.php)

INVITATION

The Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research,
The Federation Press and the Sidney Myer Fund
warmly invite you to the launch of

People on Country Vital Landscapes Indigenous Futures

Edited by Jon Altman and Seán Kerins

Book Launch & Meet the Authors



Sydney

Tuesday 9th October

5.30 for 6.00-7.30 p.m.

Mary Jane Barker Theatre, Y Conference Centre,
Y Hotel Hyde Park, 5-11 Wentworth Ave,
Sydney, NSW

Launch by Jody Broun, Co-Chair, National Congress of
Australia's First Peoples, followed by contributions from
Indigenous ranger partners and authors. Hosted by Jason
Ardler, General Manager, Aboriginal Affairs NSW.

Canberra

Wednesday 10th October

5.30 for 6.00-7.30 p.m.

Finkel Lecture Theatre, John Curtin School of Medical Research
Australian National University
Building 131, Garran Road, Acton, ACT

Launch by Dr Tom Calma AO, Co-Chair, Reconciliation Australia,
followed by contributions from Indigenous ranger partners and
authors. Hosted by Dan Gillespie, Chairperson, People on Country
Advisory Committee.

Melbourne

Thursday 11th October

5.30 for 6.00-7.30 p.m.

BMW Edge Theatre, Federation Square
Cnr Flinders & Swanston Streets, Melbourne, VIC

Launch by Monica Morgan, Indigenous Rights Program, Amnesty
International, followed by contributions from Indigenous ranger
partners and authors. Hosted by Professor Brian Howe AO,
University of Melbourne.

Darwin

Tuesday 16th October

4.30 for 5.00-6.30 p.m.

Mal Nairn Auditorium, Charles Darwin University
Red 7, University Drive North, Casuarina, NT

Launch by Marion Scrymgour, Australian Red Cross, followed
by contributions from Indigenous ranger partners and authors.
Hosted by Dan Gillespie, Chairperson, People on Country
Advisory Committee.

To confirm your attendance, please respond to Elisabeth Yarbakhsh at elisabeth.yarbakhsh@anu.edu.au or
phone +61 2 6125 0648 by 02 October. Numbers are limited. Refreshments will be provided at all events.
Copies of the book will be available at a special launch price.



Australian
National
University



THE FEDERATION PRESS



SIDNEY MYER FUND



ANNEX 1

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE For the Period 01 June, 2007 to 30 November, 2012

	Current Period \$
Unspent Balance as at 01 June, 2007	0.00
Add	
Grant Income	1,632,791.29
Total Income	1,632,791.29
Total Available Funds Before Expenditure	\$1,632,791.29
Less	
Salaries & Related Costs	1,330,926.26
Equipment - Non-Capital	7,782.61
Utilities & Maintenance	2,666.22
Travel Field & Survey Expenses	179,007.86
Expendable Research Materials	607.31
Other Expenses	111,801.03
Total Expenditure	1,632,791.29
Unspent Balance as at 30 November, 2012	\$0.00

I certify that the above statement accurately summarises the financial records of the grant and that these records have been properly maintained so as to record accurately the Income and Expenditure of the grant.



Luke Beckett
Manager
Statutory and External Reporting

ANNEX 2

PEOPLE ON COUNTRY FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

PEOPLE ON COUNTRY: END OF PROJECT EVALUATION

DERMOT SMYTH

*Smyth and Bahrdt Consultants, Atherton, Queensland
University Fellow, Research Institute for the Environment and
Livelihoods,
Charles Darwin University*

November 2012

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Acknowledgments

I would like to sincerely thank all members of the People on Country team – Indigenous partners, researchers, Steering Committee members and representatives of the Sidney Myer Fund – for the time, thoughtful insights and feedback they provided to this evaluation.

Executive Summary

A project team comprising researchers based at the Australian National University's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and their Indigenous partner organisations are nearing completion of a five-year action research project focusing on Aboriginal land and sea management in the tropical savannah of the Top End and Gulf country of the Northern Territory. The 'People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures' project has been largely sponsored by the Sidney Myer Fund's Poverty and Disadvantage Large Grants program, with additional investment from the Australian National University (ANU) and the Australian Research Council (ARC). The project was primarily undertaken with seven partner Indigenous land and sea management organisations in the Top End of the Northern Territory, but also including several sites in New South Wales.

This Final Evaluation Report contains minor revisions and additions based on feedback from the earlier drafts circulated to researchers, Indigenous partners, Steering Committee members and representatives of the Sidney Myer Fund. The evaluation process involved participation in a project Steering Committee meeting in late 2011, consultations with researchers and Indigenous partners, participation in an evaluation workshop at CAEPR in June 2012 and participation in the end-of-project Steering Committee meeting in Darwin October 2012.

The evaluation examined the following aspects of the People on Country project:

- Achievements against research objectives;
- Impacts on stakeholders;
- Effectiveness of individual projects;
- Positive factors influencing project outcomes;
- Negative factors impacting on project outcomes;
- Future directions.

Like the mid-project evaluation undertaken in 2010¹, the current evaluation concludes that the project has met its specified research objectives, and in some respects has exceeded those objectives. The project has been particularly successful in directly supporting Indigenous land management through innovative on-ground activities, including monitoring the effectiveness of those activities, and through strengthening local governance of ranger groups. The project has also provided multiple opportunities for Indigenous voices and issues to be heard in national and regional conferences and workshops, and in policy-influencing forums. Collectively the activities of People on Country project have strengthened the capacity of emerging and established rangers groups in the Top End of the Northern Territory to deliver the environmental and cultural heritage management expected of them by their communities and their funders.

The project involved several transformative activities that arguably exceeded the original research objectives. Of particular note are the symposia on Indigenous environmental management convened by Dr Emilie Ens as part of the Ecological Society of Australia's annual conferences (including the publication of a special edition of the journal *Ecological Management and Restoration* arising from the 2010 conference), the support for Indigenous women's involvement in environmental management and research (including two women's ranger workshops and subsequent publication), the production of annual reports for several ranger groups as a template to enhance their future governance and reporting capacity, and Professor Jon Altman's involvement in the development of the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust to provide long term sustainable funding for management of the Djelk and Warddeken Indigenous Protected Areas.

Despite an increased focus on documenting the wellbeing outcomes from the work of Indigenous rangers, including convening a wellbeing-focused workshop in Darwin in November 2010 and follow-up community consultations, the objective measurement of wellbeing and its explicit links to managing country remain elusive. Nevertheless, the project did gather substantial information that strongly infers personal and community wellbeing outcomes from Indigenous engagement in managing country, including activities undertaken during the People on Country project.

The evaluation concluded that governance and management of the People on Country project has been effective and responsive to emerging issues and requests from Indigenous partners during the life of the project, including recommendations made in the mid-project evaluation. The Steering Committee, under the guidance of independent chair Dan Gillespie, has proved to be a valuable sounding board for researchers and an additional source of support for Indigenous partners.

¹ Smyth, D. 2010. *People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures Evaluation Report*. Report to Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and the Sidney Myer Fund.

The evaluation report notes that collaboration with regional research and Indigenous environmental management organisations based in the Northern Territory has been less than expected during the life of the project, despite representation of these institutions on the Steering Committee; possible barriers to such collaboration are discussed.

The People on Country project has had a prodigious communications output in the form of academic publications, workshop reports, community-focused publications, newsletters, website, submissions to government inquiries and, most recently, the publication of the book *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures* – all of which will have some influence on policy development and investment in caring for country activities, including support for Indigenous ranger groups. The evaluation report speculates on whether and how additional measures could be taken in future to better understand and influence the policy development process.

Key findings

The key findings are that the People on Country project has:

- Met, and in some respects exceeded, all of its nominated research objectives;
- Set a high standard of collaborative action research, that has delivered tangible and productive outcomes that contribute to knowledge generation (research) and community-based land and sea management (action);
- Established an effective, ethical and productive model of collaboration between a research institution and remote Indigenous communities – a model which enables the expertise of both partners to be applied to their mutual benefit;
- Effectively communicated the outcomes of research collaborations to a diversity of audiences – Indigenous, academic, government and the wider community; and
- Generated ideas and questions that can be pursued through further action research to support Indigenous land and sea management and wider indigenous policy development.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

A project team comprising researchers based at the Australian National University's Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research (CAEPR) and their Indigenous partner organisations are nearing completion of a five year action research project focusing on Aboriginal land and sea management in the tropical savannah of the Top End and Gulf country of the Northern Territory. The 'People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures' project has been largely sponsored by the Sidney Myer Fund's Poverty and Disadvantage Large Grants program, with additional investment from the Australian National University (ANU) and the Australian Research Council (ARC). The project was undertaken with seven partner Indigenous land and sea management organisations in the Top End of the Northern Territory; an invitation was extended to a West Kimberley ranger group but not taken up.

As outlined in the original project description, the core objective of the project was to transfer skills to Indigenous land and sea management groups to address two major issues:

1. How the groups' activities are improving Indigenous wellbeing; and
2. How the groups' activities are delivering better natural resource management on Aboriginal land and sea country.

