Collaboration on Country: Participatory Evaluation of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas

Eli Taylor
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Collaboration on Country: Participatory Evaluation of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas

Abstract
The Girringun Aboriginal Corporation is defined by innovative, experimental Indigenous collaborative governance. This is demonstrated through existing research and the recent declaration of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas. This research project, developed collaboratively with Girringun is also embedded in and engages with this context in multiple ways. Employing a participatory action oriented approach, this project implements a collaborative evaluation process with a sample of Indigenous Protected Area partner organisations. This thesis employs a reflexive account of full immersion fieldwork to explore agency and transformation and its effect on the researcher and the research participants. The research project and the organisations and individuals it has engaged with have delivered three distinct but entangled outcomes: research training, an appropriate and endorsed evaluation process, and the emergent outcome of a baseline partnership snapshot. The evaluation process is framed as a two-step process where first, individual interviews, and facilitated self-reflection occur, and second a facilitated workshop supports the co-production of knowledge and social learning. The partnership snapshot explores the themes of information sharing, resource capacity, intercultural cultural capacity, and on-ground delivery. Amongst a community of policy entrepreneurs and individuals determined to make it ‘work’, this project makes an action contribution to the collaborative governance of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas.

Degree Type
Thesis

Degree Name
Bachelor of Science (Honours)

Department
Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities

Keywords
Conservation, Aboriginal, Policy, SGSC

This thesis is available at Research Online: http://ro.uow.edu.au/thss/1
COLLABORATION ON COUNTRY: PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION OF THE GIRRINGUN INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

Eli Taylor 15/10/2014

A thesis submitted in part fulfilment of the requirement of the Honours Degree of Bachelor of Science in the Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities 2014
The information in this thesis is entirely the result of investigations conducted by the author, unless otherwise acknowledged, and has not been submitted in part, or otherwise, for any other degree or qualification.

Signed

15th October 2014
The Girringun Aboriginal Corporation is defined by innovative, experimental Indigenous collaborative governance. This is demonstrated through existing research and the recent declaration of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas. This research project, developed collaboratively with Girringun is also embedded in and engages with this context in multiple ways. Employing a participatory action oriented approach, this project implements a collaborative evaluation process with a sample of Indigenous Protected Area partner organisations. This thesis employs a reflexive account of full immersion fieldwork to explore agency and transformation and its effect on the researcher and the research participants. The research project and the organisations and individuals it has engaged with have delivered three distinct but entangled outcomes: research training, an appropriate and endorsed evaluation process, and the emergent outcome of a baseline partnership snapshot. The evaluation process is framed as a two-step process where first, individual interviews, and facilitated self-reflection occur, and second a facilitated workshop supports the co-production of knowledge and social learning. The partnership snapshot explores the themes of information sharing, resource capacity, intercultural cultural capacity, and on-ground delivery. Amongst a community of policy entrepreneurs and individuals determined to make it ‘work’, this project makes an action contribution to the collaborative governance of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by giving my thanks to both my mother Janelle Medway and father, Keith Taylor for their unconditional support. You have shaped me into the person that I am today and you continue to inspire. For that I am grateful.

Second, I would like to thank my supervisors Michael Adams and Dermot Smyth. Michael has challenged and inspired me and me over the course of my undergraduate degree in the way that not many teachers can. Dermot Smyth is someone who has been deeply invested in the Indigenous Protected Area concept since its inception, his gracious decision to supervise and support this project has proved invaluable.

I would like to thank the Staff at the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation for welcoming me with open arms. Particularly Karman Lippitt, who is a grounded realist and has challenged and supported me throughout my time at Girringun.

I would also like to thank the incredibly generous individuals, who agreed to be interviewed for this project. This project not only took shape during these interviews but took on a life of its own thanks to you. For those who gritted their teeth and graciously agreed to be interviewed a second time I am eternally grateful.

Special thanks are due to the cohort of on-call editors, Susan Medway, Sam Cameron, Keith Taylor and Alanna Tobin, this wouldn’t have been possible without you. Alanna, late nights were worth it. Bess Murphy and Willfrid Russell-Smith your support in the final stages of this project has been wonderful.

I would also like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the Girringun region, past and present.
CAVEATS

The expression ‘Traditional Owners’ is used interchangeably with ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Aboriginal’ throughout this thesis. These terms were used interchangeably by participants during the interview process. The term Traditional Owner applies regardless of any legal ownership of any land.
# Table of Contents

**Abstract** ........................................................................................................................................ 3

**Acknowledgements** .................................................................................................................. 4

**Caveats** ...................................................................................................................................... 5

**Table of Contents** ..................................................................................................................... 6

**List of Figures** .......................................................................................................................... 9

**List of Tables** ............................................................................................................................ 10

**List of Boxes** ............................................................................................................................ 11

**List of Terms** ............................................................................................................................. 13

## Chapter One: Introduction ........................................................................................................... 14

1.1 Co-managed Indigenous Protected Areas ................................................................................ 15
1.2 Regional Overview ................................................................................................................... 16
   1.2.1 Natural Values .................................................................................................................. 20
   1.2.2 Cultural Land and Seascapes ......................................................................................... 20
   1.2.3 Traditional Owners of the Girringun Region ................................................................. 22
   1.2.4 Contemporary Complexity – Tenure, Jurisdiction And Management Intent ................ 23
   1.2.5 Traditional Estate – Contemporary Context ................................................................. 27
   1.2.6 Key Organisations ......................................................................................................... 28
1.3 This Project .............................................................................................................................. 30
1.4 Thesis Aims ............................................................................................................................. 31
1.5 Thesis Outline ......................................................................................................................... 32

## Chapter Two: Literature Review .................................................................................................. 33

2.1 Conservation: Origins And Future Trajectories ........................................................................ 34
   2.1.1 Australian Shared Governance ..................................................................................... 38
   2.1.2 Joint or Co-management ............................................................................................... 39
   2.1.3 Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) ................................................................................ 40
2.2 Co-managed Indigenous Protected Areas .................................................................................. 46
   2.2.1 ‘Country’ Based Planning & Ontological Divides .......................................................... 48
   2.2.2 Locating The Research Project ...................................................................................... 48

## Chapter Three: Methodology ....................................................................................................... 50

3.1 Conceptual Frameworks .......................................................................................................... 50
3.2 Participatory Action Research: Participation in Co-management .............................................. 51
   3.2.1 Action Research ............................................................................................................. 51
   3.2.2 Co-research .................................................................................................................. 52
   3.2.3 Participatory Action Research ...................................................................................... 53
3.3 Co-management and Participatory Action Research ................................................................. 54
   3.3.1 Participatory Evaluation ............................................................................................... 56
3.4 Full Immersion Fieldwork: Ethics, Activism and the Friendly Outsider .................................... 58
   3.4.1 Ethics: De-colonising Research .................................................................................... 58
   3.4.2 Research Involving Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Communities ....................... 59
   3.4.3 Ethics in the Field: Cross-Cultural Research ............................................................... 59
   3.4.4 Academia and Action .................................................................................................... 60
APPENDIX H: REVISED PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET ........................................................... 159
APPENDIX I: PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES INTO THE FUTURE ......................................................... 161
APPENDIX J: KEY FOCUS FOR PARTNERSHIPS INTO THE FUTURE ................................................... 162
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Girringun Aboriginal language groups and approximate country locations. Boundaries are indicative only

Figure 1.2 Girringun IPA, approximate location of tribal groups, WHA and National Parks

Figure 1.3. Girringun TUMRA Region, marine zoning and approximate location of Girringun saltwater groups

Figure 1.4 Girringun Co-management arrangements

Figure 2.1 Indigenous Protected Areas June 2014

Figure 2.2 Australia’s National Reserve System

Figure 3.1 Tropical Cyclone Ita

Figure 3.2 Full Immersion fieldwork: Methodological approach

Figure 4.1. Complex layers of actors, interests and authority pic

Figure 4.2 Girringun Indigenous Protected Area: multi tenure, land and sea Country

Figure 4.3. Partnership visions: IPA partner sample

Figure 4.4 IPA partner sample communications processes

Figure 4.5 Value of Girringun Indigenous Protected Area Management Committee meetings to IPA partner sample and Girringun
Figure 4.6 IPA partner sample: capacity to deliver on commitments 85

Figure 4.7. Perceptions of IPA partner sample and Girringun staff on the priority afforded to traditional knowledge in management decisions within partnerships 88

Figure 4.8. Perceptions of IPA partner sample and Girringun interview participants on the incorporation of two-way knowledge sharing in partnerships 89

Figure 4.9 IPA partner sample: satisfaction with on-ground delivery 93

Figure 4.10 IPA partner sample: load sharing through partnerships 94

Figure 5.1 Traditional Owners on Country 98

Figure 5.2 Severe Tropical Cyclone Ita tracking map Queensland coast. Orange indicates cyclone warning, yellow indicates cyclone watch. 102

Figure 5.3 Interviews as catalysts for action, all participants 109

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1. Thesis outline 32

Table 2.1 A new Paradigm for Protected Areas 37

Table 2.2 Declared Indigenous Protected Areas (March 2011) and corresponding IUCN Protected Area categories 43

Table 3.1 The Action Research Cycle 52

Table 3.2 Shared principles: collaborative management and participatory action research. 55
Table 3.3 Project limitations

Table 4.1 Conceptualising the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas

Table 4.2 IPA partner conceptualisations of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Area

Table 4.3 Value of GIPACC meetings to the IPA partner sample

Table 4.4 Participants reason for evaluation

Table 5.1 Examples of action generated through the interview process

Table 5.2. The value of the interview process

Table 5.3 Where to with evaluation: Girringun, IPA partner sample and GIPACC members

Table 5.4 Beyond Job descriptions: the role of Individuals in innovatio

Table 5.6 Thesis outcomes

LIST OF BOXES

Box 1.1 Girugarr – Surveyor of Eastern Girringun

Box 1.2 Bungurrah the blue-tongued lizard - keeper of the water

Box 1.3 Mungalla Station IPA

Box 1.4 Turtle and dugong survey

Box 2.1 The Indigenous Protected Area and the NRS

Box 3.1 What do I bring to the Project?
| Box 3.2 Gatekeepers: Negotiating my position as an outsider | 66 |
| Box 5.1 Face to face #1 | 100 |
| Box 5.2 Reflections on my position as ‘outsider’ | 110 |
| Box 5.3 Face to face #2 | 103 |
| Box 5.4 Positive feedback: Once a minute taker always a minute taker | 104 |
| Box 5.5 The importance of remaining flexible | 105 |
| Box 5.6 Feeling positionality | 106 |
| Box 5.7 Crises of confidence: facilitating reflection | 110 |
| Box 5.8 Supervisor and policy entrepreneur? | 119 |
### LIST OF TERMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCRC</td>
<td>Cassowary Coast Regional Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GARCC</td>
<td>Girringun Aboriginal Ranger Cooperations Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBRWHA</td>
<td>Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIPACC</td>
<td>Girringun Indigenous Protected Area Co-management Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCAs</td>
<td>Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Indigenous Protected Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCU</td>
<td>James Cook University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>Natural Resource Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>Queensland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QPWS</td>
<td>Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUMRA</td>
<td>Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTWHA</td>
<td>Wet Tropics World Heritage Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTMA</td>
<td>Wet Tropics Management Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wildlife Fund</td>
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This research examines aspects of innovative Indigenous conservation governance. The Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (hereafter ‘Girringun’), located in the wet tropics region of north Queensland, facilitates the co-management of the recently declared and recognised (2013) Girringun Regional Indigenous Protected Areas. This is a new and unique experiment in collaborative, ‘Country-based’ conservation planning.

The project, conceived with and directed by Girringun using participatory research methodologies, was to develop an evaluation process to assist in partner self-evaluation and more formal tracking and monitoring of the health of its diverse internal and external partner relationships.

The Girringun team, the individuals in the partner organisations, and other supporters including my supervisor Dermot Smyth, can be seen as a community of policy entrepreneurs. This context of experiment and innovation significantly influenced my research, in both methodology and content, and became an important theme in my understanding of the position of the evaluation process.
In the following sections I endeavor to locate this project. I briefly introducing the concept of Indigenous Protected Areas and then take the reader to Girringun, illustrating the geographic, social, cultural and institutional complexity of the region.

### 1.1 CO-MANAGED INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

Within the Australian context, two strong trajectories in conservation have emerged in recent decades: Joint-Management of national parks (or co-management in the international literature), and the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) program. These have developed from pressure exerted at international and national levels to open up conservation concepts and practices. This includes the assertion of the rights of indigenous peoples worldwide to manage their traditional Estates, the rise of neo-liberal ideology and its influence on private and non-government conservation, and more recently increasingly diverse and innovative collaborative state, private and community environmental governance networks.

Within the IPA program, co-managed IPAs have emerged very recently, the first, the Mandingalbay Yidinji Indigenous Protected Area was declared in 2011. The Mandingalbay Yidinji IPA overlays a landscape ‘broken up’ by multiple Australian legal tenures: national park, local government reserves and native title returned lands. Declaration and subsequent recognition by the federal government represented significant endorsement of the Indigenous Australian notion of ‘Country’ as an appropriate geographic and cultural scale to manage Australia’s environments and resources (Altman 2012a; Bauman et al. 2013; Rose 2012; Smyth 2014). The co-management of IPAs declared over existing protected areas represents a significant innovation of the original IPA concept predicated on legal rights to land and typically involving one Traditional Owner group (Hill et al. 2012; Ross et al. 2009).

Within a co-management IPA arrangement, Traditional Owners are responsible for negotiating and coordinating partnerships and securing funding as well as sharing resources and management responsibility (Bauman et al. 2013). Partnerships are typically ‘whole of government’ involving local, state and federal agencies and funding sources. Additionally, partners can include non-government organisations and private landholders, determined by the interests and strategic vision of Traditional Owners (Bauman et al. 2013). With the declaration of multi-tenure IPAs the number and diversity of co-management partners
involved in protected area management has expanded significantly (Bauman et al. 2013; Hoffman et al. 2012; Smyth & Grant 2012; Zurba et al. 2012). With an increase in the number of actors involved, comes increased potential to produce outcomes which are greater than those that can be delivered by individual efforts alone. In these situations the strengths and weakness of each can be considered complimentary (Bauman et al. 2013; Hoffman et al. 2012; Maclean et al. 2013; Ross et al. 2009; Zurba et al. 2012). These arrangements have also undoubtedly increased the complexity of protected area governance.

For the Girringun IPA, flexible co-management arrangements, and partnerships characterised by participation, collaboration and learning are required to bridge this complexity (Bauman et al. 2013; Hoffman et al. 2012; Maclean et al. 2013; Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009; Zurba et al. 2012). The Girringun IPA defines the management intent and interests of Traditional Owner according to the boundaries of eight of its nine traditional owner group’s traditional Estates or Country (See Figure 1.1). The IPA is declared across a complex institutional and geographic landscape, encompassing two World Heritage Areas, national parks, marine parks, local council reserves and private land. This complexity is expressed using the term ‘polycentricity’, where multiple tenures, management objectives and aspirations overlap, and often compete (Andersson & Ostrom 2008; Zurba et al. 2012). Encompassing a total area of 1.2 million hectares, the Girringun IPA is the largest multi-tenure land and sea IPA in Australia (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a). Recognition of the Girringun IPA by the federal government is conditional on support from government agencies with statutory responsibility for cultural and natural resource management (NRM) in the region. Each of these agencies sits on the Girringun Indigenous Protected Area Co-management Committee, the primary co-management forum for the Girringun IPA. In this sense, planning, implementation and governance of the IPA is reliant on maintaining a diverse set of existing relationships with each IPA partner as well as opportunistically investing in and nurturing new partnerships.

1.2 REGIONAL OVERVIEW

The Girringun ‘region’ is not reflected in any institutionalised planning sense, save the recent declaration of the Girringun IPA. Rather, it is defined by the traditional Estate or Country of nine Aboriginal Traditional Owner groups. There are six ‘saltwater’ (costal), groups; Bandjin, Djiru, Gulnay,
Girramay, Warrgamay and Nywaigi and three ‘freshwater’ (inland) groups; Gugu Badhun, Jirrbal and Warungnu people (Zurba et al. 2012). The traditional Estate and the interests of these Traditional Owners are represented by the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. Figure 1.1 locates the Girringun region on the east coast off far north Queensland and outlines the approximate location and boundaries of the nine Traditional Owner groups country. Additionally, it outlines the presence of two World Heritage areas which intersect across the region. Figure 1.2 identifies the eight Traditional Owner groups who are signatories to the IPA, the ninth group, Jirrbal are still considering their involvement.
Figure 1.1 Girringun Aboriginal language groups and approximate country locations. Boundaries are indicative only (Source: Maclean et al. 2013, p97).
Figure 1.2 Girringun IPA, approximate location of tribal groups, WHA and National Parks
(Source: Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a)
1.2.1 NATURAL VALUES

The Girringun region is located in the southernmost section of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA), a landscape recognized internationally for its outstanding natural values in 1988, and nationally for its natural and Aboriginal cultural values in 2012 (UNESCO 2014a; Wet Tropics Management Authority 2013). The region also encompasses areas of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area, both of which are recognized as having high conservation and cultural value (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014; Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009; UNESCO 2014b).

Stretching some 450 kilometers along the north Queensland coast, the WTWHA encompasses 894,420 hectares of predominantly tropical rainforest and is the largest remaining area of contiguous rainforest left in Australia (UNESCO 2014a). Rich in biodiversity and exceptional levels of species endemism, the WTWHA is a region of significant and continuing evolutionary processes which exemplifies major stages in the earth’s evolutionary history (UNESCO 2014a). Running along the north Queensland coastline is the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) declared in 1981, for outstanding universal value. The GBRWHA is an exceptional example of coral reef evolution, complex geological processes, biological evolution and human interaction with the natural environment. The Great Barrier Reef is the world’s largest and complex coral reef ecosystem (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2014; UNESCO 2014b). The reef is a complex mosaic of coral reefs and coral islands ranging in size from less than one hectare to more than 10,000 hectares.

1.2.2 CULTURAL LAND AND SEASCAPES

The Wet Tropics region is home to 18 Traditional Owner tribal groups representing approximately 20,000 Rainforest Aboriginal People (Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team 2005). The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan describes the region as a ‘diverse set of living Aboriginal cultural landscapes’ (Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team 2005). The term cultural landscape can be considered synonymous with the term ‘Country’ used earlier in this chapter (Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2010). Country is used by Aboriginal Australians to encapsulate a broader, richer definition of their environment, one, which reflects a holistic Aboriginal ontology, the social, cultural, spiritual and natural dimensions the relationship between people the environment (Rose
1996). Rose (1996, p8), frames country as a an assemblage or constellation of multiple factors – a ‘nourishing terrain’;

   ‘Country is multidimensional – it consists of people, animals, plants Dreamings; underground, earth, soils, minerals and waters, surface water and air. There is sea country and land country’.

Far from Country being a broad universal or undifferentiated type of place, Indigenous Australians across the continent each have their own relationships, Law, Dreaming and stories about Country. Each Country sits adjacent to other Countries and boundaries are rarely considered absolute, however differences are elaborate and respected (Rose 1996). Where Country appears capitalized, it denotes its link to this holistic and multidimensional understanding articulated above. Creation and Dreaming stories form the basis of customary Law and tradition for Traditional Owners, these stories often describe the moments in which Country was brought into being. In the Girringun region a number of these stories are shared amongst the groups reflecting geographic overlap and linkages between neighboring tribal groups.

