Collaborative governance of wet tropics country

November 2014
**Mutual benefits**

**Funding** provided for Traditional Owner roles

**Working** with Indigenous governance structures

- Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
- Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation
- Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation

**Protection of Intellectual and Cultural Property**

- Collaboration Agreements
- Aboriginal people retain all ownership of their ICP
- Ownership of new material is shared
- Licences to use the material to all parties

**Participatory Co-research**

- Workshop
- Interviews
- Dialogue
- Spatial assessment
- Health ratings
Publications

6 journal articles
2 more in-review
2 more in-prep
2 book chapters
7 Research toward Policy Briefs
What works well for Indigenous co-management and why?

Investigate the capability of
• Indigenous Protected Areas, and other collaborative planning models and mechanisms;
• to provide the means for recognition of Indigenous knowledge and values; and
• joint management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area between Governments and Rainforest Aboriginal people, in partnership with communities.
Collaborative governance is critical for managing the natural and cultural values of wet tropics country. It is a flexible solution-building process, not a fixed state, involving extensive talking, negotiations and jointly learning, so it gets better over time.
Collaborative governance enhances governance vitality

Key Findings

“Culturally assured engagement, that directs the partner agency, is critical...the best results come when Traditional Owners drive the process, take government on a journey.”

Partner

HEART
Governance Quality
- Legitimacy and voice
- Direction
- Performance
- Accountability
- Fairness and rights

MIND
Governance Diversity
- Government-governed
- Shared-governance
- Indigenous peoples’ and community-governed
- Privately-governed

SPIRIT
Governance Vitality
- Well-integrated and functionally connected
- Wise
- Empowered
- Adaptive
- Innovative
Multiple benefits are delivered through effective collaborative governance of country.
Collaborative governance of wet tropics country overcomes multiple barriers to deliver these multiple benefits!

**Jobs and work**
- "64 employed"
- "Line up with 400 people for one job."
  - Traditional Owner
- "Can’t use native title for what we want."
  - Traditional Owner
- "Exclusive possession lands turned to national park."
  - Traditional Owner

**Overcoming passivity**
- "Kids are bored, passive."
  - Traditional Owner

**Health**
- "Diabetes, asthma, blood pressure, liver and kidney disease, drug and alcohol addictions."
  - Traditional Owner

**Elders and youth**
- "From school to the welfare cycle."
  - Traditional Owner
- "The Junior Ranger Program"

**Environmental protection**
- "Country is getting worse."
  - Traditional Owner
- "Losing old knowledge."
  - Traditional Owner

**Cultural renewal**
- "Walk our country"
  - Traditional Owner
- "Disaster response "exceeded"
  - Traditional Owner

**Social Barriers**
- "From welfare to business "break the welfare cycle”
- "Justice "deliver peace"
- "Reconciliation "come together"

**Barriers to sustainable livelihoods**

**Political Barriers**
- "No leverage on our land."
  - Traditional Owner
- "Organisations in town were all frightened for their security."
  - Traditional Owner
- "Rights taken away."
  - Traditional Owner

**Economic Barriers**
- "No leverage on our land."
  - Traditional Owner
- "Organisations in town were all frightened for their security."
  - Traditional Owner
- "Rights taken away."
  - Traditional Owner
Indigenous Protected Areas ...

- TO led (empowered)
- Bring people around table (connected)
- Recognise Indigenous knowledge (wise)
- Flexible (adaptive)
- Multi-tenure (innovative)

“IPAs is the ‘what’, Rangers is the ‘how’ …IPA, it’s deadly, a good thing, a really good thing, it translates to self-determination.”

Traditional Owner

**SPRIT Governance Vitality**
- Well-integrated and functionally connected
- Wise
- Empowered
- Adaptive
- Innovative
Opportunities

Value-adding to IPAs

- Extend across wet tropics
- Focus on higher level protection (national and world heritage values)
- More resources
- Delegate State/Australian roles
- Guide State plans
Indigenous Land Use Agreements show few features of governance vitality

- 11 Protected Area ILUAs
- Adversarial negotiations
- Focus on regulating native title rights, hunting, firearms, taking of species, camping, lighting fires and disposing of rubbish
- Little recognition of Indigenous knowledge
- No resources for implementation

"Native title is limited, it’s sick, it’s very sick. It doesn’t go to the implementation, doesn’t go there."
"That ILUA stops our traditional burning."

Traditional Owners
Opportunities

Value-adding to ILUAs

- Indigenous-led planning first
- Adaptive, collaborative approach to negotiations
- Recognise Indigenous knowledge
- Provide for joint management e.g. Cape York, NSW, NT
Current inequitable progress, patchy governance health

- Groups at different stages using different vehicles:
  - Pre-determination organising
  - Post determination re-connecting
  - Country as the basis of sustainable development (IPAs, Rangers, businesses etc)
- Partners also diverse experiences of stages
- Patchy outcomes, some good health some poor
- Where should we focus???????
Co-evaluation of results for keeping engagement strong

Average rating for results across all themes

Legend

Health rating
- 5 Excellent
- 4 Very good
- 3 Good
- 2 Little bit sick
- 1 Very sick

Issues resolution
Knowledge network

- provide flexible and diverse ways for people working on similar issues to share experiences and help one-another for example through dialogues, workshops, websites and social media
- Can support Aboriginal businesses, native title corporations, family groups, IPA and Rangers managers, research organisation, NRM and heritage managers to share e.g:
  - Indigenous-driven planning
  - Relationship-building
  - Practicing free prior and informed consent
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