In accordance with the funding agreement between the Sidney Myer Fund and CAEPR, I was engaged to undertake an end-of-project evaluation of the People on Country project as outlined in the Terms of Reference below. This evaluation follows my mid-project evaluation² which sought to provide an independent assessment that could inform the remaining years of the project. The current evaluation, in addition to reviewing the last two years of research, seeks to assess the achievements and legacy of the project, and also to reflect on future strategies for Indigenous environmental management and the research effort that could support those strategies.

1.2 Terms of Reference

As outlined in the Terms of Reference, the purpose of this evaluation is to determine whether and to what extent this project has contributed or is contributing in a significant manner to the alleviation of poverty or disadvantage

² Smyth, D. 2010. *Evaluation Report – People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures*. Report to the Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research and the Sidney Myer Fund (available at http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2010/03/Evaluation_Report_2010.pdf).

among Indigenous communities in northern Australia, especially through the development of community-based ranger programs, and to improvements in environmental management.

Specifically, the aims of this review are to evaluate:

- The achievements of the project, against its own research objectives;
- The project's impacts on stakeholders including Indigenous community participants (individuals and ranger groups), policy makers and others;
- The effectiveness of individual projects being undertaken jointly by CAEPR and partner organisations in the Top End and Gulf country of the Northern Territory.

The key outputs of the consultancy will be:

- A written evaluation report which includes:
 - Evaluation methodology;
 - Project achievements according to objectives set out in the Terms of Reference;
 - Positive and negative factors which have influenced the project;
 - Main issues to consider for future strategic directions of the project;
 - Key findings and recommendations;
 - A plan for a feedback and learning process for CAEPR staff and partner organisations;
 - A plan for closure of the project in late 2012;
- An appendix setting out key documents reviewed and where appropriate focus group meetings with key stakeholders undertaken.

The Terms of Reference are reproduced in full in Appendix 1.

2. Methodology

Processes I have undertaken to evaluate the People on Country project include:

- Participation in the People on Country Steering Committee meeting in Darwin on 7 November 2011;
- Participation in People on Country research review workshop in Darwin on 8 and 9 November 2011;

- Phone consultations and/or email contacts with Steering Committee members;
- Phone and/or in-person consultations with People on Country researchers;
- Phone and/or in-person consultations with representatives of People on Country Indigenous partner organisations;
- Review of selected research reports and publications resulting from the People on Country project, focusing on reports and publications completed subsequent to the 2010 evaluation;
- Review of pre-production draft of *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*, edited by Jon Altman and Seán Kerins (published October 2012);
- Distribution of a Draft Evaluation Report in June 2012 and a Revised Draft Evaluation Report to People on Country researchers, Indigenous partner organisations, Steering Committee members and Sidney Myer Fund;
- Participation in a one day evaluation workshop with People on Country researchers at CAEPR in June 2012;
- Participation in the end-of-project Steering Committee meeting in October 2012;
- Preparation of this Final Evaluation Report.

Details of consultations with Steering Committee members, researchers and representatives of Indigenous partner organisations are provided in Appendix 2. Details of research reports and publications reviewed for this evaluation are listed in Appendix 3.

3. Overview of People on Country

- The Indigenous partner land and sea management groups are:
- Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation (north-east Arnhem Land);
- Djelk Rangers (western Arnhem Land);
- Garawa Rangers (Gulf of Carpentaria);
- Waanyi/Garawa Rangers (Gulf of Carpentaria);
- Warddeken Land Management Ltd (western Arnhem Land);
- Yirralka Rangers (north-east Arnhem Land); and

- Yugul Mangi Aboriginal Land and Sea Management Corporation (south-east Arnhem Land).

The core research team comprised Professor Jon Altman (Project leader 2007–2012), Dr Séan Kerins (governance and planning 2007–2012), Dr Emilie Ens (ecologist 2008–2012), Katherine May (Research Officer and editor 2009–2011) and Geoff Buchanan (2007–2009). Other researchers who contributed to the project for shorter periods were Dr Bill Fogarty (education), Ms Gillian Towers (botany and ethno-botany), Mr John Hughes (publications, graphics and website manager), Ms Annick Thomassin (PhD candidate and editor), Gillian Cosgrove (graphic designer), and Elisabeth Yarbakhsh (Graduate Research Assistant).

Through an action research approach, the research team and their Indigenous partners developed a range of projects that aimed to make significant contributions towards:

1. Obtaining evidence for links between Indigenous land and sea management and community wellbeing;
2. Obtaining evidence of environmental outcomes from land and sea management activities;
3. Assisting Indigenous land and sea managers to make their voices heard in national environmental debates, such as climate change, water policy, outstations, Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) and the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER);
4. Influencing government policy and programs that support Indigenous land and sea management;
5. Attracting greater government and private investment in Indigenous land and sea management;
6. Building capacity of Indigenous land and sea managers, including governance.

For the first two years of the People on Country project, the activities of researchers and partners were organised in nine discrete projects. Following recommendations in my 2010 evaluation, the research effort was consolidated into six projects, including a communication project in recognition of the importance and diversity of the communication outputs of the project. The organisation of research effort pre and post 2010 is summarised in Table 1 on the following page.

While the core People on Country research team has maintained the momentum of the project throughout the last five years, some research staff have left and others have joined the team. The recent addition of Dr Bill Fogarty (to April 2012), for example, has brought an education focus to the latter stages of the project which will broaden the policy impacts and influences of the overall project.

Table 1: People on Country research sub-projects

SUB-PROJECTS 2008-2010	SUB-PROJECTS 2010-2012
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government support for Indigenous land and sea management; 2. Governance for Indigenous land and sea management; 3. Wellbeing outcomes from Indigenous land and sea management; 4. Fire abatement in Arnhem Land and the Gulf of Carpentaria; 5. Monitoring and managing invasive species impacts; 6. Assessment of feral buffalo management strategies; 7. Socioeconomics and sustainable use of wild resources; 8. Tracking Indigenous Ranger effort; 9. CyberTracker, GIS and Indigenous land and sea management. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supporting Indigenous environmental management and monitoring; 2. Cyber Tracker applications for Indigenous land and sea management; 3. Governance of Indigenous land and sea management; 4. Wellbeing and socioeconomics associated with Indigenous land and sea management; 5. Strengthening policies and investment for Indigenous land and sea management; 6. Communication.

Other related research projects

The hosting of the People on Country project by and within CAEPR has meant a degree of integration with other research being undertaken within the Centre, to the benefit of People on Country outcomes. Other CAEPR projects that have benefitted from and contributed to People on Country projects include:

- *Hybrid economic futures for remote Indigenous Australia*, Professor Jon Altman's ARC Discovery Project focusing on issues related to water rights, climate change and utilisation of wildlife resources, which includes Geoff Buchanan's PhD project collaboration with Bardi Jawi Rangers in the Kimberley and Djelk Rangers in Arnhem Land;

- *Social benefits of Indigenous engagement in natural resource management in NSW* – research undertaken by Dr Janet Hunt into the links between sustainable management of country and Indigenous wellbeing in NSW, utilising funding provided to Prof. Altman by the (then) NSW Department of Environment and Conservation;
- *Custom based land and resource management and the educational and social re-engagement of Indigenous youth in the Northern Territory*, an ARC linkage projects conducted by CAEPR's Dr Jerry Schwab and Bill Fogarty in partnership with Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation, Northern Land Council and the Dept. of Education and Training of the Northern Territory, focusing on the use of country and management of country as a successful education pathway;
- *Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge (TRaCK) research project*, undertaken by Dr Nanni Concu under the direction of Jon Altman, with assistance from John White, Bill Fogarty, Susannah Russell, Jennifer Koenig and Geoff Buchanan, aimed at developing effective conservation and sustainable use economies in two IPAs in Arnhem Land (Djelk and Dhimurru).

4. Evaluation

This end-of-project Evaluation Report should be read in conjunction with the mid-project Evaluation Report completed in early 2010³. The 2010 evaluation of the People on Country project concluded:

“The overall assessment of the project is very positive with respect to the benefits it has brought to strengthening the governance, technical capacity and demonstrable environmental management outcomes of the Indigenous ranger programs. Feedback through the evaluation interviews indicate strong evidence of improved wellbeing among Indigenous rangers and others involved in land and sea management, and the foundations have been laid for more targeted research in this area during the next stage of the project”.

The 2012 evaluation echoes this assessment and confirms that the foundations laid during the first two years of the project did result in more targeted research and tangible achievements from 2010 to 2012. Consultations with Indigenous partner organisations indicate that Indigenous land and sea management groups have benefitted in practical ways (e.g. through environmental monitoring, governance support, wellbeing improvements) and have been drawn into and contributed to problem-solving through research in productive ways.

³ http://caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2010/03/Evaluation_Report_2010.pdf.

My evaluation of the project is based not only on an assessment of particular achievements against research objectives, but also an assessment of the extent to which both the **action** and the **research** components of the action research approach have been realised. In my experience, though action research is an increasingly stated approach to collaborative environmental research with Indigenous land and sea managers, it is often the case that either **action**, usually in the form of community development activities, or **research**, usually in the form of bio-physical data collection, tends to dominate particular projects. This can occur either because researchers embark on a project with pre-determined bio-physical research questions and then seek to collaborate with Indigenous partners to access Indigenous estates to conduct the research, or Indigenous land and sea managers with pre-determined community development and environmental management objectives secure research funding to support their activities. It is challenging and rare to achieve a successful balance between genuine knowledge generation from research and genuine Indigenous community and capacity development.