**BOX 1.1. GIRUGARR – SURVEYOR OF EASTERN GIRRINGUN**

“Girugarr rose out of the ocean near Hinchinbrook Island, part man, mostly eel and gazed around the newly made countryside. The rugged grandeur of Hinchinbrook Island impressed him and he rose from the water and pronounced its name loudly. He then plunged into the sea and come out on top of the mountain at the back of Cardwell. He saw a freshwater lake surrounded by mangroves and he called it Girringun Lake.”

(Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a, p8)

The stories of Girugarr and Bungurrah tells of the mythical surveyor of the eastern areas of the Girringun region and the process of naming and shaping of the waterways and other features in the landscape (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a, p8). This story is shared by the Gulnay Djiru, Jirrbal, Bandjin, Girramay, Warungnu Traditional Owners.
Prior to invasion and colonial settlement the Traditional Owners of the wet tropics region shared a suite of unique cultural practices and intimate ecological knowledge of their region. This knowledge has underpinned their management of the region for millennia. Each group possessed a complex system of kinship and customary law, providing a framework for resource use and social interactions (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a; Zurba et al. 2012). This knowledge and cultural practice allowed rainforest communities to live exploit and manage their environment over thousands of years (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a). The abundance of food and resources in the region supported communities with semi-permanent and permanent camps with high population densities something uncommon across less resource rich areas of Australia (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a; Wet Tropics Management Authority 2014).

In the Girringun region, the social, political, economic and ceremonial interactions with other tribal groups were frequent and complex. Inland groups negotiated access to marine areas and costal groups, inland areas; tools crafted from stones and shells were traded across large distances, fish traps were constructed in larger rivers and along the shore of the mainland and offshore islands (Zurba et al. 2012). Traps at Scraggy Point on the northern side of Hinchinbrook Island are not only extensive but have been dated at over 2000 years.
old (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a). Today, traditional knowledge and use of the flora of the Girringun region encompasses an incredible diversity of edible and inedible plants (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013b). Since 1996 Girringun has assisted Traditional Owner members consolidate and expand their cultural data sets. Within this rich cultural landscape Girringun has helped identify approximately 1,600 known ‘sites’. Girringun National Park alone contains over 110 recorded sites (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a). Similarly, Girringun sea country contains both important cultural landscapes and specific sites of cultural importance including; fish traps, shell middens, rock shelters and scar trees (Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009).

### 1.2.4 CONTEMPORARY COMPLEXITY – TENURE, JURISDICTION AND MANAGEMENT INTENT

Today the traditional Estate of the Girringun Traditional Owner groups lies between the regional centers of Cairns and Townsville, intersecting and encompassing the southernmost section of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, and the central section of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. The region contains a number of small farms, regional centers, urban settlements, state managed conservation areas and private protected areas (Maclean et al. 2013, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a; Zurba et al. 2012). The terrestrial Estate is part of an eco-region dominated by sclerophyll forests as well as significant areas of tropical rainforest; other natural environments include mangroves, wetlands and inland water bodies (Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009; Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water 2007a, 2007b). Below I include a number of boxes which articulate the regional complexity on-the-ground at a personal level. The use of boxes is explained in Chapter Three section 3.4.
In April, Girringun’s CEO and IPA coordinator had arranged to meet with the manager of Mungalla Station IPA south of Cardwell. Mungalla Station IPA exists independently within the larger Girringun IPA and is owned by the Nywagi people and managed by the Nywagi Aboriginal Land Corporation. The purpose of the visit was to have a ‘yarn’ about biodiversity grant money that both Mungalla IPA and Girringun were seeking to share benefit from as overlapping IPAs.

Mungalla Station is intriguing for a number of reasons. It is Indigenous owned land, unlike much of the land included in the Girringun IPA. Due to this ownership, the range of possible projects and enterprise being undertaken on the station is incredibly diverse.

Driving through the station gates we are greeted by a narrow wetland, home to a diversity of water birds, small fences with lines of electric tape flank the waterway. On the higher floodplain, beyond the electric tape, are heard of healthy cattle. Close to the edge of the water are a crew of Girringun Biodiversity staff preparing a thickly grassed site for re-vegetation. We meet Jacob Cassidy, an Indigenous man and decedent of the European settlers who owned and developed the cattle station. Further down the road to the station homestead, we pass over a causeway, the creek feeding the wetland. Jacob points out Hymenachne, brought to Australia from South America as pasture for cattle, it now chokes the waterways across Queensland. Jacob wants to address this in the near future if he can find the funding. Driving through the paddock to the station homestead, Jacob also talks about controlling weeds in the pasture, not just in the areas they are revegetating, ‘no sooner have you got one species under control than the next is booming’.

Today, Mungalla Station is a recognised Indigenous Protected Area, but simultaneously it is a cattle station, an eco-tourism and corporate function destination as well as a place of biodiversity conservation. These multiple land uses do not easily fit with the dominant discourse of conservation and more specifically the images and ideas evoked when using the words ‘protected area’ and perhaps even with the concept of ‘Indigenous Protected Area’. The Mungalla Station missions statement below priorities the interests of its Traditional Owners, encompassing care for country and building of cultural and economic opportunities.

“Mungalla is a resource owned by the Nywaigi Traditional Owners for the purpose of fostering Aboriginal cultural values by building economic and cultural opportunities through the careful use of our country as a legacy for our children” – (Mungalla Aboriginal Tours 2014)

This is just one example of the complexity of management and governance within the Girringun region. It is an example of temporal, geographic and cultural convergence and transformation where Indigenous Australians are pursuing innovative and boundary pushing avenues to assert self-determination.
The coastal waters feature a number of islands including Gould and Hinchinbrook (Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009). The coastal waters are relatively shallow and turbid due to seasonal flooding: they include extensive mangrove, marine and sea grass habitats which support the threatened green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and dugong (*Dugong Dugong*) (Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009; UNESCO 2014b; Zurba et al. 2012). While listed for its natural values, the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Management Authority and UNESCO acknowledge the importance of access to and traditional use of marine resources by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is reflected in the development and implementation of a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) representing the management interests of Girringun’s saltwater groups (Figure 1.3.), and regulating the take of turtle and dugong by Traditional Owners (Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009).

**BOX 1.4. TURTLE AND DUGONG SURVEY**

The dolphin and dugong survey was used three vessels, two over six meters long and another 3.4m ‘tinny’. Two James Cook University (JCU) researchers, the Girringun IPA coordinator, seven Girringun Aboriginal Rangers, a training assessor and myself.

Meeting at the boat ramp as the sun rose, we were briefed by the JCU researchers who delivered an overview of objectives of the day: not only would the researchers be conducting the surveys along predetermined transects but a number of the rangers would also be assessed on key components of their certificate IV in land management.

The chance to get out onto the water was incredibly valuable in many regards. Almost immediately I am able to get some sense of the vast scale of the Girringun sea country. The survey took place along the immediate coast off Cardwell and moved across the Hinchinbrook Channel to the northern end of Hinchinbrook Island. Hinchinbrook Island, the traditional homeland of the Banjin people, is today the largest island national park in Australia. Small features on the map are suddenly contextualised and quickly stretch into the distance, Hinchinbrook Island at its northern most point broadens to form Missionary Bay, a zoned marine conservation park. The shallows of the bay and the Hinchinbrook Channel are well known feeding grounds for dugong and sea turtles, both of which are threatened species. During the course of the day I learn how to spot and identify these animals. We spotted two dugong calves in the shallows which was particularly exciting as cyclone Yasi had inflicted significant damage on the sea grass habitat on which they depend.

If one included my project as well, there were three simultaneous projects piggy backing off a larger more resource intensive operation. At a broader level this is the case with many of the co-management projects which Girringun and its partners are involved in. Established projects form a perfect framework from which to entice participation of additional partners or jointly develop and enhance capacity.
Figure 1.3. Girringun TUMRA Region, marine zoning and approximate location of Girringun saltwater groups (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority 2008).
The dominant form of land use in the Girringun region now is conservation of marine and terrestrial ecosystems. Small townships and centers such as Cardwell, Mission Beach, Halifax and the large centers of Innisfail to the north and Ingham to the south have been the focal points for development. The Murray catchment, stretching from the Kirrima Range in the North West encompassing Cardwell and the narrow coastal strip adjacent to the Hinchinbrook Chanel in the south. The region underwent significant clearing for human settlement and agricultural production in the early half of this century. Currently 30 per cent of the catchment is used for human settlement and agricultural production, approximately 70 per cent of the remaining area is made up of ‘natural environments’. The term natural environments refers to environments used primarily for conservation and maintenance of existing natural ecosystems (Department of Agriculture 2014). In 1990, 60 per cent of the region was classified National Park (Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water 2007a). Today 24 per cent of the Tully River catchment is currently used for human settlement and agricultural production, the remaining 76 per cent is made up of natural environments (Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water 2007b). In 1999 recorded land use in both of the catchments encompassed a broad spectrum of agricultural practices, such as sugarcane, bananas, plantation forestry and grazing for predominantly beef cattle. Plantation forestry suffered severe damage in tropical cyclone Yasi which crossed the coast in 2011. Across the state 15,000 hectares were severely damaged with Yasi making landfall near Mission Beach.

1.2.5 TRADITIONAL ESTATE – CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

Traditional Owners do not formally own a significant amount land in the region (Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012). Unlike Traditional Owners in more remote regions of Australia, this remains a challenging issue in the more populated and agriculturally productive regions where land was secured for non-Indigenous interests long ago and native title ‘extinguished’ (Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012). While a number of Traditional Owners in the Girringun region have embarked on Native Title claims for the recognition of customary ownership others have not. Figure 1.4 outlines the both the governance and tenure arrangements for Traditional Owners in the region. Jirrbal, Gugu Bahdun, Djiru and Girramay people have successfully negotiated the return of land through the Native Title process, while Girramay, Warungnu and Jirrbal peoples have a stake in Badjuballa station (not
included in the Girringun IPA), and Nywaigi people own the DaleMungalla Indigenous Protected Area, land returned under the Indigenous Land Corporation.

Figure 1.4. Girringun Co-management arrangements (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a).

1.2.6 Key Organisations

The list of organisations below represents only a sample of the partner organisations involved with the Girringun IPA. The organisations below have been interviewed as part of this project. When referring to the organisations and agencies, I use the term IPA partner sample.

CASSOWARY COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL (CCRC)

CCRC is the local government body responsible for the region between Innisfail and Ingham providing and maintain infrastructure and services in the region. Natural Resource Management responsibilities in the region include: beach and esplanade protection, re-vegetation, controlled burning and maintenance of walking tracks.
FISHERIES QUEENSLAND (FISHERIES QLD)

Fisheries QLD is part of the Queensland Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry. Legislated responsibilities include research and monitoring of Queensland fisheries as well as the enforcement of commercial and recreational fisheries and boating laws.

QUEENSLAND PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) consists of both terrestrial (hereafter QPWS) and marine divisions (hereafter Marine Parks), each with distinct responsibilities. QPWS has a statutory responsibility to manage the state’s protected areas according to the Nature Conservation Act 1993 which outlines both natural and cultural management responsibility. Marine Parks also undertakes the day-to-day management of Great Barrier Reef Marine Park on behalf of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

WET TROPICS MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (WTMA)

The Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA) was established under the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993 (Wet Tropics Management Authority 2013). The authority seeks to advise and support the conservation, sharing and enriching of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA). WTMA has a statutory responsibility to plan and manage the wet tropics area in accordance with Australia’s international obligations (Wet Tropics Management Authority 2005). The support of Rainforest Aboriginal people in expressing their knowledge, culture and management practices on country is identified as a specific and strategic goal (Wet Tropics Management Authority 2013, p11).

TERRAIN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (TERRAIN NRM)

Terrain NRM, represent one of 56 regional NRM bodies, across Australia. Terrain NRM does not have statutory powers in the region, instead it facilitating strategic investment at a regional scale, identifying local priorities for investment (Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team 2005, p27). Terrain NRM supported the development of the Wet Tropics Aboriginal and Cultural Natural Resource Management Plan, published in 2005. This outlined the natural and cultural management issues and aspirations of Wet Tropics Traditional Owners as well as potential strategies and actions to address these (Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team 2005).
1.3 THIS PROJECT

As described above, recent research has begun to frame key components of co-management best practice in cross-cultural, multi agency collaborative management arrangements. The importance of developing effective relationships with partners in the effective implementation of co-management is clear (Bauman et al. 2013; Davies et al. 2013; Hill 2011; Hoffman et al. 2012; Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba 2010; Zurba et al. 2012). However, there are two particular contributions that this research project responds to. Firstly, research by Zurba et al. (2012, p1141) conducted with Girringun identified the development of a participatory monitoring and evaluation process for the IPA as potential area for future investigation. Secondly, the work of Hoffman et al. (2012, p46) frame a number of success factors identified in cross cultural, multiple agency collaborations. The authors note the value in the facilitated mediation workshops arguing that they facilitate a process of internal reflection and refinement, enhancing collaborative efforts, and improving working relationships between collaborators. (Hoffman et al. 2012, p46).

This project responds firstly to the research gap identified by Zurba et al (2012) through the collaborative development and implementation of a participatory partnership evaluation process. Secondly, following the work of Hoffman et al (2012), this research project initiates a smaller scale facilitated workshop with similar objectives. Thus this project aims to contribute to local understandings of partnerships between Girringun and a sample of external IPA partners, one year since the declaration.
1.4 THESIS AIMS

Despite declaration of Girringun IPA, the implementation is just beginning. This is reflected in the diversity of IPA partnerships, some are well established over years of interaction, others remain in their infancy. As a co-managed IPA, diverse partners bring diverse and sometimes competing interests which must be negotiated to ensure effective management on the ground and across tenures.

The Aims of this project are outlined below.

- **Collaboratively develop a partnership evaluation process to assist self-evaluation of partnerships within the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas**

As an example of experimental and innovative co-management, research engagement must also be collaborative, as well as participatory. This process requires an exploratory approach, avoiding engagement with preconceived notions of what such a process might look like. As such this project is concerned with the production and sharing of local knowledge. Time and logistic constraints mean that engagement is limited to an IPA partnership sample, rather than the full complement of partners.

- **Conduct ethical culturally assured research in a cross-cultural research environment**

This requires engagement with research in a way that is sensitive to the colonial nature of research ‘on’ Indigenous peoples. This requires going beyond an ethics submission, and ‘opening up’ the research project to the needs of Indigenous peoples. This is facilitated through collaborative development and supervision of the research project with Girringun as well as a summary workshop to (in)validate the findings and promote co-ownership.

- **Investigate the role of the policy entrepreneur, and the ‘agency’ of the research process**

As an emergent aim following the completion of the interview process, this element explores how the conditions for policy innovation are fostered on the ground by individuals. It seeks to better understand how the research process influences these innovative individuals and the individuals the project.
1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

The Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, through the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas is involved in innovative, experimental Indigenous collaborative governance. This research project is also embedded in and engages with this context in a number of ways. The thesis unfolds as outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>➢ Synthesis of origins and future trajectories of conservation theory and practice, and emergence of unique Australian trajectories of shared governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Examination of emergence of co-managed IPAs, contextualising the experimental and innovative Girringun IPA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>➢ Examination and justification of the collaborative, participatory and action research typologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Negotiation of ethics in full immersion fieldwork and distinct methods of data collection and project limitations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>➢ Outcomes of the interview process. Examination of emergent baseline partnership snapshot encompassing: information sharing, resource capacity, cultural capacity, institutional cultures and on-ground delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Entrepreneurs and the Research Process</td>
<td>➢ Examination of the research process on the researcher and the research participants through agency and transformation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Reframing the Interview process as a space for self-reflection, and the summary workshop as a space for social learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>➢ Recognising the role of individuals within partnerships as advocates and policy entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>➢ Synthesis of outcomes, reflections on the position of the research project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 Thesis Outline.
In this chapter I frame the project by examining the old conservation paradigm or ‘park’ model of conservation underpinned by Western positivist ontology as distinct from Indigenous, tribal and community conservation, which has taken place for millennia. This is complemented with an exploration of factors which have contributed to a paradigm shift in conservation discourse. This shift is seen in the rise of neoliberal ideology, and international recognition of the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples in the management of their Traditional Estates. Secondly, I examine two Australian co-management conservation trajectories: the institutionalisation of both Joint Management and Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA). Thirdly, I analyse the emergence of co-managed IPAs, against this backdrop of international and national change. Here, complex, inter-cultural and multiagency collaborations have emerged and are increasingly employing adaptive management and social learning to enhance the effectiveness of working relationships.
2.1 CONSERVATION: ORIGINS AND FUTURE TRAJECTORIES

Various concepts of ‘protected areas’, places of value to be set aside for their biodiversity, spiritual and cultural values, have existed for thousands of years (Colchester 2004; Kothari et al. 2013). However, more recently the dominant model of global conservation has been tied to the concept of ‘national parks’ or discrete, state governed protected areas (Colchester 2004; Worboys et al. 2010). This ‘old’ model of conservation theory and practice rose to prominence on the back of the ‘Yellowstone model’, with the declaration of Yellowstone National Park. This declaration established discrete state managed protected areas as a dominant foundation for conservation (Ross et al. 2009; Worboys et al. 2010). Emerging in the USA, national parks have hinged on a binary of exclusion; nature could only be preserved as wilderness devoid of the influence of human beings (Colchester 2004; Dowie 2011).

There are a number of foundational issues deeply embedded in the old conservation paradigm that have particular relevance to Indigenous peoples. The ontological underpinnings of the old paradigm hinged on a perceived human/nature binary of difference (see Suchet 2002, pp141-142). Additionally the management of protected areas privileged a position of positivist Western epistemology within environmental management systems (Suchet 2002). This privileged position continues to devalue and render invisible traditional ecological knowledge and management practices today (Barbour & Schlesinger 2012; Howitt et al. 2013; Suchet-Pearson et al. 2013). Historically these foundations have contributed to the displacement and expulsion of indigenous and tribal peoples from their traditional lands under the imposition of new protected areas (Colchester 2004; Ross et al. 2009). Thus for many Indigenous and tribal peoples around the world, conservation agendas are often synonymous with the dispossession of traditional lands (Berkes 2009a; Dowie 2011; Kothari 2006; Ross et al. 2009).

The ‘new’ conservation paradigm emerged toward the end of the 20th century marking a shift toward a community-based approach (Brown 2003; Hulme & Murphree 1999; Moorcroft & Adams in press). A suite of developments internationally and nationally have delivered new models and trajectories of conservation theory and practice characterised by a diversification of conservation landscapes to include multiple uses, and multiple users (Colchester 2004, Kothari et al. 2013; Moorcroft & Adams in press). The first significant trajectory has emerged in response to increasing recognition and support for diverse forms
of Indigenous and community participation in environmental governance. In recent times, pressure from Indigenous peoples worldwide, to assert their rights to control of their estates, has contributed to a new paradigm in conservation and protected area management (Colchester 2004; Hill 2011; Ross et al. 2009, Smyth 2001). This is framed by a number of developments at the international level. Indigenous and community based conservation governance has gained significant support within international conservation forums in recent years, notably the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Kothari et al. 2013). The Vth IUCN World Parks Conference in Durban (2003) yielded two key paradigm shifts in conservation discourse (Colchester 2004; Kothari et al. 2013). Firstly, a shift away from centralised government control toward collaborative management with Indigenous people and local communities (Kothari et al. 2013). Secondly, not only the recognition of the conservation practices of Indigenous peoples and local communities, but also the support for these practices in the form of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) (Smyth & Grant 2012; Kothari et al. 2013). The United Nations General Assembly also adopted the UN declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples during this time (2007), further strengthening the basis for involvement of Indigenous peoples in conservation (for specific policy changes see Kothari et al. 2013).