The success of the People on Country project, in my view, results from the achievement of an appropriate balance between action and research, and an interweaving of these concepts as the project developed. Factors that contributed to this outcome include:

- A funding source (Sidney Myer Fund) that is directed at overcoming social and economic disadvantage – hence the imperative for action;
- A negotiated project design that focused on the acquisition of evidence for improvements in wellbeing and environmental management – hence the imperative for research;
- A respectful approach to partnership-building that enabled the technical aspects of the research to be guided by professional researchers and the priority-setting for on-ground action to be negotiated/requested by local Indigenous land and sea managers.

While I regard these as the key structural components of the project that enabled it to achieve its action research objectives, other favourable factors also contributed. These include:

- Long established relationships between several of the researchers and Indigenous communities in the Top End;
- A strong personal commitment by all researchers to enhancing Indigenous wellbeing and environmental management, while also maintaining high levels of research outcomes and outputs;

- A commitment by Indigenous partner organisations to take opportunities presented by the People on Country project, including a willingness to exchange knowledge and to adapt management practices in the light of research outcomes.

The more detailed evaluation of the project below addresses the questions set out in the Terms of Reference.

4.1 Achievements against research objectives

Research Objective 1: Obtaining evidence for links between Indigenous land and sea management and community wellbeing

While indications and enhancement of Indigenous wellbeing were achieved in various ways through all the research sub-projects, this research objective was addressed primarily through the project wellbeing and *Socio-economics associated with Indigenous Land and Sea Management*, the aim of which was to:

“... document the contribution land and sea management projects make to Indigenous well-being. The aim is to explore Indigenous notions of well-being and to document both the direct and indirect benefits of living on, and caring for country. This research also aims to contribute to the evidence base on the socioeconomic outcomes from, and the sustainability of, customary and commercial utilisation of wild resources”⁴.

The 2010 evaluation noted that only modest progress had been made in achieving this objective during the first two years of the project, reflecting the considerable complexities that surround wellbeing research, including:

- The need to develop an agreed understanding/definition of the concept of wellbeing, particularly in a cross-cultural context;
- The need to determine meaningful direct and indirect measurements of wellbeing;
- The need to obtain prior informed consent among community participants;
- Heightened sensitivity about gathering health and other personal information from Indigenous people as a result of the activities of the Northern Territory Intervention in recent years;
- The large number of social, cultural, economic and personal factors that impact on wellbeing – making it difficult to distinguish the particular contribution made by Indigenous land and sea management.

⁴ *People on Country 2010 Annual Report*, page 16.

In November 2010 the People on Country team made an effort to address these complex challenges at a workshop in Darwin, with participation from researchers, representatives of Indigenous partner organisations, Steering Committee members and other affiliates. The aim of the workshop was to explore Indigenous partners' notions of wellbeing and the wider social and economic benefits they perceived as being generated by their land and sea management activities⁵. The workshop highlighted the interconnectedness of wellbeing and working on country. Key themes that emerged from these discussions about what underlies notions of Indigenous wellbeing include:

- Importance of customary law:

"Not only are people and country associated with the semi-moieties, but so are animal and plant species, Dreaming tracks and sacred sites. Acknowledging and reinforcing this customary law through both their land management planning and work activities gave the ranger groups strength and ensured wide land owner support for their activities"⁶.

- Connections to Country:

"Warddeken Rangers discussed the importance of their annual Stone Country Walk (7-10 days) for creating a sense of well-being amongst the land owners"⁷.

- Intergenerational knowledge transfer:

"My knowledge of my country means nothing if I don't pass it on"⁸.

- Landowner and community involvement in Indigenous land and sea management:

"Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers highlighted the importance of *mingaringgi* (Owners) and *junggayi* (Managers) participating in their aerial burning activities. This is because these people hold authority for access to and activities on country"⁹.

- Binding connection between wellbeing of the environment and wellbeing of people:

⁵ The *Wellbeing Workshop Report* is available at: caepr.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/cck_misc_documents/2011/02/PoC%20Workshop%20Report_FOR%20WEB_FINAL.pdf.

⁶ Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers – *Wellbeing Workshop Report* page 3.

⁷ *Wellbeing Workshop Report* page 4.

⁸ Donald Shadforth, Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers - *Wellbeing Workshop Report* page 6.

⁹ *Wellbeing Workshop Report* page 4.

“Djelk Rangers support the aged care service in Maningrida by collecting and distributing bush foods. They also organise day trips for particularly vulnerable young people to come with them whilst carrying out their land and sea management activities”¹⁰.

Following the workshop, Séan Kerins, Katherine May and CAEPR colleague Kirrily Jordan visited Yirralka Rangers to look at some of the direct and indirect benefits of living and working on country, and the impacts of changes to the Community Development Employment Projects (CDEP) program. Achievement of this research objective has been augmented by analysis by Jon Altman and his colleagues of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (NATSISS) data in which they reviewed the value of the customary economy as part of his *Hybrid economic futures for remote Indigenous Australia* project.

Despite this increased focus on documenting the wellbeing outcomes from the work of Indigenous rangers, objective measurement of wellbeing and its explicit links to managing country remain elusive and possibly unobtainable. As the notion of and criteria for wellbeing are intensely personal, it may be that the **assertions** and **expressions** of links between wellbeing and managing country reported at the wellbeing workshop, and elsewhere in People on Country communications, are as valid a measure as is possible or reasonable. In addition, however, it is legitimate to **infer** personal and community wellbeing outcomes from numerous activities undertaken during the People on Country project, including:

- Ranger and other employment;
- Personal development resulting from participation in workshops, conferences and visits to research organisations, government agencies and other institutions and relationships with researchers and other Indigenous land and sea managers;
- Increased access to livelihood resources, especially in wetlands protected from disturbance by feral animals or in landscapes subjected to improved fire regimes;
- Improved local governance arrangements that have led to greater capacity for planning, partnership-building and investment, which in turn is yielding dividends regarding employment and training opportunities in environmental and cultural heritage management.

It is also true that some of these positive outcomes can have unintended consequences that may impact negatively on wellbeing: employment brings new personal stresses; travel to workshops and conferences may place additional

¹⁰ *Wellbeing Workshop Report* page 6.

stresses on families; acquiring new environmental management knowledge, skills and technologies contribute to a process of rapid cultural change that is already underway across remote Indigenous Australia.

Though gathering evidence for the link between enhanced Indigenous wellbeing and Indigenous land and sea management was a core objective of the People on Country project, I found that all project participants, including representatives of the Sidney Myer Fund, were well aware of the complex challenges in objectively establishing this link. While not developing a stand-alone objective measure for wellbeing, the People on Country Project has contributed a significant body of qualitative, associative and inferred evidence of the wellbeing benefits that are derived from connection to and care for Country. These benefits are elaborated by Indigenous partners in the book *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*.

Research Objective 2: Obtaining evidence of environmental outcomes from land and sea management activities

The main driver for this objective was the growing need to demonstrate improved environmental management returns for the considerable and increasing investment by government agencies, commercial corporations, non-government conservation organisations and others in supporting Indigenous land and sea management groups. What was striking about discussions with representatives of Indigenous partner organisations, however, was the impact of obtaining this evidence on Indigenous rangers and their communities. For Indigenous groups and communities that have witnessed significant environmental impacts from the introduction of pest animals, invasive plants and altered fire regimes over many years it was a novel experience wellbeing for them to collect evidence that demonstrated their own effectiveness in reversing some of those adverse impacts.

The Ranger Coordinator at Ngukurr (Clarry Rogers), for example, reported that community members were sceptical that anything could be done to return the health of freshwater wetlands that had been ploughed up and polluted by pigs and cattle thereby denying the local Aboriginal community access to traditional food resources, including fish, freshwater turtles and various plant foods. As a result of collaboration between Dr Emilie Ens and the Ngukurr Rangers, the construction of feral animal exclusion fences and regular monitoring of freshwater environments demonstrated that active management and vigilant maintenance of fences could lead to the recovery of freshwater habitats and the return of traditional food species.

These achievements have resulted in increased confidence and pride among communities and rangers that they can influence their own surroundings and futures, and that active intervention can improve environmental, cultural, social

and health outcomes. At Ngukurr, for example, the community has requested that feral animal exclusion fences be installed at other important wetlands near the community.

Examples of other evidence that environmental management outcomes have been achieved with and by Indigenous partner organisations include:

- Collection of baseline environmental information essential for managing country, including the first frog survey of the Arnhem Land Plateau undertaken by the Warddeken Rangers and resulting in the discovery of a previously undescribed species;
- The reduction of wildfires and carbon pollution through restoration of traditional fire burning practices by the Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers in southwest Gulf of Carpentaria;
- Recovery of billabong habitats as the result of culling of buffaloes by Djelk Rangers;
- Indications that increased water conductivity and ammonium levels resulting from buffalo and pig activities in freshwater wetlands are leading to paperbark (*Melaleuca*) deaths – research initiated following empirical observations by Djelk women rangers linking the presence of buffalo and pigs to paperbark deaths.