The second trajectory relates to the rise of neoliberal ideologies, which is the opening up of conservation governance and protected area ownership to include non-government organisations, interests and private ownership. An increasing adoption of neoliberal ideologies has undoubtedly influenced the ‘stretching’ of conservation theory and practice (Brockington et al. 2008; Sundberg 2006). This is evidenced in a shift away from protected area ownership and governance dominated by the state, toward increasing involvement of NGOs and private landholders and networks of actors (Brockington et al. 2008; Pasquini et al. 2011; Kothari et al. 2013). The declaration of protected areas under the old paradigm was accompanied by the notion that protected areas were self-sustaining and separate from surrounding land uses, in a sense, ‘islands’ in a mosaic of human dominated landscapes (Kothari et al. 2013; Worboys et al. 2010). However, the emergence of multi-use landscapes, where conservation represents just one of multiple land uses, has challenged this notion (Moorcroft & Adams in press). This concept finds significant overlap with the Girringun IPA,
where a diversity of tenures, land uses and notions of ‘conservation’ and land management overlap and sometimes compete.

The table below outlines key shifts associated with the new paradigm in the context of protected areas. Recognition of this shift by the IUCN is significant as governments internationally draw on the IUCN protected area framework and categories to inform their conservation strategies (Beresford & Philips 2000; Phillips 2003).

New trajectories of Indigenous and community participation have opened the door to increased recognition of the contribution that Indigenous knowledge makes to natural resource management (for examples from Australia, see Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2012; Ens et al. 2012; Gratani et al. 2014). These developments are analysed in a rapidly expanding global literature. Recent summaries include, Dove et al. (2011), merson et al. (2012) and Verschuuren et al. (2010). The remainder of this literature review will explore Australia’s collaborative management trajectories, with a specific focus on co-management and the emergence of Indigenous Protected Areas.
As it was: protected areas were... | As it is becoming: protected areas are...

- Planned and managed against people
- Run by central government
- Set aside for conservation
- Managed without regard to local community
- Developed separately
- Managed as ‘islands’
- Established mainly for scenic protection
- Managed mainly for visitors and tourists
- Managed reactively within short timescale
- About protection
- Viewed primarily as a national asset
- Viewed exclusively as a national concern

- Run with, for, and in some cases, by local people
- Run by many partners
- Run also with social and economic objectives
- Managed to help meet needs of local people
- Planned as part of national, regional and international systems
- Developed as ‘networks’ (strictly protected areas, buffered and linked by green corridors)
- Often set up for scientific, economic and cultural reasons
- Managed with local people more in mind
- Managed adaptively in long-term perspective
- Also about restoration and rehabilitation
- Viewed also as a community asset
- Viewed also as an international concern

**Table 2.1** A new Paradigm for Protected Areas (Source: Phillips 2003)
2.1.1 AUSTRALIAN SHARED GOVERNANCE

These global trajectories of change have complemented a suite of developments at the national level where innovation and vernacular adaptation have delivered unique responses to conservation challenges (see Figgis et al. 2012; Ross et al. 2009). Australia’s contemporary conservation agenda has its foundations in the Yellowstone model, with Royal National Park in NSW following Yellowstone as the second national park in the world to be declared. Australia’s co-management trajectories have developed unevenly across the continent, both spatially and temporally, first in the Northern Territory and then in each of the states (Bauman & Smyth 2007; Smyth & Jaireth 2012; Smyth & Ward 2009). Co-management refers broadly to the management of a common pool of resources, involving multiple actors with distinct interests (Berkes 2009a; Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004). However there is currently no universally accepted definition. Rather, co-management is conceptualised as a continuum, where power sharing and decision-making arrangements constitute unique forms of co-management (Armitage et al. 2008; Berkes 2009a; Berkes 2010; Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2004). At the national level, legal developments including the recognition of Aboriginal rights to land as well as native title determinations have laid the foundations for Joint management of protected areas (referred to as co-management in the international literature and hereafter as co-management) and IPA (see Smyth & Jaireth 2012). More recently the evolution of the IPA concept has delivered another shared governance trajectory, that of co-managed IPAs (Rose 2012; Ross et al. 2009; Smyth & Jaireth 2012). Each of these trajectories is explored below.

Today Australia is considered a world leader in Indigenous peoples’ protected area management (Ross et al. 2009, p242). Despite this, it must be acknowledged that this position is one built on a foundation of colonial history steeped in dispossession, conflict and violence (Moorcroft & Adams in press). However, through protest and litigation, rights to land and demonstration of native title, Indigenous Australians have asserted ownership to almost 23 per cent of the continent’s land mass (Altman 2012b). This 170 million hectares of land is often referred to as the Indigenous Estate (Altman 2012a; Altman 2012b). The Indigenous Estate has emerged in a distinct geographical pattern occupying regions of Australia which have been deemed economically unproductive due to remoteness and low agricultural productivity, as shown in Figure 2.1 (Altman 2012b). It has only more recently
been re-framed as a geographical area of high conservation value in relatively sound environmental condition (Altman 2012b). There is however, increasing recognition of threats to the Indigenous Estate and its ability to generate ecological services. This recognition echoes global and national concerns associated with a looming environmental crisis (Altman 2012b; Australia State of the Environment 2011). In line with these concerns is the recognition that additional conservation intervention is required to maintain the condition of the Indigenous Estate (Altman 2012b).

### 2.1.2 JOINT OR CO-MANAGEMENT

Co-management has emerged in Australia over the last thirty years responding to international and national pressure for the participation of Indigenous people in conservation and management of their traditional lands (Hill et al. 2012; Ross et al. 2009). In contrast to top-down management arrangements, co-management is a collaborative process, with the potential to bridge gaps between different levels of governance (Berkes 2010; Berkes 2009b). Co-management in Australia has historically been tied to the rights of stakeholders to land. As a result it has emerged unevenly across Australia, reflecting differing levels of recognition for the rights of Indigenous peoples across levels of government at different times (Bauman & Smyth 2007; Smyth & Jaireth 2012). In many cases, where Indigenous land granted under a land rights claim intersects with an established national park, co-management arrangements are negotiated. In some cases the transfer of ownership is contingent on Indigenous peoples support for the continuation of the national park (Bauman & Smyth 2007; Smyth & Jaireth 2012; Smyth & Ward 2009). The earliest and most prominent examples of co-management emerged in the Northern Territory and include Gurig Gunak Barlu, Kakadu, and Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Parks (Ross et al. 2009).

Typically, where Indigenous legal rights to traditional lands are strong, co-management arrangements necessitate significant Indigenous involvement in decision-making and
facilitate Indigenous access and use of protected areas. Conversely, where legal rights to land are weak, Indigenous input into decision-making tends to be limited to an advisory role and access to protected areas is reduced (Smyth & Jaireth 2012). Outlining a number of typologies of Indigenous engagement, Hill et al. (2012, pp6-7) argue that each typology involves different levels of power sharing, participation each with distinct and sometimes competing intercultural purposes. Hill et al. (2012) note that where legal recognition of rights to land are strong, the legal mechanism of joint-management (co-management) is sought. However, co-management is often driven by government agencies in these legal arrangements. It is noted that within these forms of government driven co-management arrangements there remains a number of challenges associated with negotiating intercultural differences. These include; uneven positions of power in decision making, management priorities and engagement (Hill 2011; Hill et al. 2012; Howitt et al. 2013; Suchet 2002). Thus in many respects, co-management has emerged as a trade-off, an attempt to find common ground between the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples and the rights and interests of government conservation agencies (Smyth & Jaireth 2012, p31). While most co-management arrangements have been negotiated and implemented across defined protected areas, notably national parks, off-park arrangements have been developed. A number of these are outlined by Ross et al. (2009). This literature review will focus predominantly on the role of Indigenous Protected Areas in defining co-management outside of official protected area boundaries.

### 2.1.3 Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA)

The emergence of the IPA concept parallels the development of ICCAs internationally (see Smyth & Grant 2012). In Australia the IPA concept represents a significant divergence from more common, Government driven, co-management arrangements. IPAs are a form of Indigenous driven co-governance which emerged in 1997 following the findings of a
bioregional survey which demonstrated the overlap between areas of the Indigenous Estate, and poorly represented bioregions within the National Reserve System (Department of the Environment and Water Resources, 2007). From the perspective of the Australian Government, the institutionalisation of the IPA concept, to develop the IPA program, presented an opportunity and mechanism to incorporate these areas into the National Reserve System (Australian National Audit Office, 2011; Rose 2012). Simultaneously, it was recognised that protected area models that might require the loss of Indigenous title, or joint title, would not be appropriate in light of the often long and grueling process to secure land title in Australia (Rose 2012).

Distinct from legally established and defined protected areas, IPAs are not underpinned by a legal framework. Instead, from 1997, Indigenous landowners were able to voluntarily declare protected area status over their land and/or sea country in return for land management assistance and funding from the Australian government (Bauman & Smyth 2007; Rose 2012; Ross et al. 2009). Indigenous Protected Areas are declared according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) protected area categories, a system that classifies protected areas into six distinct groups according to their management objectives (Dudley 2008; 2013). The declaration of an IPA is dependent on the development of an IPA management plan which outlines the category of protected area according to the IUCN categories. The IUCN protected area categories are considered the global standard in defining protected areas. A protected area is

‘A clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values’. (Dudley 2013, p2)

The IUCN protected area definition represents a significant departure from the Yellowstone model. Protected areas are instead positioned in a spectrum; from most natural conditions and least environmental modification (I), to increased human activity and modification of the environment (V & VI) (See Table 2.2). Indigenous protected areas are typically declared under categories IV, V and VI (see Hill et al. 2011, pp9-11). As outlined in Table 2.2 The IUCN definitions of category V and VI represent a significant opening-up of conservation theory and practice, with acknowledgment of the compatibility of traditional use and management, ‘sustainable use’ of resources and the protection of natural ecosystems (Colchester 2004; Hill et al. 2011; Kothari et al. 2013). There are key components of the definition from Dudley.
which the IPA concept has capitalised on; the inclusion of conservation targeting ‘cultural values’, the term ‘geographical space’, and management ‘through legal and other effective means’. In light of this, a working definition for contemporary IPAs in Australia which includes the aspects highlighted within the IUCN definition of a protected area is defined below.

‘An IPA is an area of land and/or water voluntarily dedicated by its Traditional Owners as a protected area, recognised by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments as part of Australia’s National Reserve System of Protected Areas, and managed through legal and other effective means in accordance with protected area guidelines of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature’ (Bauman et al. 2013)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governance Type</th>
<th>A. Governance by government</th>
<th>B. Shared governance</th>
<th>C. Private governance</th>
<th>D. Governance by Indigenous peoples and local communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I A - Strict Nature Reserve/Wilderness Area</td>
<td>To conserve ecosystems and natural areas undisturbed by significant human activity (summary, see full version in NRS Guidelines)</td>
<td>0—6% (0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II – National Park (ecosystem protection; protection of cultural values)</td>
<td>To protect natural biodiversity along with its underlying ecological structure and supporting environmental processes, and to promote education and recreation</td>
<td>2—4% (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III – Natural Monument</td>
<td>To protect specific outstanding natural features and their associated biodiversity and habitats</td>
<td>0—0% (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV – Habitat/Species Management</td>
<td>To maintain, conserve and restore species and habitats</td>
<td>2—4% (11)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V – Protected Landscape/Seascape</td>
<td>To protect and sustain important landscapes/seascapes and the associated nature conservation and other values created by interactions with humans through traditional management practices</td>
<td>13—27% (16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI – Managed Resource</td>
<td>To protect natural ecosystems and use natural resources sustainably, when conservation and sustainable use can be mutually beneficial</td>
<td>31—65% (31)</td>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL 100% (71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures show the number of IPAs and % of total, whose primary objective places it in that IUCN category—note that of a total of 48 declared IPAs, 14 have nominated more than one IUCN Category. The total number in each category appears in brackets.

**Table 2.2** Declared Indigenous Protected Areas (March 2011) and corresponding IUCN Protected Area categories (Source: Hill et al. 2011, p10). NOTE: More recent data demonstrating the growth of the IPA program is outlined below in box 2.1
According to the Australian government Indigenous Protected Area web page (Australian Government Department of Environment 2014a), there are currently 60 declared IPAs encompassing 48 million hectares and accounting for 36 per cent of the National Reserve System. IPAs account for the second largest component of the NRS (Bauman et al 2013). Interestingly, the most recent Indigenous Protected Area map from the same Australian Government IPA web page puts the total number of recognised IPAs at 65 with an additional 25 IPA consultation projects including three co-managed IPA consultation projects (see Figure 2.1 below). Figures from the National Reserve System web page put the total area of the National Reserve system (over 10,000 protected areas) at 127 million hectares, or 16.52 per cent of the continent (Australian Government Department of Environment 2014a). Figure 2.1 below shows the National Reserve System as of 2012, the contribution of IPAs to the NRS is also shown.

Figure 2.1 Indigenous Protected Areas June 2014 (Source: Australian Government Department of Environment 2014a)
The declaration and subsequent recognition of an IPA by Government hinges on its conservation purpose and Traditional Owners deep cultural commitments to their County articulated in a management plan, targeting the conservation of natural and cultural values as well as improving biodiversity outcomes (Davies et al. 2013; Ross et al. 2009; Smyth 2001; Zurba et al. 2012). Governance of IPAs includes a diverse array of actors and tools, including but not limited to; Traditional Owner organisations, Indigenous and non-Indigenous land management agencies and regional Indigenous organisations (Bauman et al. 2013; Rose 2012; Hoffman et al. 2012). Perhaps the most important feature of this governance arrangement is the level of Indigenous autonomy they afford. The non-legal framework of the IPA program has been framed as instrumental in its acceptance by Indigenous people (Rose 2012). The IPA concept supports Traditional Owners by respecting their authority, both in terms of decision-making and their desire to employ traditional land management practices. In line with the IUCN guidelines, management by legal and other effective means
is facilitated in practice though a combination of legislative means, land ownership, legislated rights to use natural resources. As well as other effective means: Indigenous Australian customary law, signage, research, education and partnerships with additional conservation agencies (see Smyth & Grant 2012, pp15-16).

The significant expansion of the number of declared IPAs can be attributed to a number of key factors which include its ability to facilitate ‘caring for country’ and the strong cultural and spiritual values associated with ‘healthy’ country. Additionally the potential to attract funding from Commonwealth Government IPA program, (distinct from IPAs themselves), as well as forming a foundation to support employment on country is a considerable factor in the success of the IPA concept (Rose 2012). Finally, there is growing recognition of a suite of social, economic and health benefits which stem from Indigenous Australians involvement with land management (see Hunt et al. 2009 & Turnbull 2010). Several authors have identified the declaration of IPAs on the basis of ‘tenure’ as a significant limitation in the declaration, recognition and implementation of IPAs in regions of Australia where strong statutory rights to land do not exist (Hill 2011; Rose 2012; Zurba et al. 2012). However, the lack of a formal legal framework has seen the stretching of the IPA concept, incorporating different forms of tenure, land and sea, as well as a multiplicity of partners and the inclusion of private freehold lands (Altman 2012a; Bauman et al. 2013; Rose 2012; Smyth 2011; Smyth & Jaireth 2012). Researchers also suggest that the IPA concept is continuing to evolve, reflecting the diverse ways in which Traditional Owners want to use and engage with it (Rose 2012; Ross et al. 2009; Bauman et al. 2013)

2.2 CO-MANAGED INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS

Co-managed IPAs represent the cutting edge of the continuously evolving IPA concept. As noted in Chapter One, Mandingalbay Yidinji was the first co-managed Indigenous Protected Area in late November 2011 (IPA No. 50, Figure 2.1). Traditional Owner, Dale Mundraby of the Mandingalbay Yidinji Indigenous Protected Area said upon its declaration;

*We had a native title determination and Indigenous Land Use Agreements, but it wasn’t until we started developing the Indigenous Protected Area project that we could see a way of ‘putting country back together’ – to manage country in a tenure-blind way with our partners.*

– Dale Mundraby Mandingalbay Yidinji Traditional Owner (Australian Government, Department of the Environment 2013)
The declaration and recognition by Government of a co-managed IPA over existing
government protected area tenures is important for a number of reasons. Firstly it is formal
acknowledgement of the extent, aspirations and management intent of a Traditional
Owners over their Country, despite a lack of legal recognition or ownership. Secondly it is
not only recognition of the continuation of this deep connection to, and knowledge of
Country, But most importantly it is recognition of the value of ‘Country’ as an appropriate
geographic and cultural scale to manage Australia’s environments and resources (Altman
2012a; Bauman et al. 2013; Rose 2012; Smyth 2014).

IPAs declared over Indigenous-owned land allow Traditional Owners to designate the
manner in which their land is managed. Co-management of an IPA however, necessitates
negotiation of the interests, management objectives and legislative responsibilities of
government agencies and other IPA partners (Bauman et al. 2013; Smyth & Grant 2012;
Rose 2012). In this sense and in reference to the definition of co-management outlined
earlier, it is useful to conceptualise co-management as a continuum rather than a defined
‘state’, where power sharing and decision-making arrangements constitute unique forms of
co-management (Berkes 2009b; Berkes 2010; Hill 2011; Hill et al. 2012). Within a co-
management IPA arrangement, Traditional Owners are responsible for negotiating and
coordinating partnerships (Bauman et al. 2013). Partnerships are typically ‘whole of
government’ involving local, state and federal agencies and funding sources, as well as NGO
and private partnerships determined by the interests and strategic vision of Traditional
Owners (Bauman et al. 2013). With the declaration of multi-tenure IPAs the number and
diversity of co-management partners involved in protected area management has expanded
significantly (Bauman et al. 2013; Hoffman et al. 2012; Smyth & Grant 2012; Zurba et al.
2012). The environmental governance literature argues that partnerships have the potential
and, in many cases do, produce outcomes which are greater than those that can be
delivered by individual efforts, in these situations the strengths and weakness of each are
2009; Zurba et al. 2012). These arrangements have undoubtedly increased the complexity of
protected area governance. In the case of the Girringun co-managed IPA, and many others,
flexible co-management arrangements, or adaptive co-management relies on strong
partnerships of participation and collaboration (Bauman et al. 2013; Hoffman et al. 2012;
2.2.1 ‘COUNTRY’ BASED PLANNING & ONTOLOGICAL DIVIDES

IPAs and their plans of management offer opportunities to deepen understandings of, and bridge boundaries between, knowledge systems (Bohenskey & Maru 2011; Davies et al. 2013, Ens et al. 2012). The concept of Country as a lens with which to identify aspirations and strategies and management intent across a landscape has been raised in support of multiple tenure co-managed IPAs and co-management more broadly (Davies et al. 2013; Smyth 2009; Ross et al. 2009). The Indigenous notion of Country is a whole-of-landscape approach, blurring the line between the distinct and hierarchical categories of colonial tenure and ownership. These categories, often arbitrary lines on a map, define and characterise much of traditional protected area management outlining ownership and inclusion or exclusion from management and involvement (Davies et al. 2013; Ross et al. 2009). The concept of country based planning lends itself to overcoming the reliance on centralised government developed plans that may not respond to Indigenous interests or might privilege western NRM systems and techniques (Barbour & Schlesinger 2012; Davies et al. 2013; Gratani et al. 2014; Howitt et al. 2013). Further, in the case of the Girringun IPA, where Traditional Owners do not have strong legal rights to land, the use of country as a management paradigm has the potential to empower Traditional Owners, placing positioning management intent and interests on a more even footing with government agencies.

2.2.2 LOCATING THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The conditions for adaptive co-management are explored in a number of governance arrangements with similar characteristics to the Girringun IPA (Hoffman et al. 2012 pp48-49) and in direct reference to Girringun’s co-management arrangements (Maclean et al. 2013, p95; Zurba et al. 2012, p113). Maclean et al. (2013, pp95-102) provide a detailed examination of the social characteristics that foster adaptive co-management, illustrating examples of network development, organisational and individual learning and visionary leadership within the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. Zurba et al. (2012) note that adaptive co-management emphasises the learning-by-doing aspect of co-management, where regular feedback cycles assist in the iterative process of planning, implementation and improvement. Finally, this research project and its methodological approach explores the concept of social-learning across governance scales within the adaptive co-management
literature (Armitage et al. 2008, p87; Cundill & Fabricus 2009; Fabricus & Cundill 2014; Plummer et al. 2013). The conditions which facilitate social learning, and ways in which this project may have provided stimulus for learning, are examined in Chapter 5 and additional literature is explored in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The chapter first outlines the value of Participatory Action Research approaches in the context of collaborative management as well as examining a subset of literature on the applicability of participatory evaluation processes. This is complemented by an outline of the way in which ethics research practices were negotiated throughout the project. Second, the chapter explores the concept of ‘full immersion’ fieldwork. Third, specific methods of data collection employed throughout the project are outlined, these include a diversity of mixed methods, including both open and closed response and qualitative questioning. Finally the chapter reviews some of the project’s limitations.

3.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Rather than drawing on ‘concrete theory’, the conceptual framework of this project can be linked to its approach, which is exploratory, interactive and concerned with the production and sharing of local knowledge and local solutions. This project seeks to explore the attributes and characteristics of partnerships in a cross-cultural context. These perspectives can be framed as a set of personal truths unique to individuals groups and institutions. In
this sense there is a significant fit between the approach and a post-structuralist paradigm where post-structuralism seeks to describe “social and cultural systems that are open and dynamic, constantly in the process of ‘becoming’” (Murdoch 2006, p 10). In such systems the knowledge, ideas and truths that inform the perspectives gathered are produced contextually, rather than universally (Cresswell 2013).

3.2. PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH: PARTICIPATION IN CO-MANAGEMENT

The literature on participatory action oriented research broadly falls into three categories, Co-research, Action Research and Participatory Action Research. These approaches share many characteristics; particularly, they focus not just on contributing new knowledge or developing new theory, but on linking intellectual knowledge to action in an effort to contribute change within society.

3.2.1. ACTION RESEARCH

Action Research is described as a process used to generate practical knowledge to pursue and produce changes in meaningful human pursuits (Coghalan & Brannick 2005). Frequent use of Action Research in a social participation context led to the development of ‘participatory’ Action Research. Today the two typologies are described in very similar terms (Izurieta 2007). Action Research and similar approaches begin with an examination of context, exploring the forces driving change, and are then followed by a cycle of four steps: diagnosing (reflect), planning action, taking action and evaluating action (Coghalan & Brannick 2005; O’Leary 2005). Proponents of Action Research argue that for change to occur, action is required, and this should be an immediate goal of any Action Research project (O’Leary 2005). This project at a personal level was initiated and driven by a desire to assist in working on a ‘real world problem’, facilitated and guided by the needs of Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (Girringun). Broadly the project has followed the Action Research cycle outlined in Table 3.1.
Action Research Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>This project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Participant observation. Collaborative discussion and triangulation with</td>
<td>➢ Collaborative development of interview questions, focusing on the interests of Girringun. Scheduling of a summary workshop on initial results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the available documentation and the broader literature.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Planning action                                                          |                                                                                                                                              |
| ➢ Collaborative development of interview questions, focusing on the       |                                                                                                                                              |
| interests of Girringun. Scheduling of a summary workshop on initial       |                                                                                                                                              |
| results                                                                    |                                                                                                                                              |

| Taking action                                                             |                                                                                                                                              |
| ➢ Interview process, holding a collaborative summary workshop to discuss   |                                                                                                                                              |
| the emerging themes and results of the research as well as the actions    |                                                                                                                                              |
| taken by individuals independent of the formal research ‘design’.         |                                                                                                                                              |

| Evaluating action                                                        |                                                                                                                                              |
| ➢ Analysis of interview transcripts and outcomes, presentation of initial |                                                                                                                                              |
| results, summary workshop.                                               |                                                                                                                                              |

Table 3.1. The Action Research Cycle.

3.2.2 CO-RESEARCH

Recent research conducted in partnership with Girringun has drawn on Co-research methodological approaches (see Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2010; Maclean et al. 2013). Co-research identifies community partners as valuable members of the research team, and where possible delivers resources to assist in their involvement (Cullen et al. 2008; Maclean & Cullen 2009). Additionally, Co-research is sensitive to the colonial legacy of ‘Aboriginal Research’ where Aboriginal people were framed, and treated as subjects rather than partners (Maclean & Cullen 2009; Smith 1999). Mclean and Cullen (2009) argue that Co-research supports and embraces ‘polyvocality’, providing space for the co-production of knowledge. A Co-research approach is a means of confronting the dominant positivist western approach to research and practice by embracing and respecting different epistemologies. What this means is that a Co-research methodology provides a means of moving beyond what is a predominantly resource focused understanding of environmental management or natural resource management (Mclean & Cullen 2009). Additionally, Co-research is inclusive, and provides space for ‘co-produced’ understanding of environmental management, one which acknowledges the inseparable role of people and culture (Mclean
et al. 2013; Maclean & Cullen 2009). Crawford (2009) argues that the co-production of knowledge is a process concerned not only with knowledge but also with the methodologies which facilitate relationship building, genuine discussions around knowledge stereotypes and the protocol of engaging with and generating dialogue between different epistemologies.

Cullen-Unsworth et al. (2012, pp356-360) outline seven key determinants of successful Co-research. These are: Cooperative problem-framing as a means of supporting and enabling Indigenous and scientific knowledge integration, strong Indigenous governance, relationship building, considerations of scale, data collection and management, and agreed dissemination of results and evaluation (determinants which this project has taken particular care to address have been emphasised).

3.2.3 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Participatory Action Research (PAR) has been continuously developing since the 1970s. Kindon (2010) argues that PAR is concerned with changing a social reality, rather than simply describing it. Thus the researcher would not normally determine the research agenda, but collaboratively involve participants in a process which defines the issues facing them, and their research needs (Kindon 2010; Pain 2004). PAR does not involve conducting research on a group, but works with a group to achieve action and ultimately the positive change that they desire (Kindon 2010 p260). PAR research allows groups who share common goals or challenges to articulate and prioritise them in a way which invites involvement in creating positive change through the research (Park 1999). PAR seeks collaboration and engagement amongst research participants as equal and full contributors in much the same way as Action Research and Co-research methodologies.

In this respect, the current research project represents the input of both myself as a student researcher, two supervisors, and Girringun. The project has seen significant change since Girringun was first approached as a potential research partner in late 2013. The original proposal was renegotiated once prior to a face to face meeting with Girringun representatives, and then again at a Girringun Indigenous Protected Area Co-management Committee (GIPACC) meeting in early April of 2014. Although challenging considering the scope of an Honours project (Klocker 2012), the process of collaborative and iterative
project development is an example of PAR principals; working with a group, to achieve the positive change which they desire (Kindon 2010). Significant input into the design of the research project has come from myself and Girringun. As the project was a collaborative endeavor developed in partnership with Girringun and not the partner organisations, it has not always been possible to ensure equal participation of all research participants. However the partner organisations were not only given the opportunity to provide input, but in some cases they were also able to generate tangible action following the interview process. This is explored further in Chapters Four and Five.

Each of the typologies outlined above are characterized by their sensitivity to the potential power imbalances inherent between the researcher and the researched. This is particularly important in the context of the exploitative nature of research conducted ‘on’ or ‘with’ Indigenous Australians (Barbour & Schlesinger 2012). Ethically and reflexively negotiating the power relations inherent in PAR is of upmost importance (Kindon 2010; Pain 2004) and I explore this process in section 3.4.1. While acknowledging that each of the research typologies outlined above are distinct, there are considerable commonalities and overlap. For the purposes of this research project I will refer broadly to this suite of research approaches as a PAR

3.3 CO-MANAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH

Ownership and equitable input into decision-making and power sharing processes have been outlined as the basis of co-management by numerous authors within the literature (Berkes 2009b; Berkes 2010; Hill 2011). These issues have also been raised in the context of research conducted with or ‘on’ Indigenous peoples (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Studies 2012; Barbour & Schlesinger 2012; Smith 1999). In this sense, a PAR research approach finds significant compatibility with the principles of collaborative management. This is reflected in Table 3.2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Co-Management Principles</th>
<th>Participatory Action Research Principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2 Shared principles: collaborative management and participatory action research.
Adapted from Izurieta, A 2007, p106.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Knowledge/truth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/involvement (of communities)</td>
<td>Participant/Involvement (of research participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community capacity building</td>
<td>Strengthen Institutions/organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation problem solving</td>
<td>Solving problems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Borrini-Feyerabend 2004; Carlsson & Berkes 2005; Ross et al. 2009)  
(Kindon 2010; O’Leary 2005; Pain 2004; Park 1999)

The co-management approach taken by Girringun, outlined below, finds significant overlap with the principles outlined in Table 3.2. The Girringun IPA and the various co-management arrangements which preceded it have had at their core a number of foundations which have contributed to Girringun’s success. These include the building of respect, rapport and trust, establishment of responsibilities, and the practical application of these responsibilities, which all flow through into capacity building (Zurba et al. 2012). As capacity is built within Girringun and its co-management partners, an expansion of the preceding factors occurs and the cycle continues.

The PAR process and Girringun’s involvement can be compared against the principles in Table 3.2 and the foundations of Girringun’s co-management arrangements outlined above. Girringun established ownership of the project through active participation and direction throughout the research process. This is particularly clear in the early stages of project development and the collaborative framing of ‘practical gaps’. Trust, knowledge and truth were facilitated through Girringun’s guidance in cultural assurance and research interests over four distinct periods of researcher residency at Girringun. Participation and involvement of research participants, strengthening of institutions and problem solving were not facilitated in strictly discreet stages and were negotiated in accordance with practical limitations of the Honours project. Semi-structured interviews with a sample of six external IPA partners and three senior Girringun employees, a presentation of preliminary research findings and a forty minute collaborative summary workshop on the research
project and the subject of partnership evaluation were all part of facilitating these PAR principles. Finally, the development and delivery of a baseline partnership snapshot and summarized evaluation process following the submission of this thesis may also contribute to self-evaluation and management processes.

Recent research conducted in partnership with the Girringun and individual Traditional Owner groups in the region have utilised the following typologies; Co-research (Cullen-Unsworth et al. 2010; Hill et al. 2011; Maclean et al. 2013) PAR (Izurieta 2007) and Action Research (Zurba 2010; Zurba et al. 2012). A participatory, action oriented research approach finds significant compatibility with the principles of co-management as a best practice approach to research with community groups. While the scope of this Honours project is significantly smaller than the projects outlined above, Kindon (2010) notes that PAR should be designed, negotiated and carried out in a way that is sensitive to the available time, resources and broader context of the project (Kindon 2010). Klocker (2012, pp149-150) challenges the notion that PhDs and PAR are incompatible, where only the ‘bravest of students dare mesh the two’. Maguire, (1993, p. 176) in the same vein as Kindon (2010), responds to debate over authentic and inauthentic PAR that attempt to achieve meaningful change arguing for support no matter how small-scale. This project has been negotiated, planned and implemented on an Honours time-frame, facilitating approximately 45 days of fieldwork between February and August, 2014, and elements of Action Research, Co-research and PAR principles have been incorporated where possible.

The research methodology involves engagement with Girringun and the Corporation’s external IPA partners in a collaborative research process to co-produce knowledge, solutions and learning. This process not only requires the input of each of the partners, but values and depends on the input process to affect change (Izurieta 2007).

3.3.1 PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

O’Sullivan (2004) suggests that evaluation is typically done for two reasons: to find out how to improve practice, and because funding sources require it. Evaluation also provides input into strengths and weaknesses, and can contribute to processes of accountability and organisational change (O’Sullivan 2004). In an adaptive management context, monitoring and on-going learning are noted as key determinants of effective decision making (Cundill &
Fabricius 2009). This is supported by recent research from Zurba et al. (2012) who frame the development of an IPA evaluation process between Girringun and its co-management partners as a future focus.

Participatory evaluation finds significant overlap with the principles of collaborative management and PAR as outlined in Table 3.2, further cementing the importance of collaborative approaches in co-management settings (Hoffman et al. 2012). For example, while significant literature exists on the development and application of natural resource management sustainability indicators, there has been some critique on the basis that, these evaluations are often too qualitative or focused on biophysical outcomes (Borrini-Feyerabend et al. 2007; Izurieta et al. 2012; Stacey et al. 2013). This is particularly relevant in protected area co-management settings, as social outcomes and processes are considered equally as important as biophysical outcomes (Stacey et al. 2013). Participatory evaluation, at least initially, can be considered as being less concerned with measuring performance or output, but instead with gathering information on what makes projects work (Hoffman et al. 2012; Woodhill & Robbins 1998).

Within co-management arrangements, participatory methods are framed as democratising evaluations and are a means of addressing the dominance of single stakeholder agendas (King et al. 2007; Sayer et al. 2007). However, considerable challenge is associated with participatory evaluation as the process often reveals that no single set of mutually inclusive outcomes desired by all stakeholders, and instead a competing set of outcomes unique to each stakeholder emerges (Sayer et al. 2007). For this project, employing participatory evaluation methods is essential to encapsulate the diverse interests and goals of the Girringun IPA partners. Applied appropriately, these methodologies can facilitate the development of outcomes that are perceived to be useful to all stakeholders (Armitage et al. 2008; Izurieta et al. 2011; Sayer et al. 2007).
3.4 FULL IMMERSION FIELDWORK: ETHICS, ACTIVISM AND THE FRIENDLY OUTSIDER

The following section explores the concept of full immersion field work, including the negotiation of ethics. I also explore the relationship between activist and scholar positions, including negotiation of the insider and outsider position. This is further developed in Chapter Five where I analyse these issues as well as my position within the research project through an examination of a series of residencies at Girringun.

3.4.1 ETHICS: DE-COLONISING RESEARCH

Throughout the research process, I remained engaged with formal ethics processes (see Appendix B) and in line with a PAR typology. I was committed to engaging with research participants in formal interviews, a presentation, and a workshop, and also through my day-to-day actions during my residencies. This necessitated negotiation of numerous facets of relationship and rapport building, outlined below and in further detail in Chapter Five.

Aboriginal Australians are often regarded to be the most researched people in the world (Aboriginal Research Institute 1993, p3). Smith (1999, p1) argues that the very word ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. Much of this research has been conducted ‘on’ Indigenous people by non-Indigenous people (Fredericks 2008; Howitt & Stevens 2010; Smith 1999). Broadly, this legacy and typology is referred to as colonial research. Howitt and Stevens (2010, p42) argue that colonial research continues today and call for more support for ‘post-colonial, de-colonizing, and inclusionary research’.

Smith (1999, p2) argues that research remains a ‘significant site of struggle between the interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other’. I acknowledged the ethical challenges associated with this project in light of the deeply problematic and extractive history of western research on indigenous peoples. As such, I position this research as ‘post-colonial’ where the research process seeks to contribute to the welfare of others and efforts for self-determination. Additionally, the research draws on elements of ‘de-colonizing’ research, where an attempt is made to collaboratively investigate cross-cultural discourses and asymmetrical power relationships (Howitt & Stevens 2010). Finally, this project responds to calls for research which ‘studies
up’, a process which seeks to illuminate structures of privilege and power capacity deficits within institutions and their engagements in cross cultural situations (Howitt & Stevens 2010; Howitt et al. 2013).

3.4.2 RESEARCH INVOLVING ABORIGINAL OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COMMUNITIES.

This project included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants and was conducted in partnership with Girringun. It was conceived and refined in accordance with the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS 2000), Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies as well as cultural assurance protocols for research conducted within the Girringun region, as articulated in the Girringun IPA Management Plan (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a). Research guidelines in this plan refer specifically to informed consent, regarding research proposals, aims and objectives. Negotiation of a potential research project and what it might deliver to each of the parties concerned began with Girringun in December 2013 and continued through January and February of 2014 (see Appendix C to F for summary of correspondence). The researcher and research project remained sensitive to the needs and input of Girringun for the duration of the project, with a shift in project focus responding to developments in the region as late as the middle of April 2014.

3.4.3 ETHICS IN THE FIELD: CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH

My research has focused on remaining both culturally assured and responsive to the needs of Girringun (Howitt & Stevens 2010). Cultural assurance is defined in the Girringun IPA management plan (p16) as a best practice approach to land and sea management where there is ‘respect, recognition and responsibility for Traditional Owners and their values in the long term sustainable use of country and its resources’. Negotiating cross-cultural situations necessitates an iterative process of ethically appropriate conduct in the field (Howitt & Stevens 2010). As a researcher in training, ethical conduct was ensured through guidance, supervision and research authorization from the Girringun IPA Coordinator(Howitt & Stevens 2010, p47). Guidance included: selecting appropriate forums for me to be involved in, introductions and endorsement of both myself and the project during co-management committee meetings, and additional guidance in day-to-day activities at Girringun. Additionally, during the June residency I was able to participate in a staff research workshop...
facilitated by James Cook University (see Chapter 5). This framed Girringun’s position on past, current and future research and flagged the growing field of indigenist methodologies literature as resource to inform future research protocols and agendas (see Howitt & Stevens 2010; Lowitja Institute 2012; Martin & Mirrabooka 2003; Rigney, 1999). My project was discussed during the workshop and I was asked to explain the project to the entire Girringun staff.

3.4.4 ACADEMIA AND ACTION

This project is motivated simultaneously by a personal interest in the environment, sustainability and anthropogenic climate change, as well as a curiosity and desire to better understand and engage with innovative and evolving methods of Indigenous Australian environmental governance. This Honours research project presented an opportunity to engage in both of these personal interests. In light of the colonial legacy of research on Indigenous peoples, any project that I was involved in would need to make a contribution beyond academia, by also making a contribution to practical action and change.

3.4.5 FULL IMMERSION FIELDWORK

I have used the term ‘full immersion fieldwork’ to capture the intensity of my time in the field, where the researcher becomes, as far as is possible, that which they are seeking to understand and describe, (Desmond 2011; Wacquant 2004). Each period of residency represents my effort to immerse myself fully in the world of the Girringun IPA and to experience their day-to-day operations. I ate and slept at the Girringun building in Cardwell for my first residency, before moving to the IPA coordinator’s house for the remainder of my time in Cardwell. I socialised, worked and performed practical service roles beyond the bounds of my project with the Girringun staff on a daily basis. I participated in numerous co-management related activities involving both Girringun staff and IPA partners at the Girriringun offices, on Traditional Owners’ country and outside the immediate region.

The full immersion approach to these residencies generated rich data and incredibly detailed contextual information captured in interviews, participant observation and field diary notebooks. This is important, as within the social sciences there is now wide recognition of the socially constructed nature of research, as well as recognition that knowledge is partial
and situated in particular places and generated at specific points in time (Hay 2010; Hoggart et al. 2002; Phillips & Johns 2012). Dowling (2010 pp30-31) recommend the use of a research diary, distinct from a field diary to record the social context, role and influence of the researcher exerted within the research.