Collection of this and other evidence, combined with training in the use of CyberTracker software for collecting environmental data and other capacity building initiatives, has strengthened the ability of Indigenous land and sea managers to demonstrate the effectiveness of their activities to funders, partners, their own communities and themselves.

Research Objective 3: Assisting Indigenous land and sea managers to make their voices heard in national environmental debates, such as climate change and water policy

The most direct assistance provided to Indigenous land and sea managers to have their voices heard is through support provided by the People on Country project to contribute to conferences, workshops and publications. These initiatives have immediate impacts on workshop and conference participants and the readers of publications, but there are also more lasting impacts from building the capacity and confidence of Indigenous rangers to communicate in regional and national forums and to appreciate that the work they do is of interest and importance to the wider Australian community.

Particularly noteworthy were the symposia on Indigenous environmental management convened by Dr Emilie Ens from People on Country and others during the 2010, 2011 and 2012 Ecological Society of Australia (ESA) conferences. Travel

by Indigenous participants to the conferences was funded through the Indigenous Travel grant set up by Dr Ens and the ESA, and financed by the Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund, The Nature Conservancy, Territory NRM and Charles Darwin University.

These events focused on Indigenous ecology and land management as an emergent theme in mainstream Australian ecology and provided opportunities for many Indigenous land and sea managers, including those associated with the People on Country project, to communicate directly with the ecological science community of Australia. In January 2012 a free online publication *Caring for country: Australian natural and cultural resource management* was published by *Ecological Management and Restoration*, the journal of the Ecological Society of Australia, based largely on presentations delivered at the 2010 symposium.

People on Country has also provided opportunities for Indigenous land and sea managers to meet together to exchange ideas and experiences, and to learn new environmental monitoring, data collection and data analysis techniques. These opportunities have enabled Indigenous voices to be heard and strengthened through collective experience and shared understanding of environmental issues facing remote Australia. In June 2010, for example, Emilie Ens and Katherine May from People on Country organised a three day workshop for women rangers from five ranger groups of the Top End to discuss the production of a women rangers' information book. A follow-up women rangers' workshop was held in Canberra in April 2012, followed by the publication of *Indigenous Women Rangers Talking – Sharing ideas and information about women rangers' work* in which Indigenous women rangers' voices, ideas, concerns, achievements and aspirations are clearly expressed, accompanied by several hundred colour photographs. These workshops and publication are indicative of the strong support the People on Country project has provided to Indigenous women's involvement in environmental research, management and monitoring over the last five years – helping to establish some gender balance in some male-dominated ranger groups.

Less directly, but no less importantly, the voices of Indigenous land and sea managers were heard through the numerous submissions made by People on Country researchers and other CAEPR staff to various government and parliamentary inquiries and reviews, thereby communicating directly with funders and policy-makers with influence over programs and legislation that impact on Indigenous land and sea activities. These submissions are listed in each of the People on Country annual reports and available on the People on Country website.

Publication of the book *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures* carries the voices of People on Country's Indigenous partners and researchers to a national and international audience¹¹.

¹¹ Approximately 500 people attended events to launch the book in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Darwin, at which about 300 copies of were sold, and a total of about 1,000 copies sold during the first month since publication (J. Altman, personal communication).

Research Objective 4: Influencing government policy and programs that support Indigenous land and sea management

As noted in the 2010 evaluation report, it can be difficult to attribute a direct link between the outcomes of a particular research project, lobbying by a particular Indigenous group or the contents of a particular submission to a government review to influence on specific government policies and programs. What is certain, however, is that there has been an exponential increase in government (especially Federal Government) support for Indigenous land and sea policies and programs over the last 10 to 15 years, and especially during the last five years. This period has coincided with increased efforts by researchers and regional Indigenous organisations to support Indigenous land and sea managers and to contribute to the development of appropriate government policies and programs.

As noted earlier, throughout the People on Country project CAEPR has maintained a longstanding tradition of preparing detailed written submissions to parliamentary inquiries and various government reviews. Efforts by People on Country researchers to support Indigenous partner organisations to express their views, concerns and achievements at regional and national workshops and conferences has also informed policy debates regarding Indigenous land and sea management programs.

Consideration of whether more focused action research could be devoted to the field of policy and program development during subsequent research projects is addressed in section 4.3. below.

Research Objective 5: Attracting greater government and private investment in Indigenous land and sea management

This research objective can be assessed with respect to:

1. Greater investment in the land and sea management activities of the Indigenous partner organisations associated with the People on Country project; and
2. Greater investment in Indigenous land and sea management nationally.

The Indigenous partner organisations associated with the People on Country project are at very diverse stages of development. Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation and Bawinanga Aboriginal Corporation (the umbrella organisation for Djelk Rangers), for example, are long established land and sea management agencies with multiple government, corporate, research and conservation NGO partnerships and multi-million dollar budgets. For these organisations, the People on Country project represents significant, but proportionately modest, additional contributions to well-developed governance, financial, training and environmental management arrangements already in place. People on Country research, and

especially support in the preparation of their annual reports (see further comments below), strengthens the capacity of these organisations to maintain their already considerable momentum.

Complementing the direct involvement of People on Country researchers in supporting land management on Djelk and Warddeken IPAs, Prof. Jon Altman is playing a major role in the development of the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust as an innovative and sustainable funding vehicle to support the long term management of these two IPAs. In his role of Secretary on the Board, Prof. Altman is assisting the Trust to achieve its goals of building a capital base of \$10 million by 2018 and \$30 million by 2027. The intention is to secure private and philanthropic investment to provide annual income for land management in excess of \$1 million per year (depending on investment returns) to provide assurance against fluctuations in government funding and increased capacity for self-support. If successful, this approach may provide a model for many other Indigenous land management groups to follow.

For other Indigenous partners, such as Yugul Mungi Rangers and Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers, which are at much earlier stages in their development, the People on Country project has played a major role in enabling them to establish governance foundations, capacity and confidence on which they are now building. During the life of the People on Country project, both of these organisations, with additional assistance from the Northern Land Council, have been successful in attracting Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Program funding to enable Traditional Owners to consider and potentially plan the establishment of IPAs on their country. Without the governance and capacity building support provided by People on Country it is unlikely that this IPA funding would have been made available at this time.

With respect to national investment in Indigenous land and sea management, the outcomes of People on Country research are part of a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the social, cultural, health and wellbeing benefits of Indigenous land and sea management activities. The wealth of publications and other communication outputs from People on Country endorses and encourages further government investments in this field. In 2011 Reviews of the Federal Government's Indigenous Protected Area and Working on Country programs, with which the People on Country project has maintained close contact, concluded that these were among the Government's most successful Indigenous support programs in terms of tangible outcomes – especially environmental and employment outcomes. While it is not possible to nominate a government investment quantum in dollars for which People on Country can claim credit, the action research activities over the last five years has certainly maintained the pressure and rationale for continued and increased investment in Indigenous land and sea management.

People on Country research has also highlighted some of the unique attributes of land and sea management that make these activities so attractive and appropriate for Indigenous people, especially (but not only) in remote communities. These unique attributes, referred to by Jon Altman as the “bliss point” at which cultural values, traditional expertise and environmental needs meet, may hold important messages for understanding the challenges and pathways towards achieving strong, healthy and sustainable remote Indigenous communities in the future. In this respect, the People on Country project, and other research currently underway to support land and sea management in remote Indigenous Australia, may make a significant contribution to better targeted government investment more broadly in Indigenous communities.

Research Objective 6: Building capacity of Indigenous land and sea managers, including governance

Building the capacity of Indigenous people to overcome social and economic disadvantages has been the focus of national Indigenous policies over the last twenty years, paralleling international goals and efforts directed at capacity building as a tool for overcoming poverty and other forms of social disadvantage globally. This focus on capacity building has led to the development of many definitions and some contested perspectives on what actually constitutes capacity building¹² and how it is achieved.

Consistent with these international, national and Indigenous-specific meanings, all of the People on Country research projects have contributed in some way to capacity building within the associated Indigenous partner organisations. Examples of capacity building activities are summarised in Table 2 below.

¹² Capacity building usually refers to strengthening the skills, competencies and abilities of people and communities in developing societies so they can overcome the causes of their exclusion and suffering.