Drawing on the views of Moser (2008; see also Gandhi 2014; and Punch 2012), this reflexive diary also seeks to articulate and embrace the personal dimensions and journeys of fieldwork in acknowledgement of the messiness and entangled relationship between the researcher and the researched. Some authors argue that accounts of positionality have tended to frame the influence of the researcher in a ‘safe’ manner drawing on social categories such as race, gender and class (Moser 2008; Weller & Caballero 2009). I articulate also the influence of personality and emotion in and on the research process, in addition to the personal, academic and emotional struggles and (in)competencies which have punctuated the research process. Additionally, some researchers suggest that the personality, interest in local events and the researcher’s conduct in the field may be the criteria by which they are predominantly judged by participants, affecting the way in which people shared their stories and views (Moser 2008). While the opening up of reflexivity is becoming more common (Dowling 2010; Gandhi 2014; Moser 2008; Punch 2012; Singh 2014), Dowling (2010) notes that self-scrutiny is difficult, and few geographers publish or share this information.

Extracts from my reflexive field diary are incorporated into the body of the thesis as well as through the use of defined boxes. The purpose of these boxes is to give additional context, to frame certain situations as sites of personal and professional struggle as well as articulating ‘light bulb’ moments of personal clarity. In this way, the combination of full immersion fieldwork and shared reflexive accounts provides significant insight into specific ways of ‘doing’ collaborative and participatory research. This methodological account explores the nuance beyond catchall phrases such as ‘building rapport’ and ‘establishing relationships’. Finally, the use of boxes throughout the thesis is one means of sharing the transformative personal journey the research process has not only facilitated, but necessitated.

Box 3.1 below introduces my position within the research project, canvassing my social and political background. I also begin to frame what I perceive to be some of my personal
characteristics and experiences that might contribute to working and gaining acceptance in a cross-cultural context (Moser 2008).

The nature and location of Girringun necessitated blocks of ‘residency’ during which time I would engage in collaborative development and refinement of the project, attend meetings relevant to the co-management of the IPA, establish and build relationships with key external IPA partners and conduct semi-structured interviews (see Figure 3.2). The residencies began in Cardwell in February 2014, with an initial meeting and collaborative development of the project. This was followed by two weeks in March, and a subsequent three weeks in June-July. The formal fieldwork component of the project drew to a close with the final residency in August. These residencies are discussed in detail in Chapter Five to analyse the transformational processes of the project. The discussion below dedicates particular attention to the identification of gatekeepers, the negotiation of insider/outsider positionality and other challenges associated with fieldwork in a remote, cross-cultural context.

Figure 3.2 is illustrated in a linear fashion, however the process was an iterative one, with each residency contributing, consolidating and informing both the researcher and the research project. The tan boxes communicate the duration of each residency at Girringun. The green boxes outline significant activities, service roles and data collection opportunities and transition from pale to dark colours as relationships and rapport is built. The yellow boxes outline key methodological and ethical components negotiated during the research project. Many of these processes, such as the identification of gatekeepers and their agency within the project, are outlined by connections to multiple other parts of the project. Relationship building and the negotiation of insider and outsider status are shown to be ongoing processes that feed into multiple stages of the research proce
I am 24 years old, a male with Anglo-Saxon parents who holds what can be characterised as left leaning political views. I grew up in the Northern Territory, leaving to pursue university study when I was 20 years old. I currently live in Wollongong, NSW where I am undertaking the Honours component of my Bachelor of Science undergraduate degree. I have had the opportunity to interact with Aboriginal people and communities through both my parents and my own working experience. Growing up in the Northern Territory, I lived for a year in the remote community of Kunbarlanjina (known also as Oenpelli) in West Arnhem Land, where my mother taught ESL to adults through the local school. Following this, I also lived for a year in the remote (mining) township of Jabiru within Kakadu National Park. My initial exposure to Indigenous affairs also stems from my father who worked with the Northern Land Council for over 15 years. While at school I developed an interest in acrobatics and circus performance, this led to the development of strong ties with a youth arts organisation in Darwin. After graduating high school in 2007, the opportunity arose to teach ‘social circus’ workshops in remote Indigenous communities. Between 2008 and 2009 I was involved in various acrobatic workshops in a number of rural and remote Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory. In this context I have also returned to the community of Kunbarlanjina a number of times to facilitate social circus workshops, most recently in August 2013 for three weeks.

While certainly no expert on cross-cultural communication and contexts, I began to adapt my communication to suit these engagements, reducing my reliance on verbal communication, drawing on nuanced head and eye movements, silences, and indulged in very basic forms of creole and regional vernacular adaptations of the English language. In this cross-cultural context, learning, especially physical movements, is often done through careful observation, by watching closely, and then watching again - in these places there is often a different way of doing things. Through my studies I have had the opportunity to engage in an academic exploration of some of the issues that face Indigenous Australians in both urban and remote communities. This has been facilitated in part by compulsory subjects, elective choice and also my own research topic choice. Additionally, my academic study, driven by my own interest in the environment, anthropogenic climate change and sustainability, has exposed me to a wealth of often uplifting and exciting literature exploring Indigenous environmental governance and stewardship.

In the context of longer term ‘research projects, I have previously been embedded within a regional Indigenous research organisation, the Cape York Institute for Policy and Leadership in Cairns QLD. This took the form of a six week full time internship in 2012. It was during this time that these life experiences coalesced for the first time, in a way which demonstrated to me that I have more experience and an established ‘position’ on Indigenous issues than I might have thought. I felt the process being undertaken by the institution I was working with, specifically the unit I was working with, was not ethically sound, culturally respectful or entirely applicable to the Cape York context in which we were working. While I was certainly out of my own depth in the internship, I was conscious that my experience thus far did afford me some level of cultural sensitivity which was invaluable in interpreting and negotiating the six week internship.

While this project is not attempting to interview only Indigenous participants, I will be embedded within an Indigenous organisation, and will undoubtedly negotiate ethical and cultural challenges as I interact in this space. Additionally the project will deal with issues which have a significant impact on the lives of Indigenous peoples, thus it is imperative that I remain conscious of the power inherent in the story that I tell.
Figure 3.2. Full Immersion fieldwork: Methodological approach, Tan = Duration, Green = Service Roles and Yellow = Methods
In many cases, access to research participants hinges on relationships with gatekeepers (Singh 2014; Hoggart et al. 2002). The term gatekeeper is defined here as an individual or institution that can grant or withhold access to people, organisations, or physical and constructed spaces (Crowhurst & Kennedy-Macfoy 2013; Phillips & Johns 2014; Singh 2014). In this project I have identified institutional gatekeepers such as the Girringun itself (as it controls access to the Girringun IPA) as well as individuals who might be considered gatekeepers. I draw on recent contributions from Crowhurst & Kennedy-Macfoy (2013) who argue that the role of gatekeepers extends beyond the fixed linear role of granting or withholding access. The implications of interactions with a number of these gatekeepers are outlined below.

I began liaising with Girringun on the advice, and with the assistance of Dermot Smyth, a well-respected consultant in north QLD who has extensive expertise in working with traditional owners and an extensive working knowledge of the IPA program. I have known Dermot Smyth for a number of years through my immediate and extended family and my supervisor from the University of Wollongong was also familiar with Dermot, having worked with him in the past. Dermot was initially approached to assist in developing a potential research topic that might be relevant to the needs of Indigenous groups engaged with the IPA process in north QLD. Dermot had a unique role in the project extending beyond the concept of gatekeeper to that of ‘door opener’ which I examine below and further in Chapter Five.

Acknowledging that Indigenous organisations are often under resourced it was imperative to approach an IPA and traditional owner representative body that would have the experience and capacity to take on the (significant) task of collaborating with a student researcher. Dermot Smyth not only suggested approaching Girringun, but also approached Girringun independently of my supervisor and myself on our behalf. This is something which lent authenticity and legitimacy to the project and my capacity as a ‘researcher ‘representing the first stage of negotiating my position as an ‘outsider’
It is important to reflect on the fact that Dermot does not wield ‘power’ in the region (in the sense of legislative, management or funding authority) that might make participants reconsider their accounts (Watson 2011, p216 ‘the well-connected researcher’). Rather, his work is considered to have been valuable and culturally assured, and his advice beneficial to Girringun’s IPA planner.

**BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH**

Conducting my research through Girringun also yielded other significant benefits such as on site accommodation and access to Girringun vehicles. This was particularly helpful considering the challenges associated with personally funding my travel from NSW to QLD and from Cairns to Cardwell.

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**BOX 3.2. GATEKEEPERS: NEGOTIATING MY POSITION AS AN OUTSIDER**

I am very conscious that I come from an ‘unknown’ university. Wollongong isn’t a place that people have necessarily heard of before, and the University of Wollongong doesn’t often ring a bell. There have been a number of occasions where people have simply assumed that I am from James Cook University which has campuses in Cairns and Townsville to the north and south of Cardwell. This positions me as an outsider and potentially has raised concerns with a number of people over why I would come so far north for a project? What are my motives? Am I here simply to further my own interests? In these sometimes awkward conversations I have noticed my own use of a form of authoritative endorsement; I have become strategic in such moments, noting that it was Dermot Smyth who pointed me in the direction of the Girringun as a partner organization for this project. This immediately seems to put people at ease, conversation loosens up and quickly loses any interrogative vibes.
3.5 METHODS EMPLOYED IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

3.5.1 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The primary source of written text was academic peer reviewed literature, and texts also included government reports, management plans, non-government organisation publications, management plans and newsletters. Non-peer reviewed literature was an essential resource throughout the research project due to the specific and regional scale of the Girringun IPA. These texts included: regional management plans, internal Girringun management plans, newsletters, and internal report as well as other confidential documents. Access to confidential material was crucial to gaining a holistic picture of co-management arrangements and the development of partnerships prior to engaging with participants in interviews. Confidential documents included; GIPACC and GARCC meeting minutes memorandums of understanding and letters of support. The confidential nature of these documents is respected where they are used in this thesis. Texts were analyzed using Discourse Analysis methods (Waitt 2010).

3.5.2 OBSERVATIONS & PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

A key component of the methodology employed for this project has been observation based research. Participant observation in a broad sense is concerned with placing the researcher into situations where detailed understandings of place are likely to be facilitated (Kearns 2010). Proponents of participant observation methodologies note that participation in the social processes we seek to observe enhances the potential for the researcher to engage with the spontaneity of everyday life (Kearns 2010). There are a number of challenges associated with the collection of data, qualitative or quantitative. The presence of a ‘researcher’ for example may alter the behavior of the observed and thus the research setting. This is a reality that one cannot escape – as researchers, we are present in the research process and introduce a suit of issues tied to our own lived experience, ontology, ‘race’, gender and age all of which influence the ‘data’ that a researcher might record (Kearns 2010). In addition to this, Moser (2008) argues that additional characteristics such as personality, emotional intelligence and how one conducts oneself in the field also stand to influence the research process and participants behavior and responses.
There are a number of participant observation typologies recognised by ethnographic researchers; this research employs that of the participant as observer. This form of participant observation lends the researcher a more natural reason for being part of an activity. In this sense, the participants are more at ease, and there is increased potential for natural, everyday interactions to occur.

Participant observation was therefore particularly useful, orienting me in the on ground reality of the Girringun and a co-management setting. Observing GiPACC meetings and Girringun Aboriginal Ranger Co-operation meetings facilitated a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes inherent in the co-management of such a diverse polycentric management arrangement. Participant observation was essential in targeting subsequent research questions and directions, and stimulating collaborative discussion of events. Finally it was also a means of complementing, contextualizing and triangulating the information and stories revealed during semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

3.5.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

I conducted 10 semi-structured interviews, seven of which were with external IPA partners and three with Girringun’s management staff. Each interview lasted between 60-120 minutes. A number of external interviews were conducted over a period of one and a half weeks in Cairns, where most of the external IPA partners offices are based (See Appendix page A). Interview transcripts were coded using descriptive, analytic codes and a synthesis of key themes (Cope 2010).

Throughout the research project it was important to avoid forming concrete preconceptions of what an evaluation process might look like, remaining conscious of the researcher’s potential to influence these semi-structured interviews in line with such preconceptions. Instead, it was useful to remember that the interview participants, as experienced practitioners in the field of natural and cultural resource management, would have their own solutions, directions, and perceptions of what an evaluation process might look like. The interview questions focused on four broad themes: reporting, information sharing, capacity and on-ground implementation. A core set of questions was asked of each participant, with flexibility for additional institution specific questions. (see Appendix F for example interview questions.)
Interview participants were collaboratively selected by the researcher and the Girringun IPA Coordinator. Where possible, participants were senior decision makers within their organisations, reflecting the decision-making role of Traditional Owners and Girringun’s desire to engage with those with the power to enact shared decisions and goals. The interviews focused on a sample of external IPA partners. This was based on the advice of the IPA coordinator in relation to the perceptions of the core group of well-engaged partners, as well as on the basis of those who attended the first GIPACC meeting where the project was presented by the researcher. Due to operator error, three interviews were not recorded and the researcher had to arrange a second round of interviews. Although initially appearing as a significant setback, was reframed as an opportunity for further targeted questioning based on themes which emerged from earlier interviews. Simultaneously it provided an opportunity for participants to clarify any of their original responses and add additional content.

Design of the interview schedule incorporated a number of closed response questions under each of the four interview themes. These included yes or no responses and a series of Likert scale type questions (included in example interview questions Appendix F). The purpose of this was to generate easily interpreted partnership ‘snapshot’ data. This data was then compiled and displayed in a graphical format using frequency histograms. The challenges associated in closed response, questionnaire style questions are acknowledge and discussed in Chapter Four (Hoggart et al. 2002 McGuirk & O’Neill 2010).

3.5.4 TRIANGULATION

Triangulation of multiple methods and data sources facilitated internal validity of the data gathered, this process involves the ‘checking’ of procedures, interpretations and representation throughout the research process (Bradshaw & Stratford 2010, p77). Four overarching types of triangulation are: multiple sources, methods, investigators and theories (Bradshaw & Stratford 2010). Triangulation through multiple sources has been facilitated by the diversity of methods explored in section 3.5, particularly document analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Triangulation through Mixed methods has included participant observation, semi-structured interviews, full immersion fieldwork, reflexive diaries, document analysis, informal conversations, a summary workshop and a presentation of initial findings to the research participants. A PAR approach ensured
triangulation through multiple *investigators*, these include the input of multiple supervisors and practitioners and the opening up of the project to participants at the GiPACC summary workshop.

### 3.5.5 CENSUS DATA

The Girringun ‘region’ can be considered a ‘footprint’ outside of the Aboriginal Corporation and the IPA, and the area is not formally recognized in an ABS dataset and thus has no formal dataset. The region overlays the existing boundaries used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). To gain the most accurate demographic picture of the region, the smallest ABS Statistical Area level was required to encompass and to best reflect the boundary of the Girringun IPA. A Geographic Information System was used to form an approximate area for Girringun, aggregating data from 85 Statistical Area Level 1 (SA1) units from the ABS Australia Statistical Geography Standard. The Australian Bureau of Statistics Table Builder was used to define a custom geographical area using those 85 SA1s to generate Census data tables.

### 3.6 LIMITATIONS

Operating within an Honours timeframe has meant this thesis, while ambitious in scope, has a number of limitations. Additionally limitations with the research project raised by participants during the presentation of initial findings are explored are included below.
Limitations Description

Time
I financed the logistics of travel to Girringun up front this included including numerous airfares, bus fares and petrol expenses. Expenses limited the duration of each residency and the scope for rescheduling interviews or snowballing.

Negotiating the time constraints of the Honours year and a PAR project meant that it was only possible to conduct one workshop on the research findings. Ideally this process would have been undertaken again to promote further co-ownership and (in)validation of the findings.

My Experience
PAR methodology relies on the researcher’s skills in facilitation, and familiarity with participatory processes. Many of these were beyond skillset, particularly the ability to facilitate meetings or focus groups between cultural and natural resource managers.

Issues beyond my control
The cross-cultural nature of the project remains posed significant challenge throughout the project. As a non-Indigenous person there are significant aspects of traditional ontology and epistemology which remain beyond my grasp. During the interviews this was apparent in the challenging prospect of rephrasing or giving additional context to questions around the concept of ‘cultural assurance’, ‘cultural business’ and ‘two-way knowledge sharing’. However what was also apparent was a similar inability to adequately articulate or engage with these concepts with non-Indigenous interview participants.

The interviews undertaken focused on a small sample of external IPA partners. This was based on the advice of the IPA Coordinator and on the basis of those who attended the first GIPACC meeting where the project was introduced. Coupled with time limitations, interview sampling was limited.

Scale of interviews
My own observations during the interview process, coupled with comments made during the interviews and the GIPACC illustrate that interviewing focused on a management perspective. Ideally interviews would have been conducted with both management and operational staff in order to build more complete and nuanced understandings of the IPA partnerships. Discussion at the summary workshop also indicated that interviews with the funding bodies themselves would have contributed to the findings of the project considering the absence of any ‘on ground’ responsibilities.

There are a number of co-managed IPAs in north Queensland, Ideally, with issues of scope aside, it would have been valuable to engage with these IPAs to discuss the findings of the project and explore evaluation processes that they might be using.

Table 3.3 Project limitations.
CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION

This chapter explores the iterative development of a self-evaluation process in collaboration with Girringun. It describes the unique structure of Girringun both spatially and administratively, then examines issues around the nature of evaluation. It then presents an emerging baseline partnership snapshot on the health of six Girringun IPA partnerships drawing on open and closed response qualitative data gathered during interviews and participant observation. This baseline establishes an indicator of partnership satisfaction, challenges, successes and values of a number of key Girringun IPA management processes and mechanisms.

The snapshot examines shared visions, and then follows the themes of the interview schedule: information sharing, resource capacity, intercultural cultural capacity, and on-ground delivery. The analysis unpacks a number of key themes emerging from participant observation, semi-structured interviews and a facilitated workshop. Links are drawn between these key themes and the existing literature within the spheres of environmental
governance, intercultural natural resource management and participatory monitoring and evaluation. These themes relate to perceptions of **intercultural capacity** and **cultural assurance, institutional cultures, communications and capacity**. Unpacking these themes gives additional context to the partnership snapshot and closed response questions.

### 4.1 PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS COUNTRY:

While it is possible to visualize the complexity of competing tenures complete with layers of management responsibilities and opportunities, experiencing this on the ground and the ways it delineates the landscape is very useful. Figure 4.2 below uses a photograph taken within the Girringun IPA to illustrate the distinct way lines on a map interact and overlap. Each of the boxes above the image represent government agency management interests (where Girringun has to negotiate), while the boxes below represent forms of tenure over which Girringun is able to exert significant management authority.

The declaration of the Girringun IPA occurred in June 2013, and represents the culmination of a long journey toward formal recognition of the aspirations of eight traditional owner groups represent by the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation for management and access to their traditional Estate. Implementing the IPA management plan is further complicated by the fact that Traditional Owners do not formally own a significant amount of land in the region (Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012). Without strong statutory rights to land included in the IPA, management of the traditional Estate instead depends on negotiated partnerships with the government agencies with legislated responsibility over these areas. However, Girringun IPA partners include organisations and individuals without legislative management responsibility who are able to support the IPA in different ways. In this sense the identification of new partnerships and development and deepening of existing partnerships is a constant priority for Girringun.
4.1.1 SHARED SPACES: GIRRINGUN INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREAS CO-MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Various researchers have typified Girringun’s approach to management as adaptive co-management (Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012). Olsson et al. (2004) provide a definition: co-management refers to “… flexible, community-based systems of resource management tailored to specific places and situations, and supported by and working with, various organisations at different scales.” The Girringun Indigenous Protected Area Co-management Committee (GIPACC) is the primary mechanism by which the IPA partners communicate, collaborate, coordinate and reconcile their management objectives within the region. The committee’s purpose is outlined in a GIPACC Terms of Reference document, updated in 2014:

Figure 4.2 Girringun Indigenous Protected Area: multi tenure, land and sea Country.
Guide the ongoing implementation of collaborative management arrangements underpinning the Girringun Indigenous Protected Area Management Plan 2013-2023, and provide high level coordination between Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, its affiliated Traditional Owner groups and collaborative management partners to oversee timely and effective delivery of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Area collaborative management strategies, arrangements and activities. (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2014).

Representation on the committee is expected to include senior decision makers or representatives from partner government agencies and NGOs. This reflects the senior decision making role and responsibilities of the Traditional Owners present at these meetings. In their absence, informed proxies should be present. A similar mechanism exists to coordinate the implementation of the decisions made at the GIPACC and to coordinate the on-ground activities of the operations focused IPA partners. This forum is the Girringun Aboriginal Rangers Cooperation’s Committee.

Recent analysis of the Girringun region contributes to understandings of co-management as a process of collaborative problem solving (Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012; Zurba, 2010). The GIPACC can be considered a key component in the IPA management framework and the highest level forum for collaborative problem solving. The purpose of the forum is to allow decisions to be made within a ‘shared space’, removed from the institutional hierarchy of IPA partner organisations and inclusive of the values and aspirations of Traditional Owners (Zurba et al. 2012). Existing research suggests that the GIPACC is functioning well and confers significant benefits to the function of co-management arrangements. Meetings have been described as consensual, innovative and supportive of creative solutions; the shared space allows common purpose and directions to be identified amongst the IPA partners (Zurba et al. 2012).

The GIPACC terms of reference include a code of conduct that seeks to support this shared space and foster adaptive and innovative problem solving:

The Committee Code of Conduct includes the following articles:

- Remain flexible and willing to explore options
- Respect opinions expressed by others
- Treat other members with respect and integrity
A key challenge which emerged during the course of the research project was the absence of a clear, practical example of a partnership evaluation ‘tool’. This was a challenge not only for me as a researcher, but a challenge for the partner organisations, as well as my supervisors. While a significant literature exists on the development and application of natural resource management sustainability indicators, this has focused on predominantly quantitative or biophysical outcomes (Borrini-Feyerabende et al. 2007; Izurieta et al. 2012; Stacey et al. 2013). In protected area co-management settings, particularly with cross-cultural arrangements, social outcomes and processes are considered equally as important as biophysical outcomes (Stacey et al. 2013). In many cases evaluation in environmental management can focus heavily on outcomes, rather than institutional arrangements and processes which enable effective management (Ross et al. 2004; Plummer & Armitage 2007). Bauman and Smyth (2007) note that evaluations should distinguish between the overall success of managing protected areas and the success of the partnerships which enable such management.

The Federal Government provides a guide to monitoring and evaluation of Indigenous Protected Areas on their web page (Department of the Environment, 2012). However this guide and the series of examples relate predominantly to the biophysical outcomes of IPA implementation. Besides a recommendation to include the IPA steering committee in the monitoring and evaluation process, these resources make no reference to monitoring and evaluation of co-managed IPAs, nor the processes which might enable the delivery of successful co-management of Country.

Included within the Girringun IPA Management Plan is an assessment framework which is intended to assist partners in pursuing their collaborative management goals, developed in an earlier study (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013; Izurieta 2007). The framework includes concepts of protected area management effectiveness coupled with adaptive management approaches. The framework is intended to be applied in an external capacity, assessing Girringun’s partnerships with key Government and non-government institutions in the region. This collaborative evaluation framework, developed in 2007, has not yet been used to conduct an assessment of these partnerships. While it is unclear exactly why this framework was not implemented, research suggests that in many cases time intense
collaborative evaluation processes struggle to continue when an organisation’s capacity is reduced, for example when facilitators, champions or resources disappear (Cundill & Fabricius 2009; Mutimukuru et al. 2006; Poulsen & Luanglarth 2005). However, many of the questions posed remain relevant and have informed the development of the interview questions in my project.

The framework articulates a specific sequence of events prior to conducting an evaluation. These include contracting an external facilitator, examination of supporting co-management documentation, gathering information to evidence responses and finally, conducting joint evaluation or convergent evaluation (Izurieta 2007). Convergent evaluation here refers to each IPA partner meeting separately to make their assessment, with a subsequent workshop to share the outcome with the other parties (Izurieta 2007, pp292-295). My project has followed a similar, two-step approach, albeit constrained by a smaller scope. I as researcher, can be positioned as an external facilitator who examined supporting co-management documentation. Interview participants often gave examples to support their responses, and I raised observations from co-management meetings to stimulate discussion. The interviews were conducted individually echoing Izurieta’s (2007) ‘process of convergence’, before I presented a synthesis to the GIPACC. The synthesis was based on initial findings and de-identified respondents, respecting the confidence of each of their interviews. The outcomes of this process are discussed further below and in Chapter Five.

In discussion with Girringun’s IPA Coordinator, we developed the idea of unbounding the concept of an evaluation ‘tool’, putting aside any notion that the collaborative research project would deliver a ‘golden evaluation tool’. Instead a decision was made to focus on the process of moving toward evaluation. The feedback within the interviews, and in many cases the action generated from these facilitated reflective spaces, demonstrated that self-evaluation was being facilitated. In this sense the interviews were able to facilitate reflection and, in line with the concept of adaptive co-management, social learning.

4.3 THE BASELINE PARTNERSHIP SNAPSHOT
In section 4.2, I unbound the evaluation process from the production of an evaluation tool, instead focusing on the value in ‘process.’ The emergence of a baseline partnership snapshot is an example of this shift in focus. I argue that the value in the process of engagement through facilitated self-reflection within individual interviews is demonstrated through the emergence of a baseline partnership snapshot. This process produced an incredibly rich set of data, coupled with participant observation and document analysis. What is presented below is, as the title describes, only a snapshot of the partnerships. Additional analysis has the potential to deepen this baseline snapshot further. I focus on the snapshot as an emergent outcome of the first stage of a two-step research process of individual and collaborative engagement. The interviews asked a set of questions which delivered a rich set of responses around the following themes, shared visions, information sharing, resource capacity, cultural capacity and on-ground delivery. Questions that related specifically to the process of evaluation were broad and attempted to ascertain whether IPA partner organisations had any evaluation processes in place, and stimulate discussion around the value of evaluating the IPA partnership (See Appendix A for example interview schedule). Alongside the interviews were a number of universal closed response questions. Closed response questions are displayed as frequency histograms, where they compare both Girringun and IPA partner sample responses this is stated. The frequency refers to the number of participants; the figure headings describe this in more detail.

4.3.1 SHARED VISIONS

As an innovative and experimental multi-tenure IPA, Girringun presents new opportunities for Traditional Owners, Government agencies, NGOs and other landholders. Simultaneously it presents challenges in conceptualizing the nature and potential of partnerships and what this means for existing cultural and natural resource managers and agencies. Implementation of the Girringun IPA can be considered an iterative process of ‘learning by doing’ and thus it is important to ask the question, almost one year into the implementation of the Girringun IPA, ‘is there a shared vision?’

Effective collaboration and partnerships between a diversity of partners relies on a shared vision and understanding of what the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and the eight traditional owner groups are working toward. Additionally it relies on a shared vision for the partnerships between individual partners and Girringun. Earlier analysis of the Girringun
concept by Zurba (2010) identified that all parties needed to be in agreement on the overall direction and vision before moving toward development and planning. Responses from the IPA partner sample illustrates that understandings of what the IPA is and what it is trying to achieve are generally aligned but the vision and goals within individual partnerships remain somewhat unclear.

CONCEPTUALISING THE IPA

From the perspective of Girringun itself, the IPA is framed as outlining a management footprint across the region. In the words of the Girringun CEO, it is a mechanism which complements Native Title and the Indigenous Land Corporation as a means to ‘get land back’, not in the sense of acquiring the land but by increasing presence and management across Country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girringun staff member</th>
<th>Conceptualising the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>‘...it’s good for the people in the Kimberleys, and it’s good for the people where they are on the land. What about us poor bastards? We live in urban Australia. We’ve got no land here. The only real mechanisms you have to get land back is the ILC and Native Title... These two here can deliver land. So between the three, [points to diagram], that’s still the Girringun Country...and this is the strategic part of it, the leadership has to use these mechanisms to develop, increased management by Traditional Owners over this Country’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA Coordinator</td>
<td>‘A regional, national and even international platform for the TO [Traditional Owner] groups who are on the IPA to engage with natural and cultural resource management and on-ground delivery...on a more equal footing with the agencies that are charged with that responsibility’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranger Coordinator</td>
<td>‘The IPA outlines our management footprint, if you like, land and sea Country and the rangers are one of our vehicles for getting some of our project work done on the ground... to represent the nine tribes...’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Conceptualising the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas

Drawing on a whole-of-landscape approach, the declaration of the Girringun IPA builds a platform from which to engage with the full extent of Traditional Owners County. This platform is not legal, declaration hinges on endorsement by government agencies with legislated land management responsibility in the region. But declaration delivers recognition at a federal level, all of which raises the voice of Traditional Owners in contemporary
cultural and natural resource management debates and practice. Thus, the IPA can be framed as a platform for engagement in management and decision-making on a more equal footing with government and non-government organisations. Additionally, as raised by the IPA coordinator, the IPA is a platform to engage with partners beyond the regional scale and an opportunity to pursue partnerships with national and international NGOs.

From the perspective of the partners, perceptions of the Girringun IPA and what it was trying to achieve, generally corresponded with those of Girringun staff. Responses from participants clearly identify the importance of a whole-of-Country approach, recognized through the declaration of the IPA as a platform for Traditional Owner engagement in land management on a more equal footing with land managers operating within a Western positivist paradigm (Bauman et al. 2013; Howwit et al. 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPA Partner</th>
<th>Conceptualising the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries QLD</td>
<td>‘I suppose I see it, yeah, holistically it is about the strategic overview of how they want to manage their country...’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Parks</td>
<td>‘I think about it as looking across all the tenures I suppose, all the different government departments and land and sea, bringing everyone together and obviously with the Indigenous group, bringing that together and getting involved with management of country’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QPWS</td>
<td>‘Well it’s a whole of Country approach to ahhh, natural and cultural resource management, but it’s also significantly partnership approach, and it’s a partnership model... for me...it’s a partnership model that is an alternative to Joint management.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrain NRM</td>
<td>‘I suppose where it’s at, at the moment the IPA process is a bit of a stepping stone to a more full blown sort of management of Country’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTMA</td>
<td>‘I really see IPAs in general as an opportunity for Traditional Owners to manage Country using a Western model. Traditional Owners have always managed Country, but it’s actually giving them that opportunity to be at the same level as other land managers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCRC</td>
<td>‘I think that’s more in the minds of Girringun. It’s not really filtered down to the local, other communities’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 IPA partner conceptualisations of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Area.
These responses make clear that both Girringun and the IPA partner sample understand the IPA as repositioning Traditional Owners aspirations for management of Country in a marked shift, away from the confines of legal ownership and tenure, toward the full extent of their traditional Estate. Additionally, the response from the Cassowary Coast Regional Council (CCRC) illustrates that there is still significant work to be done, not only in communicating to its partners the vision of the Girringun IPA, but to the wider regional community. The interview participant for CCRC was not the sitting member on the GIPACC, who was unavailable, but a senior decision maker nonetheless. This response does raise the issue of communication and promotion of the IPA beyond the shared spaces of the GIPACC and GARCC. The level to which the developed understanding of sitting members permeates their own organisations also remains unknown and may require additional investigation.

**PARTNERSHIP VISIONS**

Each IPA partner has a unique relationship with Girringun. Many of these partnerships have been developed over numerous years and predate the declaration of the IPA, while others are in their infancy. Establishing partner perceptions of their vision or goal is useful in revealing the development of strong partnerships (Hoffman et al. 2012). Drawing on both open and closed response questions a snapshot is presented below. Figure 4.3 below captures perspectives on the clarity of vision or goals in partnerships between the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and a sample of IPA partners.

![Figure 4.3. Partnership visions: IPA partner sample](image)

The cluster of ‘fairly clear’ responses corresponds to the fact that these organisations are planning to revise their MoUs with Girringun to better articulate their commitments to the
Girringun IPA and what mutually beneficial outcomes this produces. Interview participants from Marine Parks, QPWS and Terrain NRM also outlined their desire to revisit their MoUs on the basis that these were developed some years ago during the planning phase of the IPA. Terrain NRM suggested that their organisation’s MoU was predominantly relational, and signed with the intent of revisiting following declaration of the IPA, with the view to include more ‘deliverables; things which can be achieved’. This is contrasted by perspectives of the Girringun staff, who suggest that revisiting the MoUs was not a pressing concern and that the strong desire for written agreements and documents reflects a Western managerial culture. Girringun was clear that the desire of IPA partners to revisit the MoUs was positive, and that making the document more meaningful was clearly important for many as an anchor point for the partnership. Girringun staff are clear that face to face communication or having a yarn about challenges and future directions is as just as effective as a developing a written agreement to define what happens within a partnership. However Hoffman et al. (2012, p48) argue that in such multiagency cross-cultural environments, formal, written documents provide clarity, and prevent misunderstandings. In the case of Dhimurru IPA, there are well established plans of engagement, clear vision, a five year research plan and codes of conduct for staff and collaborators (Hoffman et al. 2012).

Acknowledging the challenges of giving a response that generalised across many partnerships, the perspectives of Girringun staff illuminated the fact that while some partnerships do have clear visions or goals, each remains at different levels of development. The perception that the IPA partnerships were based on a ‘not very clear’ vision or goals reflects the desire of external IPA partners to revisit their MoUs and suggests that there is potential to improve and better articulate visions and goals at the partnership level. The Girringun Ranger coordinator framed a response to this question against the backdrop of the most recent Girringun Aboriginal Rangers Cooperations committee (GARCC) meeting.

"Not entirely, and that was sort of somewhat reinforced with that after the meeting [GARCC] the other day. No not really. I don’t think that’s conveyed properly to Parks [QPWS] and probably some of the other stakeholders as well... we’re not like an NGO, a WWF or anything that actively promotes and advertises what we do and a logo or anything like that. There’s a lot that goes on here on a local level that a lot of Joe Blow’s don’t know about.” Girringun Ranger Coordinator

This comment suggests that the lack of a shared vision is apparent in the discussions around implementing collaborative projects and to a certain extent, related to communications
capacity and priority of Girringun. Girringun’s CEO suggests that the lack of goals or vision is a product of the experimental and ambitious process of steering the process of co-management into uncharted territory. The CEO also notes that despite this uncertainty, the IPA partners together with Girringun will collaboratively embrace the challenges and successes of such an approach.

“We don’t know what’s going to happen there. But hold my hand. And whatever challenges come up, whatever rewards that come up or whatever, we can deal with it together...A lot of times they don’t know what the other benefits are until we get there. So joint management, or co-management is not an outcome, it’s the process.” – Girringun CEO

As the comment above illustrates: co-management is a continual state of becoming, it is constantly being negotiated and developed, as such the visions and goals are constantly shifting and will require constant attention (Bauman et al. 2013). Calls for the review of MoUs by the IPA partner sample suggest that not only are clear and mutually agreed visions and goals important in steering partnerships, but the process of reaffirming these visions is already occurring. This is demonstrated in Chapter Five section 5.2.1.

4.3.2 INFORMATION SHARING

The issue of communication or information sharing emerges in the above exploration of shared visions. The way in which information about the Girringun IPA partnership is shared and promoted by IPA partners within their own organisations is examined here.

![Figure 4.4. IPA partner sample communications processes](image)

According to several participants, communications were predominantly informal, based on conversations, emails and phone calls. Communication was often triggered by developments within the Girringun IPA which might require the attention of other personnel within IPA partner organisations. However, there were two interview participants who flagged the
presence of, or recent implementation of formal communications frameworks. Marine Parks had conceived and begun to implement a system where key individuals were accountable to each of their Traditional Owner co-management arrangements accompanied by a list of proxies who should communicate closely with representatives and possess a working knowledge of the co-management arrangements. WTMA operates a system of file notes written and lodged after meetings with external partners and stakeholders.

**GIPACC AS A COMMUNICATION FORUM**

A specific set of questions focused on the value of the GIPACC meetings to both Girringun and the partners, in an effort to build on existing research which frames these shared spaces as consensual, innovative and supportive of creative solutions (Zurba et al. 2012).

![Value of GIPACC meetings to IPA partner sample and Girringun](image)

**Figure 4.5** Value of Girringun Indigenous Protected Area Management Committee meetings to IPA partner sample and Girringun (aggregated as one response), not valuable and not very valuable omitted.

The GIPACC forum was considered valuable from both perspectives. From an organisational perspective, participants articulated a number of strengths and areas for improvement. Issues raised revolved around the view that sometimes the agenda might not be entirely relevant for all partners involved, facilitation in some instances could be ‘tighter’ and that meetings should delivering more ‘real tasks’ or ‘actions’. Almost universal was the assertion that while this might be the case, there was value in attending, not only to demonstrate commitment to the partnership but to engage in face-to-face communication. However, when re-examining this value from a personal perspective, responses unanimously shifted to ‘Very valuable’, with the opportunity to engage in inter agency and organisational
networking noted as a key part of the committee’s value. A number of participant perspectives are outline in Table 4.3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Value of GIPACC meetings to the IPA partner sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrain NRM</td>
<td>‘Oh yeah there's still a lot of value in the collective, that’s where the value is, in that collective’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTMA</td>
<td>‘It’s important because it’s just getting everybody around the table at the same time. It’s highlighting that those relationships are working, because people won’t turn up if it’s not working’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrain NRM</td>
<td>‘And it’s good because often Phil [Girringun CEO] can be hard to catch, and he’s always there so you can always bend his ear about something if you need to…’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.3 Value of GIPACC meetings to the IPA partner sample**

### 4.3.3 RESOURCE CAPACITY

Questions around capacity revealed that IPA partners felt that overall they were adequately resourced to deliver on their commitments to the partnership.

**Figure 4.6. IPA partner sample: capacity to deliver on commitments**

The partner sample felt they had the human resources, skills and personnel to deliver on their commitments to their respective partnerships. Unanimously, the partners acknowledge that significant financial challenges existed in delivering on commitments.
partnership, currently and into the future. A number of participants also delineated the management and implementation of the IPA partnership, associating financial challenges with on-ground commitments to the partnerships. This unanimous concern reflects significant reduction or ongoing stagnation of funding from government sources. Bauman et al. (2013, p.71) note that often management arrangements within government agencies express ‘support’ for co-management arrangements, however, often the matching funds are not available.

In the context of the Girringun IPA, challenges associated with funding constraints also have the potential to foster innovation and experimentation with resourcing arrangements. The Marine Parks representative articulated an example where an unfilled agency position might be converted into a negotiated funding arrangement with Girringun. This is linked to the Queensland Governments support for the contestability of government services, where questions of economic efficiency reposition the role of government from service provider, to service ‘enabler’ (Queensland Government 2013). Additionally it is an example of the willingness of the community of individuals involved in the Girringun IPA, to innovate and experiment outside of clear policy directions to make things work. This thread is examined further in Chapter Five.