Table 2: Examples of capacity building activities from People on Country project

CAPACITY CATEGORY	PEOPLE ON COUNTRY PROJECTS	CAPACITY-BUILDING ACTIVITIES
Governance / Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance of Indigenous land and sea management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance planning with Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers; Support for successful IPA Program funding application; Support for production of Annual reports for Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, Yirralka Rangers, Djelk Rangers and Warddeken Land Management Limited.
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CyberTracker applications for Indigenous land and sea management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of CyberTracker sequences for environmental monitoring with Djelk Rangers; Development of CyberTracker sequences with Yirralka Miyalk (Women) Rangers on traditional knowledge associated with seed collecting; Delivery of CyberTracker training at the 2010 North Australian Women's Ranger forum, in which Warddeken, Djelk, Yirralka Miyalk and Dhimurru Rangers participated; Purchase of CyberTracker units and associated training for Yugul Mangi Rangers; Delivery of CyberTracker training to 50 Working on Country and IPA staff drawn from IPAs in southern Australia.
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting Indigenous environmental management and monitoring CyberTracker applications for Indigenous land and sea management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of rigorous environmental monitoring techniques and protocols that are yielding scientifically credible data on impacts of feral animals and results of management responses, including culling and exclusion fences;

Science (continuing)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arnhem Land Plateau frog survey with Warddeken Rangers, transferring survey skills to Rangers and generating valuable baseline data for future monitoring; • Compilation of flora and fauna databases in collaboration with Indigenous partners and with CSIRO's Australian Virtual Herbarium, resulting in the collection of several species previously unknown to science, including one frog species, one invertebrate species and three algae.
Environmental management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Indigenous environmental management and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of weed and feral animal management strategy with Yirralka Rangers; • Development and implementation of pig and buffalo control and monitoring measures with Djelk and Yugul Mangi Rangers; • Planning and implementation of Indigenous fire burning practices on Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa country.
Indigenous knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Indigenous environmental management and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of CyberTracker sequences with Yirralka Miyalk (Women) Rangers on traditional knowledge associated with seed collecting; • Recognition of Aboriginal customary law in the development of contemporary governance arrangements for Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers^a; • Collaboration between Warddeken Land Management and Macquarie University Indigenous Bio-Resources Group to investigate medicinal qualities of bush medicines;

Note

^a Yirralka Ranger Coordinator, Dave Preece, advised that the development of the weed and feral animal management strategy was instrumental in having the Blue Mud Bay region recognised as an Area of High Conservation Significance and in securing Caring for Our Country funding to manage the area.

Indigenous knowledge (continuing)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Indigenous taxonomies to complement Western science taxonomies in the development of fauna and flora databases.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for a delivering presentations at workshops and conferences, including symposia on Indigenous land and sea management at the Ecological Society of Australia conferences; • Collaborating in the preparation of scientific and community focused publications; • Practical experience of developing an ethnobotanical DVD with Warddeken Land Management Rangers.
Wellbeing and self-confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing and socioeconomics associated with Indigenous land and sea management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing outcomes area asserted and inferred from all People on Country activities. • Self-confidence of Indigenous individuals enhanced through visits to Canberra and to conferences and participation in the end-of-project book launch events in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Darwin.

4.2 Impacts on stakeholders

Interviews with representatives of Indigenous partner organisations for this evaluation has confirmed the finding from the 2010 evaluation that the impacts of People on Country activities on Indigenous Rangers, land and sea management organisations and their associated communities have been overwhelmingly positive.

These positive impacts have derived from:

- Enhanced self-confidence derived from learning new skills, demonstrating environmental management outcomes and appreciation from community members who are benefiting from better access to traditional resources as a result of better environmental management;
- Enhanced environmental management options and funding opportunities as a result of improved governance, access to planning funding and expertise (e.g. through successful IPA Program applications) and new technological skills (e.g. use of CyberTracker);

- Broadening of social, cultural and intellectual horizons through participation in regional and national workshops and conferences, and visiting national institutions in Canberra (ANU, AIATSIS, Museum of Australia, Parliament House, etc.);
- Ranger groups learning from each other through shared experiences, workshops, training and on-ground activities;
- Developing and maintaining relationships with researchers from CAEPR and other institutions that provide important, mutually beneficial links between residents of remote communities and the wider Australian society.

Interviews with People on Country researchers confirmed this assessment of the impacts of the projects on their Indigenous partners. Several researchers commented that rangers who were reluctant to communicate and take initiative at the start of the project have become much more expressive, more active in making suggestions and taking action, and more interested in learning new skills and seeking new information.

As noted earlier, however, these positive impacts are likely to be accompanied by other impacts associated with cultural and social change. It is rare and perhaps elusive to achieve positive impacts without some collateral negative consequences. People on Country researchers and their Indigenous land and sea manager partners are agents of change. All parties have taken care to ensure that any changes that result from this collaboration are as positive as possible, but in reality it is not possible to foresee the consequences for individuals, communities or organisations for any change, however desired or consensual. In this instance, the evidence strongly suggests that positive impacts outweigh any unintended negative consequences and that the process of delivering change has occurred through negotiated, agreed and ethical processes.

4.3 Effectiveness of individual projects

My assessment, as indicated by the preceding sections, is that each People on Country project has been effective in delivering a high standard of outcomes commensurate with the **action** and **research** goals of the collaborating parties. In the reviews of each project below I consider possible opportunities to improve their effectiveness in subsequent research endeavours.

Supporting Indigenous environmental management and monitoring

In my view, this is the linchpin project around which the broader People on Country project revolves. Improving environmental management and monitoring is the core business of the Indigenous land and sea management partners and was an important incentive for these partners to participate in People on Country.

This is not to diminish the importance of the other projects, which are the enablers and catalysts that strengthened the central goal of supporting Indigenous environmental management and monitoring.

Ecologist Dr Emilie Ens has shouldered the main responsibility for delivering effective outcomes for this project. As occurred during the 2010 evaluation, Indigenous partners and fellow researchers consulted for the current evaluation acknowledged the key role that Emilie has played in building on-ground relationships, responding to local Indigenous priorities in developing environmental monitoring and management trials, designing CyberTracker sequences and training packages and collaborating with rangers and partner organisations in publishing outcomes in the scientific literature and in community-friendly formats.

During the last two years of the project, botanists Ms Gillian Towler and Mr Sam Bentley-Toon have provided valuable support and additional technical expertise for this project. Emilie, Gill and Sam have demonstrated how effective independent scientists can be in supporting and providing new ideas and skills for Indigenous land and sea managers.

Given the small number of researchers, the large number of project partners, the remoteness of research locations and the diversity of research, management, monitoring and communication projects undertaken, I cannot envisage how this project could have been delivered more effectively. As will be discussed further below, however, it is puzzling how little collaboration there appears to have occurred between People and Country and other initiatives to support Indigenous land and sea managers in the Top End – particularly those delivered by the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA) and the Northern Land Council. Perhaps had such collaboration been possible, greater effectiveness could have been achieved both for People on Country land and sea management support outcomes and for the equivalent objectives of NAILSMA's initiatives, but without a better understanding of the barriers to such collaboration this assessment is purely speculative.

CyberTracker applications for Indigenous land and sea management

This project introduced CyberTracker software (and the hand-held computer device that runs the software) as a data collection and management tool to some Indigenous partners, while for others this project complemented their existing use of CyberTracker. Again this project was undertaken primarily by Dr Emilie Ens, with input from other People on Country researchers and other colleagues.

The effectiveness of this project resulted from the bringing together of appropriate technology, tested software and well-targeted training to meet the data collection and land management priorities identified by the Indigenous partners. In particular, this project complemented and strengthened the *Supporting*

Indigenous environmental management and monitoring project, and also played a role in recording traditional knowledge and aided in the preparation of communication outputs.

Dr Ens has also delivered training to, and adoption of CyberTracker software and technology among, IPA managers in southern Australia through collaboration with the Indigenous Protected Area Program of the Commonwealth Department of Environment, Water, Sustainability, Population and Communities – a process that has spread the effectiveness of this project beyond the intended geographic scope of the People on Country project.

Once again it is puzzling that little or no collaboration appears to have occurred between People on Country's CyberTracker initiatives and those provided by NAILSMA, particularly through NAILSMA's Saltwater People Project¹³. Several of the People on Country partners are also collaborating with NAILSMA and receiving CyberTracker training and support through the Saltwater People on Country Project – using the same technology and software but under the rubric "I-Tracker". On the other hand, the People on Country CyberTracker sequences were tailored specifically to complement People on Country environmental monitoring, management and data collection initiatives and did not overlap with sequences developed by the Saltwater People Project to meet their project-specific objectives.

Notwithstanding my puzzlement, I note that none of the Indigenous partners I consulted raised any issues relating to the two sources of CyberTracker support, or the apparent absence of collaboration between them.

Governance of Indigenous land and sea management

Good local governance, with varying degrees of regional and national support, is at the heart of successful Indigenous organisations, including Indigenous land and sea management organisations. Without good local governance plans cannot be made or implemented, funds are difficult or impossible to obtain, partnerships with government agencies and others cannot be sustained, and training and employment opportunities cannot be realised. For those emerging Indigenous land and sea management partners, such as Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers, this project has been foundational to their development over the last few years and to their sustainable future.

This project has been largely implemented by Dr Seán Kerins who, prior to joining People on Country, has had many years' experience working with and supporting remote Indigenous communities in the Gulf country of the Northern Territory. Seán has effectively responded to the expressed aspirations of Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa people to reassert their management of their traditional country. To achieve this goal he has delivered a combination of governance training and support and facilitated the re-engagement of Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa Rangers

¹³ http://www.nailsma.org.au/projects/dugong_turtle.html.

in the management of their country – especially through the re-establishment of Indigenous burning practices. The improved governance that has resulted from this project has been rewarded by a successful grant from the IPA Program to undertake consultations and planning for a potential IPA on Garawa and Waanyi/Garawa country.

This project has tackled the specific governance challenges of communities in the southwest Gulf – communities that face their unique legacies of colonisation, frontier violence, dispossession, marginalisation, remoteness and recent impacts from mining developments. The project adds to the growing body of research focusing on the importance and challenges of achieving contemporary governance structures and processes that honour local traditional social and cultural practices while also enabling a functional interface with 21st century Australia.

Other more established Indigenous partners, such as Yirralka, Dhimurru, Warddeken and Djelk have also benefitted from the additional organisational support provided by People on Country, particularly through the preparation of annual reports for these organisations. By demonstrating the effectiveness of this communication and confidence-building tool and by establishing templates that will enable these organisations to produce their own annual reports in future, this project has delivered a legacy that has the potential to further strengthen these longstanding organisations. It will be a test of this legacy to observe if the production of these annual reports continues once the support from the People on Country project ends.

Wellbeing and socioeconomics associated with Indigenous land and sea management

The effectiveness of this project has been discussed in some detail in section 4.1 above. Given the complexities of defining, supporting and measuring wellbeing, this project has been effective in strengthening the body of evidence that links the wellbeing of Indigenous people and communities and their involvement in managing their country – particularly when that involvement is well supported through employment and training programs and partnerships. The absence of objective measures for Indigenous wellbeing reflects the intangible nature of the challenge rather than a reflection of the effectiveness of this project.

Nevertheless, there are nuggets of information, observation and reflection throughout the People on Country communication outputs, including the People on Country book that I feel could be mined for further insights or research questions relating to Indigenous wellbeing. Examples of these nuggets are:

- The observation from a researcher that, once the researcher had left the community, rangers usually did not carry out tasks that they were asked to undertake by the researcher even though the tasks (such as maintaining a fence protecting wetlands from feral animal impacts) had been shown to result in beneficial outcomes for the environment and the community;
- The application of Jon Altman's concept of the 'bliss point' of the hybrid economy in the context of Indigenous ranger employment.

What do these and other tantalising insights tell us about the role of Indigenous rangers, the nature of work in remote communities and their links with wellbeing? If Indigenous ranger employment enhances wellbeing, what are the barriers or disincentives to undertaking ranger tasks in the absence of a researcher/mentor? Is this apparent inertia or lack of follow-through different from the experience of researchers working with non-Indigenous land managers? What are the characteristics of the 'bliss point' as it applies to Indigenous Ranger work? Can these characteristics be replicated in other scenarios to enhance wellbeing? How can the answers to these and other questions inform the future of Indigenous land and sea management **action** and Indigenous and sea management **research**?

Strengthening policies and investment for Indigenous land and sea management

As noted in section 4.1 above, People on Country researchers and other CAEPR staff (Jon Altman in particular) have contributed to numerous workshops, conferences, reviews and inquiries with the explicit goal of strengthening policies and investment for Indigenous land and sea management. That such policies and investments have indeed strengthened (albeit belatedly) over the last five to ten years has undoubtedly resulted from concerted pressure, evidence and lobbying from many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and organisations, among which CAEPR has played a prominent role. The extent to which CAEPR's detailed, well-researched and thoughtful submissions and recommendations has contributed to these strengthening policies and investments may never be possible to determine¹⁴, yet there is the intriguing possibility that this objective could be subjected to more targeted action research.

People on Country has been effective in its use of workshops and symposia as tools to bring researchers and Indigenous partners together to progress many issues and to communicate with, for example, the scientific community. Could this and other action research tools be used to more directly influence Indigenous land and sea policies and investments – for example by convening a Policy and Investment Forum to which selected researchers, Indigenous partners, policy makers

¹⁴ Staff from the Commonwealth Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) have acknowledged the contribution of the work by CAEPR to the development of Working on Country Program in 2006 which provides funding for the employment of Indigenous rangers nationally (J. Altman, pers.com.).

and investors could be invited? Could the action research lessons learnt from engagement with and support for Indigenous land and sea managers in remote northern communities be applied (in modified forms) to more productively engage with and influence policy makers and investors in Canberra and elsewhere?

Communication

Good communication, through the CAEPR website, research journals, community reports, annual reports, newsletters, Steering Committee minutes, photographs, workshop and conference presentations, DVDs, etc., has been a feature of the People on Country project from the start. In recognition of the key role of communication as an action research tool, *Communication* was designated as a distinct research project following the 2010 evaluation.

Given the number and diversity of communication products generated by the People on Country project and other partner projects associated with CAEPR, it is highly likely that this communication has indeed been effective. However, despite its designation as a research project, there does not appear to have been an explicit attempt to determine the effectiveness of this impressive communication output. Consideration could be given to what communication lessons from the People on Country experience can inform future research projects of this nature.

A significant communication legacy of the People on Country project is the book *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures* published in October 2012. The book comprises a collection of essays in two parts by researchers and by Indigenous partners (sometimes with assistance from researchers) respectively. The book does not attempt to present all the People on Country project outcomes, but rather provides a forum for researchers and Indigenous partners to reflect on key matters arising from or impacting on their projects and their varied experiences of Indigenous land and sea management. The scope of the book extends beyond the geographic boundaries and personnel of People on Country to include essays from other CAEPR researchers and their Indigenous partners working in related fields. The chosen format provides a forum for research findings, personal reflections and statements of opportunities, achievements and constraints relating to Indigenous environmental management in the early 21st century – a 2012 literary time capsule that will be used as a benchmark to judge progress in this field in succeeding decades. I anticipate that this volume will provide a valuable addition to the growing canon devoted to the role of Indigenous land and sea management in the lives of Indigenous Australians.

Many of the essays, and especially the concluding chapter by Jon Altman, contain analysis and speculation about the direction of future Indigenous land and sea management policies, challenges and directions. Many intriguing questions are asked that will be answered in one way or another by the passage of time, and in the meantime could form the basis of action research questions that may yet influence the course of that history yet to be lived.

4.4 Positive factors influencing project outcomes

Expanding on some of factors identified earlier, positive factors influencing outcomes from the People on Country project include:

- A funding source (Sidney Myer Fund) that is directed at overcoming social and economic disadvantage – hence the imperative for action;
- A negotiated project design that focused on the acquisition of evidence for improvements in wellbeing and environmental management – hence the imperative for research;
- A respectful approach to partnership-building that enabled the technical aspects of the research to be guided by professional researchers and the priority-setting for on-ground action to be set by local Indigenous land and sea managers;
- Long established relationships between several of the researchers and Indigenous communities in the Top End;
- The diversity of Indigenous partners at different stages in their development as land and sea managers, thereby enabling a greater range of action research questions to be pursued;
- A strong personal commitment by all researchers to enhancing Indigenous wellbeing and environmental management, while also maintaining high levels of research outcomes and outputs;
- A commitment by Indigenous partner organisations to take opportunities presented by the People on Country project, including a willingness to exchange knowledge and to adapt management practices in the light of research outcomes;
- A diversity of research disciplines represented in the People on Country research team that enabled a broad range of action research issues to be addressed.

4.5 Negative factors impacting on project outcomes

Constraints of time, funding and personnel inevitably limited the extent of support that could be provided across the remotely located Indigenous partner organisations. A bigger, more diverse research team could perhaps have yielded more on-ground outcomes, provided more continuous support for environmental management and monitoring innovation and governance development.

The strong pre-existing links between CAEPR and Indigenous communities of the Top End has resulted, by design, in a project which focuses almost exclusively on that region of Australia. While other CAEPR staff, notably Dr Janet Hunt and Geoff

Buchanan, have undertaken action research to support Indigenous land and sea management in New South Wales and the Kimberley respectively, the primarily Arnhem Land focus of the project diminishes the extent to which People on Country can provide a national perspective on trends, challenges and achievements regarding Indigenous land and sea management in Australia. Though this was never the intention of the project, its somewhat narrow geographic focus has limited the extent to which the lessons learnt over the last five years can be viewed within a national context.

In view of the close collaboration between the CAEPR-based researchers with Charles Darwin University, CSIRO and NAILSMA on other Top End projects, it is surprising that collaboration with these institutions was not further developed during the People on Country project, despite the presence of senior representatives of NAILSMA, Northern Land Council and CSIRO on the People on Country Steering Committee. This limited collaboration should not be viewed as a criticism of the project, but rather as additional “data” to be analysed in considering policy development and further action research to support Indigenous land and sea management in remote communities. Questions for consideration could include:

- What are the barriers to and benefits from collaboration between research and regional Indigenous organisations to support community-based Indigenous land and sea management?
- Does the limited collaboration evident in the People on Country project reflect the recent growth in the Indigenous land and sea management “industry” to the extent that research and regional Indigenous organisations are now competing for roles, niches and funding?
- If so, is this competition a positive factor in strengthening policy and investment in this field?
- How can this competitive arena be used for the advantage of community-based Indigenous land and sea management?