Responses from Girringun echoed the perspectives of the IPA partner sample, however Girringun’s position is that it currently has the financial capacity to support its current commitments. While research by Maclean et al. (2013) and Zurba et al. (2012) outline the funding challenges faced by Girringun at the time of their research, the current funding arrangements are guaranteed until 2018. Girringun staff members are conscious their resources are committed and taking on new project will stretch their capacity beyond sustainable levels.

‘However, even in the last six months as we have been developing the IPA and implementing the management plan, it’s getting bigger and our human resources and our financial resources are getting further stretched all the time.’ Girringun IPA Coordinator

‘…we would need to make sure that we grow Girringun properly… to be able to handle that and maintain that because the last thing we want to do is take on any of these things and have them fail…’ Girringun Ranger Coordinator

These concerns over capacity and sustainable growth tie into questions of adequate communication, as IPA partners seek to engage Girringun in new co-management projects.
Observations made during the GARCC meeting on the 11th of June 2014 suggest that for many of the partners, particularly QPWS who occupy a significant portion of Girringun’s workload, there is limited understanding of the breadth of projects Girringun is already involved in, let alone their capacity to take on additional projects. Considering the reduced capacity of IPA partners due to funding cuts, and recognition of quickly stretching resources within Girringun there is significant potential to engage more creatively with load sharing within the region, discussed further below.

4.3.4 INTERCULTURAL CAPACITY

The Girringun IPA as a form of Indigenous led environmental governance is inherently cross cultural. The concept of cultural assurance is defined in the Girringun IPA Management Plan (p.16) as: ‘land and sea management, land use considerations’ undertaken with ‘respect, recognition and responsibility for Traditional Owners and their values in the long term sustainable use of country and its resources’. Where IPAs are declared over existing protected areas, there is considerable potential for challenges to emerge in negotiating the natural and cultural resource management priorities where Western and Traditional Owner worldviews converge (Barbour & Schlesinger 2012; Howitt et al 2013). A series of questions around the concept of cultural assurance as best practice in land and sea management explored the ways in which IPA partner organisations were engaging with the cultural dimension of the co-management arrangement. Responses include the perspectives of the IPA partner sample on how their organisations incorporate these considerations into management decisions, as well as Girringun’s perspective on how well cultural elements are incorporated across all of their partnerships.
The responses outlined above are in this sense, somewhat misleading, particularly when alongside those from Girringun. These responses on face value suggest that IPA partners afford traditional knowledge a high priority. However, as is the case with closed response questions, capturing complexity is challenging (Hoggart et al. 2002). Further investigation using open response questions revealed in many cases, a personal view that while these considerations remain important, many of the participants consider their organisations or agencies poorly engaging with this process.

‘...we'd sort of had cultural sensitivity training... but it's more than that...the whole process needs to be designed from the outset to incorporate these considerations...It's not there. It's really difficult because we haven’t done it. We don’t know I think how to incorporate and we haven’t done well.’ Terrain NRM.

These types of response and observation of the types of co-management projects discussed during co-management meetings (GIPACC and GARCC) indicate that there is a tendency to include cultural elements after a project or program is developed. Preuss and Dixion (2012, p.3) quote a senior Indigenous woman involved in the Southern Tanami IPA consultation Project, ‘we don’t want kardiya [non-indigenous people] to come in with their own picture painted about what will happen...we need to sit down... and paint that picture together…’. This view draws significant parallels with calls from Indigenous peoples for the decolonization of research outlined in Chapter Three and speaks to the importance of ‘cultural assurance’ outlined earlier. Another closed response question explored the practical application of ‘prioritising’ traditional knowledge in management decisions.
Drawing on the concept of ‘two-way’ knowledge sharing, or the ‘two toolbox’ approach, where the skills and knowledge of both Traditional Owners and Western scientists are employed, recognizing the value of both knowledge systems (Bauman & Smyth 2007; Preuss & Dixion 2012).

In unpacking the closed response questions, the perspectives of participants suggest that there remain fundamental challenges associated with engaging in cross-cultural contexts. A number of participants framed the specific dimensions of the on-ground activities as factors in determining how much priority might be afforded to traditional knowledge.

‘…I think that there’s two levels. There’s one level where they should just go in and do the job, not bring in the culture… and use that to do their cultural stuff at some point…’ CCRC

The perception that work and culture are separate illustrates a significant ontological divide which permeates Western land management systems. In this instance the participant directly referring to beach cleanups and re-vegetation projects, as work to be done by a ‘workforce’ where cultural concerns remain separate. Others noted that due to changes in their legislated responsibility, they currently did not have any co-management projects which prioritised or incorporated traditional knowledge or two way knowledge sharing.
While in some senses these limits on engagement may be valid, it is useful to flag the importance of these considerations so that they might be incorporated in future arrangements.

INTERCULTURAL CAPACITY DEFICITS

Howitt et al. (2013, p127) use the term intercultural capacity deficits to describe ‘shortfalls in knowledge, skills, understanding and values’ which impinge on an institution, or agencies communicating or operational effectiveness in an intercultural context. The discussion around the concept of cultural assurance was considerable, canvassing many examples of intercultural capacity deficits. Particularly the perception that ‘consultation’ can be framed as ticking the ‘cultural box’ is one which was consistently raised within the interviews. Two participants responding ‘not very incorporated’ in Figure 4.8, justified their position in the following ways:

‘...well generally and organizationally the whole agency needs to become a culturally capable agency... through deliberate learning programs...[currently] Its more about telling than involving...yeah you know...were going to do, you know, pretty much we’re going to do this... and this is how we do it... you know , we’ve consulted because we’ve told you how we do it...’
QPWS

‘I think that’s one which I imagine is probably something we could do better. I mean we consult, and with the Girringun rangers probably better than most because there is an established group there sort of thing... But probably on more of a day to day basis, the routine type stuff, we probably don’t do it enough I don’t think...’ Marine Parks

Within larger organisations, and more broadly natural resource management systems some authors argue that these processes and attitudes remain dominant and institutionalised (Bauman et al. 2013; Howitt et al. 2013). Bauman et al. argue that in some cases co-management may be proclaimed as a governance model, however, established management structures, rational and views on conservation often remain the same. Likewise, Howitt et al. (2013, p128) argue that ‘simply calling something intercultural does not make it so’. This is clearly illustrated by response form the QPWS representative, who states that as an agency, the development of intercultural capacity will require deliberate learning programs. Finally, this is illustrated in the challenges in engaging with the ‘cultural business’ conducted by Girringun. The comment made by the participant below in regard to Girringun’s IPA Coordinator and Ranger Coordinator’s request for logistical support from its
partners during a scheduled cultural camp on Hinchinbrook Island for the Banjin tribal group.

‘How do I sell this to my boss… sitting around the fire to make damper… Because, from a Western point of view, we compartmentalise culture. And say, oh that’s culture. I’ll engage in that sometimes but not always…‘there’s culture’ and then ‘there’s country management.’’

This comment suggests that while at the individual level, the representative understands the value in supporting such a process, there are challenges within organisations in bridging worldviews which are not just different, but in many cases, contrary to one’s own (Howwitt et al. 2013). The IPA Coordinator argues that to a certain extent engagement with the cultural dimensions of co-management is also a daunting process where mistakes may directly impact emerging and well-developed partnerships.

‘I think part of it is that it’s new and they haven’t done it before, and maybe some of it is trepidation, like a bit of fearfulness because they don’t want to do it wrong, and they want to be culturally appropriate…but they may be worried that they are going to do something without realizing…’ Girringun IPA Coordinator

The Girringun IPA is an inherently intercultural co-management arrangement: there remains significant work to be done in institutionalizing the concept of cultural assurance beyond ‘prioritising’ traditional knowledge or engaging in tokenistic ‘consultation’ practices. Additionally, it is apparent that many of the individuals interviewed during this project are well aware of the intercultural capacity deficits within their own organisations. There is a general understanding amongst most of the IPA partners that incorporating cultural dimensions of land management remains a challenging process, one which requires additional direction and guidance from Girringun. In light of this, there was general consensus from the IPA partner sample that the development of future knowledge sharing goals would be of value to each of the partnerships.
4.3.5 INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES

Negotiation around ‘ownership’ and who is ultimately responsible for and in control of assets, and specific areas within the IPA emerged as a prominent tension between Girringun and Queensland Parks and Wildlife. I frame this below as an issue of institutional culture. This was particularly apparent at the operational level” during discussion at the GARCC meeting a member of the GARCC stated in relation to the proposed handover of management of ‘QPWS assets’ to Girringun,

‘...these are our assets and we do not hand them over lightly...they are the face of what we do...their management is important and there is risk associated with handing them over...’.

This view is problematic when we consider the fact that these ‘assets’ in the most contemporary sense are in fact held in trust by the government for the benefit of all Australians and in the words of the Girringun CEO, Indigenous assets, long before colonisation.

‘...Previously though, these assets were ours, this is at the end of the day Aboriginal land. All of us are going to have to get used to a different way of doing things...this is a powerful statement, particularly coming from a state department, the fact that you are willing to pass management on... speaks volumes.’

Sharing this situation with the GIPACC representative from QPWS, revealed that this issue of ‘assets’ and the concept of ‘surrendering’ them was a particularly challenging issue one which required a cultural shift from the operational staff of the organisation. Both the QPWS representative and Girringun Ranger Coordinator noted that at the operational level of QPWS there was a ‘patch proud’ culture, and individuals who understood their work as ‘my patch, your patch’. This is noted by Bauman et al. (2013) who argue that often the status quo prevails, and it can be business as usual in park management. While this is not the case in the Girringun IPA, the issue remains that there are distinct cultures within organisations that Girringun is not able to directly influence. In the context of the tenure blind approach of the Girringun IPA this is a challenge that will need to faced into the future. When asked about how such an issue might be addressed, the response was change must come down as policy from within the organisation itself, and that such an approach may be able to capitalise on the concept of contestability given its recent support from the Queensland Government.

4.3.6 ON-GROUND DELIVERY
The partner sample was asked to rate their satisfaction with the on-ground service delivery provided by Girringun. The Girringun Indigenous Ranger Unit and Increasingly, the Girringun Biodiversity Unit are the primary vehicles through which co-management priorities are implemented (Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012; Zurba 2010). While acknowledging that not all partners have a significant on-ground role, many have experience with Girringun’s on ground service delivery.

Figure 4.9 IPA partner sample: satisfaction with on-ground delivery

The responses reveal that the IPA partner sample is generally very satisfied with the standard of on-ground service delivery provided by Girringun’s implementation units. Participants that rated their satisfaction as ‘fairly satisfied’ clarified their responses by stating that over time and through engagement in additional co-management activities, service delivery would continue to improve. Both Marine Parks and QPWS articulated a desire to see increased ‘technical capacity’ amongst the Girringun rangers. This is something Girringun is not only aware of, but avidly pursuing through its IPA partnerships particularly in the context of increasing its capacity to take on more cultural and natural resource management responsibility in the region.

LOAD SHARING

The concept of ‘load sharing’, where partners devolve management responsibility to institutions and organisations at a lower level (Berkes 2010), was raised in the context of co-management arrangements and reductions in government funding in the region. This
attempted to gauge whether partners were engaging with the Girringun IPA in mutually beneficial ways through their partnerships.

![Figure 4.10 IPA partner sample: load sharing through partnerships](image)

The responses to this question reveal that generally the partner sample don’t consider their partnership with the Girringun IPA as a means of ‘load sharing’ in its current form. This is particularly interesting in the case of QPWS, rating the partnership ‘Not very effective’ at load sharing whereas the Girringun Ranger Coordinator articulated the following.

‘...I would say overall we wax and wane with the workload depending on wet season or dry season, but we might work anywhere from possibly 50 to 60 per cent of our workload would be parks work [QPWS]... I think they rely on Girringun quite heavily, the Girringun Rangers for a lot of that work...they already are load sharing... I believe so, and looking to load share more...’ Girringun Ranger Coordinator

The response above raises questions about the limitations of interviewing primarily at a managerial level as well as communication between the implementation and management forums. Other partners, due to the nature of their management responsibility or the lack of on-ground co-management arrangements with Girringun did not see the partnership as an effective means of load sharing. A number of partners suggested that future co-management arrangements could contribute to load sharing, but that short term projects did not always contribute to this process.

Load sharing into the future, with reduced capacity of IPA partners due to funding cuts, and recognition of quickly stretching resources within Girringun (section 4.3.3) will require additional experimentation and innovation, as well as consideration of the cultural
dimensions of work on the IPA and concerns over the concentration of co-management activities on the traditional Estate of the tribal groups adjacent to Cardwell.

4.3.7 EVALUATION SUMMARY

None of the IPA partner sample has an evaluation process in place to monitor their partnership with the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. The extent of evaluation they do have encompasses specific project or targets that already exist within work plans. All IPA partners agreed that the development of an evaluation process would be of benefit to them and the implementation of the Girringun IPA. A summary of reason to evaluate the IPA partnerships is outlined in Table 4.4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Reason for evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence and accountability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girringun, Terrain NRM</td>
<td>➢ Generate evidence of what has been done for evidence based evaluation and reporting accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QPWS, Terrain NRM</td>
<td>➢ Review projects based on data coming out of evaluation process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QPWS</td>
<td>➢ Assess value of overall project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Parks, QPWS</td>
<td>➢ Develop evidence base for most effective model of engagement with Indigenous groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTMA, Girringun</td>
<td>➢ Assessment of implementation: are we on track?, what’s changed?, what direction do we need to go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTMA</td>
<td>➢ Avoid making the same mistakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries QLD</td>
<td>➢ Identify gaps and ways to improve partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.4** Participants reason for evaluation

As the table reveals, there is no single set of mutually inclusive outcomes desired by all stakeholders, instead a diversity of outcomes unique to each stakeholder emerges (Sayer et al. 2007). However the responses fall broadly under two significant themes: firstly, the generation of evidence and accountability, secondly the facilitation of learning. The diversity of desired outcomes emerges again in Chapter Five in the projects summary workshop section 5.3.
4.4 CONCLUSIONS

The challenging geographical and institutional complexity of the Girringun region are negotiated through unique administrative arrangements enabling shared space for multi-stakeholder decision-making. However, as argued by Armitage et al. (2007), within multi-stakeholder collaborations institutional capacity as well as management systems limitations are often weaknesses. The emergent baseline partnership snapshot delivers some insight into what these weaknesses are. This snapshot delivers on both the themes identified as reasons for evaluation in Table 4.4. First, through the perspectives of an IPA partner sample, anecdotal evidence is used to ascertain what individual partnerships have been delivering to Girringun, the Girringun IPA and individual partner organisations and agencies. Second, the snapshot flags a number of challenges and successes which have emerged in the first year of the Girringun IPAs implementation. These are presented as areas that may require monitoring to track improvement into the future as well as stimulus for social learning when presented in a collaborative forum.
CHAPTER 5: POLICY ENTREPRENEURS AND THE RESEARCH PROCESS

“There’s value in process... there’s value in the conversations and discussions that occur as you’re going through a monitoring and evaluation process.”

Figure 5.1 Traditional Owners on Country (Image source Eli Taylor; Quote QPWS participant)

This chapter describes and examines the ‘agency’ of the research process in the context of the level of policy innovation demonstrated by Girringun and its partners. To varying degrees, the project was transformative for myself, for Girringun, and for the organisations and individuals involved in the IPA. This is partly a result of the readiness to innovate of these parties. I examine this process firstly through my full-immersion residency periods at Girringun; secondly as an externality of specific research inputs such as interviews; and thirdly through the action generated, promoting the co-production of knowledge and facilitating social learning amongst a community of policy entrepreneurs.
5.1 RESIDENCIES

In the following section I outline a series of personal transformations across two residencies at the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (Girringun). While I undertook four residencies in total, for the purpose of discussion, I explore the first and second in section 5.1.1, the third in 5.1.2 and the final residency in section 5.3. The residencies and the notion of full immersion fieldwork proved critical in developing a nuanced understanding of the institutional and geographical complexity of the region. They also established a basis for developing personal relationships which were instrumental to the success of the project. Through this section, I weave accounts from my reflexive diary into the body of the text to provide additional context on internal struggles and transformations that punctuated the research project.

5.1.1 RESIDENCY: APRIL 7TH – 18TH 2014

During each of my visits to Girringun I made a significant effort to involve myself with the day-to-day ‘work’ of the organisation, particularly that which might assist in legitimising and explaining my presence within the organisation or within particular situations. This process went beyond ‘academic’ or ‘research’ based tasks and included physical labour, logistical assistance and keeping meeting minutes. Demonstrating interest in local events, the day-to-day work of an organisation and conducting oneself in such a way that does not convey arrogance or engagement for the purposes of self-interest are all essential factors in successful fieldwork (Moser 2008). Likewise an exploration of positionality and reflexivity is essential in navigating and deepening understandings of the context in which the research project, the research participants and the researcher are embedded. I highlight these experiences and decisions as achieving multiple outcomes simultaneously, reflecting on calls for a more open dialogue on the specific methods, techniques and opportunities which facilitate successful fieldwork (Gandhi 2014; Moser 2008; Punch 2012; Singh 2014; Weller & Caballero 2009).

I first visited Girringun in February for one day to meet the IPA coordinator and other staff from the organisation. This marked a departure from phone and email communication and was the early stages of genuine relationship and rapport building. During my second residency in April I undertook a number of service roles such and minute taking, and logistical support that saw my involvement with Girringun expand beyond that of an
external researcher. This presented opportunities for further relationship building and renegotiation of my position as an outsider.

**BOX 5.1. FACE TO FACE #1.**

Not only had I arrived terrified in Cardwell, wracked with fear that I would be found out as a fraudulent student with no concept of anything and of no use to anyone, but on top of this, Karman made it very clear today that Girringun’s capacity was stretched - ‘think about it like a boat, if we take you onboard we don’t want a pair of idle hands...we can’t afford that’. This was a deeply personal and incredibly challenging moment, which had me frantically looking inwards at myself, trying to ascertain whether I had the ability to make a contribution or become deadweight.

There was certainly a steep learning curve, incomprehensible acronyms pronounced with vernacular accents, a multiplicity of partner organisations, tribal groups and the messy, entangled internal and external politics of all of these. However, Karman said at the end of the day, ‘I think you actually get it, when I’m talking your eyes aren’t glazing over’. This was incredibly relieving feedback, an endorsement of my own understandings and my ability to engage with the suite of complex issues facing an organisation like Girringun and Indigenous groups across Australia. Additionally, this represented a successful attempt at initiating our face to face relationship and the process of developing rapport.

**GIRRINGUN INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA CO-MANAGEMENT MEETING (GIPACC)**

I participated in the second GIPACC since the declaration of the Girringun IPA. My service role during this meeting was as the minute taker, something I undertook multiple times in multiple meetings and forums over the duration my involvement with Girringun. During the GIPACC, I was introduced to Girringun’s external partners both as an Honours student from UOW undertaking a collaborative project and as a volunteer minute taker. During this meeting I was framed first as an outsider complete with my ‘own’ agenda and secondly as a legitimised attendee through my minute taking role, something of immediate and tangible value to both Girringun and the partners. This meeting was integral in establishing the IPA partners’ perceptions of my project and myself as a researcher, as well as an opportunity to observe and become familiar with the discussion, actors and relationships that defined these meetings.