4.6 Future directions

The People on Country project took place during a critical period of growth and consolidation in the development of Indigenous land and sea management in Australia. What began as a series of disconnected community-based Indigenous initiatives from the early 1980s in Queensland¹⁵, initially without support from government agencies (other than CDEP), research institutions or regional Indigenous organisations, is now a well-established national movement that

¹⁵ For further details on the development of caring for country initiatives in Australia see Smyth, D. (2001) Indigenous land and sea management – a case study, in 2011 *State of the Environment Report* – <http://www.environment.gov.au/soe/2011/report/land/pubs/soe2011-supplementary-land-indigenous-land-and-sea-management-case-study.pdf>.

attracts significant, though still inadequate, investment from governments and other sources and which is recognised as an essential component in national efforts to manage Australia's natural and cultural heritage.

The collaborative projects undertaken by People on Country have assisted the Indigenous partner organisations, whatever their current stage of development, to be better prepared to develop their land and sea management capacity, to develop new partnerships and to take up new opportunities that will emerge from growing recognition of the importance of their work. The outcomes and publications emerging from People on Country make it clear that, despite ongoing challenges, caring for country will be a central component of the lives and economies of remote Indigenous communities for the foreseeable future. Stripped bare of the technical details, plans and paradigms, the People on Country story is a confirmation that land and sea management has a relentlessly special place in the lives of Indigenous Australians and that the value of this special place, this bliss point, this propitious niche¹⁶, is increasingly recognised by governments and the wider Australian society.

Individual research activities by the People on Country team will continue to contribute to this field, either through their involvement in other CAEPR/ANU projects, or with other institutions. Indigenous partner organisations are also likely to continue to develop research partnerships with these and/or other researchers, subject always to the availability of funding and other support.

The success of the People on Country project at this particular time and with these particular Indigenous partners begs questions to be asked about the nature of similar Indigenous-focused action research projects in the future, including:

- Will the legitimate demands for greater Indigenous autonomy make projects like People on Country more difficult to establish in future?
- Will Indigenous land and sea management agencies seek to exert more control over research relating to their agendas and responsibilities?
- Will the emerging competition between research institutions and regional Indigenous organisations strengthen or weaken the research support provided to community-based Indigenous land and sea managers?
- Can action research elicit a greater understanding of the bliss point characteristics of Indigenous rangeland to guide Indigenous policies and programs beyond land and sea management?

¹⁶ In this context a propitious niche is an employment role that particularly fits the skills, aspirations and interests of Traditional Owners and is valued by governments and the wider Australian society. For a discussion on Indigenous ranger employment as a propitious niche see Smyth (2001) above and Greiner, R. (2010). The potential for a conservation economy in the tropical savannas based on 'payments for environmental services'. In, Gerritsen, R. (ed.) North Australian Political Economy. CDU Press, Darwin.

The evaluation identified the following emerging research questions, which were discussed at the end-of-project Steering Committee meeting and which could be pursued by follow-up research projects:

- Benefits of Indigenous land and sea management:
 - Development of further social, cultural and ecological indicators, building on evidence acquired during People on Country;
- Understanding the bliss point/propitious niche:
 - What factors contribute to the success of Indigenous ranger employment?
- Collaboration with regional organisations:
 - What are the barriers and opportunities for collaboration between research institutions and regional Indigenous organisations to support Indigenous land and sea management?
- Indigenous governance in cross-cultural contexts:
 - What organisational structures and performance criteria are required to develop effective and culturally appropriate governance to support Indigenous land and sea management activities?
- Action research on policy influence:
 - What “cross-cultural”¹⁷ methods can be developed to transfer action research outcomes into policy development and implementation?
 - What indicators can be developed to demonstrate policy impacts from action research?

The project also highlighted the pivotal role that land and sea management coordinators play in the successful operation of ranger groups. These positions require a complex range of organisational, resource management, financial and cross-cultural skills. The end-of-project Steering Committee meeting discussed the need for targeted education and training courses that better prepare coordinators and potential coordinators for their demanding roles.

5 Conclusions

The People on Country project has demonstrated the effectiveness of a multi-disciplinary, action research project that combines the expertise and commitments of researchers with the knowledge, cultural obligations and aspirations of Indigenous partners. Key factors that have contributed to this achievement include:

¹⁷ In this context “cross-cultural” refers to the challenges of bridging the communication gap between the “cultures” of researchers and policy-makers.

- Flexibility in research design that enabled the researches to respond to and meet needs and objectives articulated by Indigenous partners¹⁸;
- Sufficient and appropriately flexible investment in funds, human resources and time to build relationships, develop and test methodologies, and deliver demonstrable outcomes;
- A good fit of researchers and Indigenous partners that built on existing relationships, experience and commitments;
- Lateral thinking and innovation that enabled the project to become more than the sum of its component parts – e.g. through exchange of information and learnings between projects and groups, support for the role of Indigenous women in managing and researching country and the mentoring of individual Indigenous participants;
- Project governance and management that was responsive to developments and demands during the life of the project, including responding positively to the outcomes of the mid-project evaluation.

The availability of financial support from the Sidney Myer Fund, combined with contributions from ANU and other sources, provided the opportunity for a project that was less constrained by the often narrow goals of investors in many other research projects. The project demonstrated that research can provide a service to Indigenous societies and open new opportunities for Indigenous individuals. The project confirms that successful Indigenous-focussed research views Indigenous people and communities as clients and partners rather than merely land owners and informants. This presents a challenge for research funders, institutions and policy-makers who may prefer the role of priority setters to that of service providers. The closure of the People on Country project raises the question: where are the ongoing sources of funding and expertise to meet Indigenous clients' needs in the Arnhem Land and Gulf of Carpentaria communities that were the focus of this project and in many Indigenous communities elsewhere in Australia.

5.1 Key findings

The key findings are that the People on Country project has:

- Met, and in some cases exceeded, all of its nominated research objectives;
- Set a high standard of collaborative action research, that has delivered tangible and productive outcomes that contribute to knowledge generation (research) and community-based land and sea management (action);

¹⁸ At the end-of-project Steering Committee meeting, a representative from Warddeken IPA suggested the establishment of a register of researchers who could assist Indigenous land and sea managers to undertake baseline biodiversity and other research.

- Established an effective, ethical and productive model of collaboration between a research institution and remote Indigenous communities – a model which enables the expertise of both partners to be applied to their mutual benefit;
- Effectively communicated the outcomes of research collaborations to a diversity of audiences – Indigenous, academic, government and the wider community;
- Generated ideas and questions that can be pursued through further action research to support Indigenous land and sea management and wider indigenous policy development.

5.2 Feedback to researchers and partners

Feedback on the evaluation was provided to researchers and partners through the following processes:

- June 2012: Distribution of Draft Evaluation Report to researchers, Indigenous partners, Steering Committee members and Sidney Myer Fund;
- June 2012: Evaluation workshop for People on Country researchers, held at CAEPR;
- October 2012: Distribution of Revised Draft Evaluation Report, incorporating feedback received on the earlier draft and from the Evaluation Workshop;
- October 2012: end-of-project Steering Committee meeting, including a presentation on the project evaluation and feedback from representatives of Indigenous partners, researchers and Steering Committee members;
- November 2012: Distribution of Final Evaluation Report to researchers, Indigenous partners, Steering Committee members and Sidney Myer Fund;
- December 2012: Distribution of Final Evaluation Report to researchers, Indigenous partners, Steering Committee members and Sidney Myer Fund and uploading on the People on Country website.

5.3 Project closure plan

Formal closure of the People on Country project includes the following steps:

- Publication and launching of book *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures* in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney, Canberra and Darwin.
- Distribution of the Final Evaluation Report, as described above;
- Distribution of Final Project Report by Prof. Jon Altman.

Elements of People on Country will continue beyond the formal closure of the project through the following processes:

- Publication of academic journal articles and other communications by individual researchers, based on research undertaken during People on Country;
- Ongoing or new research undertaken by individual researchers that continues or builds on research undertaken during People on Country¹⁹, including opportunities to explore action research questions identified in section 4.6 above;
- Ongoing activities undertaken by Indigenous partners based on methods developed during People on Country – e.g. preparation of annual reports, maintenance of feral animal exclusion fences around culturally significant billabongs, etc.

¹⁹ For example: Prof. Jon Altman's ARC Hybrid Economy research project; Dr Seán Kerins' Northern Environment Research Program (NERP) funded project on Indigenous governance in the south-west Gulf of Carpentaria; Dr Emilie's Ens has been awarded an ARC Discovery Early Career Research Award (2013–2015) to support her ongoing involvement in action research with Indigenous ranger groups with whom she has worked during People on Country; Dr Bill Fogarty will continue researching and supporting the link between education and caring for country through the ANU's National Centre for Indigenous Studies (NCIS).

APPENDIX 1

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PEOPLE ON COUNTRY END-OF-PROJECT EVALUATION

SIDNEY MYER FUND
INDIGENOUS POVERTY REDUCTION AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN
NORTH AUSTRALIA PROJECT.

Project Evaluation Consultancy: Terms of Reference

PROJECT BACKGROUND

CAEPR is in the process of completing a five year applied research project focusing on Aboriginal land and sea management in the tropical savannah of the Top End and Gulf Country of the Northern Territory. The research is called 'People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures', and it is largely sponsored by the Sidney Myer Fund's Poverty and Disadvantage Large Grants program, but also by the Australian National University (ANU) and the Australian Research Council (ARC).

What the Research is About

One of the objectives of the Sidney Myer Fund's Poverty & Disadvantage Large Grants Program is to help create a good society by promoting justice and equity.

The priority areas of the program are:

- Indigenous poverty
- Child and family poverty

Within this framework, People on Country aims to transfer skills to land and sea management groups to address two major issues: how the groups' activities are improving Indigenous wellbeing, and delivering better natural resource management on Aboriginal land and sea country. Working in partnership with traditional owners and their land and sea management groups, the research aims to strengthen Caring for Country projects by:

- Building partnerships, sharing skills, and capacity development especially in governance;

- Assisting key Aboriginal organisations and natural resource management agencies with evidence-based research;
- Using evidence-based research to better inform government policy on cultural and natural resource management on Aboriginal land and sea country and to attract more government and private investments in Caring for Country projects;
- Helping Aboriginal land and sea managers make their voice heard in national debates such as climate change, water, land and sea country, fire management, wildlife use and cultural and natural resource management.

The project is working with seven Indigenous communities and ranger groups, mainly in Arnhem Land, but also in the Gulf region of the Northern Territory.

EVALUATION

Project funding from the Sidney Myer Fund began in July 2007, and to date four of five grant instalments have been paid. Upon the commencement of the funding relationship between ANU and the Sidney Myer Fund, a commitment was made to reviewing the project towards the end of the second year of the three-year project, with a view to considering funding for a further two years beyond the first three years. This review was duly completed and CAEPR's funding was extended. As the project enters its fifth year a second review is required to evaluate the total project.

This evaluation, to be carried out by an external consultant, will provide information on the progress and impact of the project to ANU and its partners in Arnhem Land and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

THE CONSULTANCY

The Consultant

CAEPR and Sidney Myer Fund have appointed Dr Dermot Smyth, who undertook the first review in 2010 and has extensive knowledge and understanding of the current indigenous policy environment, as well as expertise and experience in impact assessment of community-based and action research projects.

Responsibility

In consultation with ANU/CAEPR and the Sidney Myer Fund, the Consultant will be responsible for designing, coordinating and implementing the evaluation process in accordance with the objectives of the evaluation outlined below. This process will include consultation with key stakeholders (including beneficiaries) of the project, and may include field work.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to determine whether and to what extent this project has contributed or is contributing in a significant manner to the alleviation of poverty or disadvantage among Indigenous communities in northern Australia, especially through the development of community-based ranger programs; and to improvements in environmental management.

To achieve this, the following will be evaluated:

- The achievements so far of the project, against its own research objectives set out above;
- The project's impacts on stakeholders including Indigenous community participants (individuals and ranger groups), policy makers and others;
- The effectiveness of individual projects being undertaken jointly by CAEPR and partner organisations in the Top End and Gulf country of the Northern Territory.

Outputs

The key outputs of the consultancy will be:

1. A written evaluation report of 15 pages minimum (not including appendices) which includes:
 - Evaluation methodology;
 - Project achievements according to objectives set out in the Terms of Reference;
 - Positive and negative factors which have influenced the project;
 - Main issues to consider for future strategic directions of the project;
 - Key findings and recommendations;
 - A plan for a feedback and learning process for CAEPR staff and partner organisations;
 - A plan for the closure of the project in mid to late 2012.
2. An appendix setting out key documents reviewed (project proposal, progress reports) and interviews and, where appropriate, focus group meetings with key stakeholders undertaken.

Reporting

The consultant will provide a draft report for review to CAEPR and the Sidney Myer Fund by 30 April 2012

The final report will take account of comments provided through the review process and be completed so that it can be accepted by 30 June 2012.

Timeframe

The evaluation will begin in the week beginning on 7 November 2011 with Dr Smyth's invited attendance at the project's Steering committee meeting in Darwin. The review should be completed by the 30 June 2012²⁰.

²⁰ This completion was subsequently amended to enable outcomes of the end-of-project workshop held in Darwin on 17 October 2012 to be addressed in the Final Evaluation Report.

APPENDIX 2

CONSULTATIONS FOR THE END OF PROJECT EVALUATIONS

Consultations in the form of discussions and semi-structured interviews were held with:

- Representatives of People on Country partner Indigenous land and sea management organisations;
- People on Country researchers and other CAEPR staff;
- Members of the People on Country Steering Committee.

The purpose of the discussions and interviews was to elicit information about their:

- Role in the People on Country project;
- Assessment of the achievements of the project;
- Suggestions on how the project could be improved;
- Assessment of the legacy of the project.

NAME	ORGANISATION	CONSULTATION CONTACT
Mr Steve Roeger	Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• During book planning workshop (Darwin)• Following Sea Country Workshop (Mary River)
Mr Mandaka Sam Marika	Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• During book planning workshop (Darwin)
Mr Bunguthuwa Geoffrey Dhurrkay	Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• During book planning workshop (Darwin)
Mr Dave Preece	Yirralka Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• During book planning workshop (Darwin)• Following Sea Country Workshop (Mary River)
Mr Wesley Campion	Djelk Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• During book planning workshop (Darwin)

Professor Jon Altman	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book planning workshop (Darwin) • Meeting at CAEPR
Dr Seán Kerins	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book planning workshop (Darwin) • Meeting at CAEPR
Dr Emilie Ens	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book planning workshop (Darwin) • Meeting at CAEPR
Dr Bill Fogarty	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book planning workshop (Darwin) • Meeting at CAEPR
Ms Gill Towler	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book planning workshop (Darwin)
Ms Elisabeth Yarbakhsh	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting at CAEPR
Ms Annick Thomassin	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting at CAEPR
Mr Geoff Buchanan	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book planning workshop (Darwin)
Dr Janet Hunt	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book planning workshop (Darwin) • Meeting at CAEPR
Professor John Taylor	CAEPR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting at CAEPR
Mr Dan Gillespie	Steering Committee Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Committee meeting • Book planning workshop • Email feedback
Professor Peter Kanowski	Steering Committee Member The Fenner School of Environment and Society, ANU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief email response
Mr Joe Morrison	Steering Committee Member North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAISMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief informal discussion
Dr Benedict Scambary	Steering Committee Member Northern Territory Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority (AAPA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Committee meeting

Dr Peter Whitehead	Steering Committee Member Independent consultant, formally at Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts (NRETA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee meeting, email feedback and subsequent discussions
Dr Sue Jackson	Steering Committee Member CSIRO Tropical Ecosystems Research Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2011 Steering Committee meeting
Ms Kirsty Allen	The Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee meeting Meeting at Myer foundation, Melbourne
Mr Leonard Vary	CEO, The Myer Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Committee meeting Meeting at Myer foundation, Melbourne

APPENDIX 3

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

Altman, J. And Kerins, S. (eds) 2012. *People on Country, Vital Landscapes, Indigenous Futures*. The Federation Press, Annandale, NSW.

Altman, J., Kerins, S., Hunt, J., Ens, E., May, K., Russell, S and Fogarty, B. 2001. *Indigenous Cultural and Natural Resource Management Futures*. CAEPR Topical Issue No. 9, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation 2011. *Annual Report 2010–11*.

Djelk Rangers - *Caring for Country in Maningrida, Arnhem Land* – video uploaded on CAEPR website May 2011.

Ecological Management and Restoration 13 (1) 2012 – Special issue on Indigenous land and sea management in remote Australia (including 18 separate articles, short reports and book reviews).

Ens, E. (undated). *CyberTracker® sequence development guide for the Yirralka Rangers*. CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Kalkiwarra, M., Namundja, S., Garlngarr, V., Gurawalwal, B., Gurawalwal, C., Namarnyilk, S., Nadjamerrek, J., Driscilla, Simone, Ens, E., Towler, G., and Vallance, G. 2010. *Collecting plants in the Warddeken IPA*.

Karrakad Kanjdji Trust – Supporting the environment, people and culture of West Arnhem Land. Undated introductory brochure about the goals and objectives of the Karrakad Kanjdji Trust.

Bulliwana, K., Namarnyilk, E., Namundja, S., Vallance, G., and Ens, E. (undated). *Warddeken IPA Frog Field Guide*. Warddeken Land Management Ltd.

Laynhapuy Homelands Association 2011. *Yirralka Rangers Annual Report 2010-2011*.

Laynhapuy Homelands Association Incorporated (undated). *Management Strategy for Feral Pigs (*Sus scrofa*) in the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area, North East Arnhem Land, Australia, 2009-2011*. ANU and Yirralka Rangers.

May, K. And Kerins, S. 2010. *People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures – Wellbeing Workshop Report*. November 2010, CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

People on Country Newsletters 1–7.

People on Country Project Partners 2012. *Indigenous Women Rangers Talking – Sharing ideas and information about women rangers' work.*

People on Country, Healthy Landscapes and Indigenous Economic Futures 2010 and 2011 *Annual Reports.*

Russell, S. 2011. *The Hybrid Economy Topic Guide.* CAEPR, ANU, Canberra.

Warddeken Land Management Ltd 2011. *Annual Report 2010-2011.*