I made a number of observations during the GIPACC meeting. Feedback from IPA partners was diverse and did not follow any particular structure. In addition, the level to which partners contributed to discussion and evaluation of their roles and obligations in the co-management of the IPA was varied, and one partner chose to report their progress on the shared management objectives outlined in the Girringun Region Indigenous Protected Area...
management plan. Subsequent discussion with the IPA Coordinator laid the foundation for this project and the development of a partnership self-evaluation process was proposed. The purpose of the self-evaluation process would be to enhance partner commitment to the Girringun IPA process and to more clearly capture their perspectives of expectations, successes and challenges associated with the IPA.

**CYCLONE SEASON IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA: HELPING OUT**

Hoggart et al. (2002, p290) argue that in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) setting the researcher must become a ‘friendly outsider’ someone who is ‘self-confident in social situations’ and able to employ ‘playfulness and irony’, through an ongoing and iterative process. I would add to the notion of ‘friendly outsider’ that the researcher should, if possible, offer what tangible assistance they can with day-to-day activities, particularly where it is seen to extend beyond the researcher’s immediate benefit (Zurba 2010; Watson 2011). I acknowledge that this might simply be considered a type of participant observation such as ‘participant as observer’, or an approach drawing on elements of ‘full participation’ (Hoggart et al. 2002; Kearns 2010; Phillips & Johns 2012). However, these contributions serve an additional purpose beyond delivering observation based ‘data’ and context for the researcher. Other significant benefits include an additional means of negotiating insider and outsider positionality, and opportunities to build relationships of trust and rapport (Zurba 2010). This argument is made in the context of working with a community organisation operating at, and often beyond capacity where these contributions go a long way towards assisting with day-to-day operations.

While Cardwell is not a remote community, it is nevertheless located some two hours from the larger regional centres in north Queensland. Thus, in conducting fieldwork in the region there remain inherent challenges. These include: travel costs, time limits, and environmental and geographical factors such as the ‘wet’ and ‘dry’ seasons, and the risk of flooding or tropical cyclones. In 2011 Cardwell suffered a direct hit from severe tropical cyclone Yasi, where wind speeds were recorded at up to 285kmh. On the 10th of April (during one of my residencies) a cyclone watch issued for the north Queensland coast was upgraded to a warning, with cyclone threat maps identifying Cardwell within the predicted path of severe tropical cyclone Ita (Figure 5.2).
I assisted the Girringun staff with some last minute preparations for cyclone Ita in both a physical and logistical capacity, for example, by driving vehicles south to the regional centre of Ingham for servicing to ensure readiness for post-cyclone cleanup and securing plants in the on-site nursery to limit damage from high winds. While the staff joked about the fact that Ita would be a ‘fizzer’, their references to cyclone Yasi were laced with its seriousness and the acknowledgement that any cyclone should be treated with respect. Ita made landfall on the 11th of April, close to Cooktown (See Figure 5.2). Cyclone Ita’s subsequent passage over Cardwell as a low intensity tropical low delivered record rainfall for April with 307mm of rain falling in 24 hours (Bureau of Meteorology, 2014). The road south to Townsville was closed for two days as major waterways burst their banks, however the wind speeds had dropped such that there was little damage to the infrastructure and vegetation in the region.
At the culmination of my April residency I had made significant inroads on re-negotiating my outsider position, laying the foundations for a transition toward a ‘friendly outsider’. As my account of the April residency demonstrates, there are multiple ways in which to develop rapport, and relationships in the field, as well as a suite of personal, professional fears and internal struggles which permeate this process.

**BOX 5.3 FACE TO FACE #2.**

Karman and have been able to quickly bond on the basis of a shared experience from the Northern Territory, environmental and ethical positions as well as shared music tastes. It was apparent that Karman took me under her wing almost immediately, supporting me where appropriate and tossing me out to fend for myself when she felt I needed it. Karman has invited me over to her house for dinner a number of times this week and has helped me feel incredibly welcome. Our conversations have stretched across various topics, from life in the remote Northern Territory to the follies of youth, however they have always returned to the challenges she saw facing Girringun and the challenges she was encountering on a personal level. During one of these visits she said ‘It’s so nice to see a young person who is interested and engaged with these issues’. I could feel us beginning to bridge the simple binary of friends or colleagues as we shared insight and discussions in confidence.
5.1.2 RESIDENCY: JUNE 9TH – 29TH

During the June residency I undertook additional participant observation of the Girringun Aboriginal Rangers Cooperation’s Committee (GARCC), again adopting a service role of minute taking. Relationship building and authorisation of the project was enhanced in an organisation wide workshop on research with Indigenous communities and organisations facilitated by James Cook University researchers. An appropriate sample of IPA partners for the research project was collaboratively identified, in addition to suitable Girringun representatives, and interviews were conducted with each group. Additionally, opportunistic assistance was provided in Girringun fieldwork activities.

GIRRINGUN ABORIGINAL RANGERS COOPERATION’S COMMITTEE MEETING (GARCC)

Again I assumed the role of minute taker to legitimise my presence at the GARCC meeting, a forum for partners involved in implementing on-ground works with Girringun. This meeting provided an opportunity to observe the interactions of Girringun and its partners as they discussed operational matters. This was incredibly valuable, further contextualising my observations made at the more strategic level GIPACC meeting. Additionally it provided impetus and direction for lines of inquiry within the interview process, particularly around notions of ‘load sharing’, perceptions of asset ownership and it lead to the development of a series of questions around the concept of cultural assurance.

BOX 5.4 POSITIVE FEEDBACK: ONCE A MINUTE TAKER ALWAYS A MINUTE TAKER

At the GARCC, Phil Rist (Girringun’s CEO) was seated next to me as I took minutes. Karman Lippitt (IPA Coordinator) passed on that Phil was so impressed that he requested that I extend my residency by two days in order to take more minutes, this time at the Girringun Traditional Owners Prescribed Body Corporate meeting to be held over the final weekend of my residency. Karman had previously showed me the minutes taken at the last meeting which consisted of not more than an A4 page of notes. I’m pleased by such positive feedback and acknowledgement of my value but also concerned about how many minutes I might be asked to take! I’m also starting to think that my presence at Girringun might not be the drain on resources and time that Karman initially feared.

INTERVIEWS
When approaching external partners for interviews I was able to draw on my presence at both the GIPACC meeting in April and the more recent GARCC meeting as a form of ‘insider’ credibility. I conducted interviews with the six IPA partners identified in the research project sample, as well as three Girringun staff members. Four first round interviews were not recorded due to operator error - the selection of incorrect settings on the digital audio recorder. This could have proved catastrophic for the project however I was able to recover very quickly. Three of the four participants were sent an email to explain the situation, affirming that while I had taken some notes on the transcripts, the reliance on transcript analysis for the project meant that I was asking them to participate in another interview. I followed up these interviews with a phone call, which were well received and there was widespread acknowledgement that these things can and do happen. I was also able to suggest that a second interview would allow the participant to confirm, and deepen their previous responses that I had recorded as transcript notes.

**BOX 5.5. THE IMPORTANCE OF REMAINING FLEXIBLE**

The importance of flexibility was brought home today as I looked back through my audio files and made a staggering, unbelievable, discovery. I had incorrectly recorded four of my interviews. I must have been feeling nervous and not checked the microphone input of the device so while it generated files of the correct size and length, these files were blank. I could have given up in the minutes following the discovery, thoughts of packing up defeated and heading back to Wollongong flashed in and out of my mind. It was only after I contacted the technical officer at UOW and confirmed that the files were indeed lost, and conversed with my supervisor about possible ways to recover that I was able to think and breathe again. When I contacted the participants again, we were able to have a laugh about the whole situation, I was able to quickly reschedule three interviews without any problems thanks to the incredible good will of those involved.
INVESTIGATING THE RESEARCHER

I was able to participate in a workshop on research with Indigenous communities and organisations facilitated by two Indigenous women from the GuGu Badhun tribal group (represented by Girringun). The facilitators were from James Cook University’s School of Indigenous Australian Studies and Division of Teaching and Learning and Engagement. The workshop was a whole day event and included the majority of the Girringun staff. Facilitators sought to catalyse the development of a unique research agenda for Girringun as well as specific research protocols for researchers wishing to engage with Girringun. This process is outlined by Hoffman et al. (2012) as a success factor in the Dhimmuru IPA in the Northern Territory. As a participant in this workshop there were a series of light bulb moments where my positionality became incredibly clear. Additionally, and most alarmingly, my presence also gave the facilitators a tangible example of a ‘researcher’ engaging with an Indigenous organisation.

BOX 5.6 FEELING POSITIONALITY

I feel that I am sensitive to the colonial legacy of academic research on Indigenous peoples, I have certainly read and written about it, most recently in my application for ethics approval to undertake my project. I know that I occupy a ‘white’ middle class position in society and that this position influences my perception of the world. However, today it dawned on me in the way that I always imagined a light bulb moment might, a flash of brilliant white-hot clarity. Despite ‘knowing’ this legacy, despite considering my position in society, I had never fully grappled with it nor sufficiently confronted and unpacked it. It had never truly dawned on me just how significant that was, or just how much these realities are rendered invisible in my day-to-day life. This was going beyond the ethics submission, this was going beyond the ritual of writing a positionality statement.

I was in a room full of Indigenous people, in a workshop on ‘research’ and ‘research protocol’ run by two Indigenous women from the Gugu Badhun tribal group. We were talking about research with Indigenous people, its colonial legacy and the continued contemporary trajectory of ‘outsider driven’ exploitative research projects. We were talking about me.

This workshop was an incredibly reflexive space for me. It touched on much of what I had done in order to prepare my own ethics application to undertake my research project. So while in this sense much of the colonial legacy of research was not new to me, context was everything. I believe part of the reason for my own critical reflexivity was the realisation that these individuals were used to being at the opposite end of power imbalance, they were used to having the terms of research imposed from the outside (Barbour & Schlesinger...
This was illustrated by the facilitators use of language encouraging the staff to ‘reclaim research as a weapon’ to pursue the needs and desires of Indigenous peoples. Once the facilitators became aware that I was indeed a ‘researcher’ I was asked to explain my research project to the group, many of whom I had only met briefly. Spelling out my project was useful not only for the Girringun staff, but also for myself as I was able to demonstrate that it followed the protocols and processes outlined as best practice research engagement.

The workshop facilitated the creation of a set of draft research protocols and initial research priorities as identified by the Girringun Aboriginal rangers. This process transformed the perspectives of Girringun staff, affirming the value of research priorities set by those with detailed local knowledge. It was incredibly humbling to watch the facilitators build up and affirm the capacity of the rangers and the biodiversity staff, empowering them to consider topics of research that they might be interested in. The research workshop concluded with affirmation that everyone can contribute to, and participate in conducting research.

5.1.3 RESIDENCY SUMMARY

My final residency revolved around the August GIPACC meeting where I presented the initial findings of this research project. This is explored in detail in section 5.3, however two other relevant events occurred during this time. Firstly I was asked to, and of course accepted, the role of minute taker at the Girringun Senior Elders and Decision Makers Forum in Cairns in August. Secondly, many of the Girringun staff, including the CEO, IPA Coordinator, and Ranger Coordinator expressed their thanks for my assistance, and extended an open invitation should I wish to return and work with them in the future.

Attempting to disentangle the multiple layers of complexity in the Girringun region requires a detailed understanding of the local context. The four residencies facilitated approximately 46 days of full immersion fieldwork in the Girringun region. In many ways, full immersion fieldwork facilitated a rich (and sometimes-overwhelming) learning process. I have woven entries from my reflexive diary into the account above in an effort to frame myself as deeply involved in the transformative journey which this project has necessitated. Each of the residencies provided opportunities to engage with staff in day-to-day activities, service roles...
and casual conversations all of which contributed to repositioning and transforming my position as the outsider from ‘Wollongong’ toward a more inclusive position of ‘friendly outsider’. I was able to build rapport, establish and deepen relationships, and in some cases move beyond the friend or colleague binary. Closing my formal engagement with Girringun with a presentation at the GIPACC (see section 5.3) also constituted best practice and marked a significant transformation from my position as a risky investment, to a confident contributor.

5.2 SOCIAL-LEARNING AND CO-OWNERSHIP

In this section of the chapter I outline the first component in a two-step process of best practice research engagement. The first step consisted of private interviews conducted with the sample partners in their workplaces. The second step, outlined in section 5.3, sought to open up the findings of stage one to a collaborative forum for (in)validation, co-ownership and potential stimulus for social learning. Below I frame the interview process and my role as facilitator as transforming interviews into spaces of self-reflection and stimulus for action. The interviews and the action generated are explored using the concept of social learning in adaptive co-management.

Within the field of natural and cultural resource management, social learning can be defined as a process of action and reflection taking place amongst individuals and groups who are working toward an improved management of relationships between social and ecological systems (Cundill 2010; Cundill & Fabricus 2009; Keen et al. 2005). Keen et al. (2005, pp3-21) further define social learning as a process of iterative reflection occurring when experiences, ideas and environments are shared with others. Facilitated self-reflection can be framed as reflection on action amongst individuals, feeding into collaborative reflection, sharing of ideas and experience as detailed in section 5.3.

5.2.1 INTERVIEW OUTCOMES

While the transformative nature of the research on the participants, or the ‘agency’ of the research process was expected by both myself and Girringun as a possible outcome, the degree to which this might occur was unknown. Thus, during the research process a
concerted effort was made to remain alert to any evidence of such transformations. The interview questions were carefully designed to avoid introducing preconceived notions of how to evaluate the partnership or gauge partnership health. This approach ensured that the interviews remained sensitive to new glimmers of ‘insight’ and creative solutions that might contribute to individual or group learning (Cundill 2010; Plummer et al. 2013). Thus the interviews became reflective spaces where I took on the role of facilitator. As Hoffman et al. (2012) and Izurieta (2007) note, facilitation is often best undertaken by an outsider, providing that they are someone with a comprehensive understanding of the local context and actors. Indeed, one of the interview participants remarked:

‘...well that’s because you’re an outsider, and you see things that maybe we don’t.’ WTMA 2014

Facilitating self-evaluation of IPA partnerships was not only useful in generating ‘data’ for the project but in most cases provided stimulus for immediate action. Figure 5.3 below outlines key examples of action, however a full list of action generated from the interview process is located in Appendix x.

Figure 5.3 Interviews as catalysts for action, all participants.

While expecting the interview process to yield some form of transformative effect, I underestimated the value of my role as a facilitator of self-reflection in providing the ‘electricity’ to stimulate immediate action (Box 5.7). Perhaps what is most compelling about such an outcome is the fact that each instance of action was generated independently, resulting in almost unanimous action from each of the participants.
Examining the interviews as spaces for self-reflection and catalysts for action draws a number of parallels with the principals of adaptive co-management and the concept of social learning outlined above, in particular, the sharing of knowledge and the generation of new knowledge (Cundill & Fabricius 2009). During the interviews a number of comments that were made by participants demonstrated the value in the process of self-reflection, notably of the values of generating action and sharing knowledge in an adaptive co-management context.

### BOX 5.7 CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE: FACILITATING REFLECTION

Throughout this research process, I have had a number of crises of confidence in regard to my academic skill and interpersonal competency. Who was I to ask natural and cultural resource management professionals these questions? Did I have enough of an understanding of the ideas, concepts and political landscape to allow me to engage in discussion around the questions I was asking? Would the questions generate useful and insightful responses?

I was caught by surprise when one of my participants asked after the interview whether I had written and designed the interview question myself, she told me that she thought that they were very good and had challenged her thinking.
Participant | Examples of action generated through the interview process

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Fisheries QLD | ‘Just from talking to you today I feel like I should ring up and talk to the managers about organising more support, this is an issue in the Gulf too.’

QPWS | ‘So I think we might need to have a talk to Phil [Girringun CEO] about that hey... I’ve got a bit of an agenda to talk to Phil about sometimes so I must go down...’

WTMA | ‘After our first interview, it made me go back and have a bit of a read. I picked up a document [MoU] that was meant to be reviewed after six months – I’ve organised to go to Girringun and talk to Phil about a review.’

Table 5.1 Examples of action generated through the interview process.

Several partners contacted Girringun to follow up on content discussed during the interviews. These predominantly involved the IPA partner’s interest in revisiting the Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) between partner organisations and Girringun. What the examples from the interviews and phone calls with the IPA Coordinator demonstrate is that engineering space for reflection through facilitated interviews can deliver a form of self-evaluation. The value of this process extends beyond the space of self-reflection, with decision makers able to identify gaps or areas for attention and immediately feed this learning into management decisions (Cundill & Fabricius 2009). While the action generated as a result of the interviews may be small scale, it is used to illustrate the value of facilitated self-reflection as an evaluation process suited to the complexity of the Girringun IPA. In section 5.3, I examine the process of opening up the perspectives of individual participants to the wider GIPACC forum, framing this as an opportunity to reflexively examine their value in an evaluation process.
5.3 SUMMARY WORKSHOP

The summary GIPACC workshop represents the second stage in the two-step process of best practice engagement with a sample of the partners’ responses outlined in section 5.2. As the primary forum for strategic co-management of the Girringun IPA, the GIPACC is the appropriate forum to present a synthesis of initial findings and a snapshot of partnership evaluation. The GIPACC forum facilitates the sharing of knowledge between multiple actors from different knowledge systems (Cundill & Fabricius 2009). It facilitates these through its recognised ability to foster shared space, inclusive of Traditional Owner values (Zurba et al. 2012). Individual interviews conducted in stage one with individuals who sit on the GIPACC make this forum ideal for (in)validation of preliminary data analysis. This approach is sensitive to the often ‘extractive’ nature of research, and the power the researcher holds through the stories they tell about the researched. In this sense, this two-step process demonstrated researcher transparency and integrity.

It was hoped that the GIPACC presentation and the summary workshop would serve three distinct outcomes. Firstly to establish a sense of co-ownership of the evaluation process; secondly, to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, learning and discussion around evaluation into the future; and thirdly, it would serve as a best practice means of ending my formal involvement with Girringun and the Girringun IPA partners. I explore these outcomes below through discussion around the value of interviews (5.3.1), the value of partnerships (5.3.2) and the evaluation itself (5.3.3). I conclude the chapter by examining the concept of policy entrepreneurs and the roles of individuals as advocates and risk takers in creating the conditions on the ground that support the experimental and innovative Girringun IPA.

5.3.1 THE VALUE OF INTERVIEWS

As well as seeking validation, the purpose of examining these personal perspectives within a collaborative forum was to create a space for individual and group reflexivity to occur, specifically, reflexivity about the process of learning, and how that relates to improving performance (Tosey et al. 2011). Cundill & Fabricius (2009) argue that on-going reflection is a key component of social learning, where reflection on the learning that has taken place during a specific process can be used as a catalyst for more learning. Table 5.2 below
outlines participant responses to a question posed by Dermot Smyth during the summary workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>‘What was valuable about the interviews Eli conducted?’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPA partner sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisheries QLD</td>
<td>“Eli opened my eyes and provided a space to reflect...I found the interview process really valuable as it gave me time to reflect on the Girringun IPA process and what commitments Fisheries QLD has made to the process.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Parks</td>
<td>“I found the interview process useful, definitely got me thinking about what’s working, what’s not, and where to go from now.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTMA</td>
<td>“It helped me to clarify my own thoughts about the Girringun IPA and IPAs in general...It made me look at all the pointy things about the partnership... It Helped me think about our relationship with Girringun in a different light.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girringun</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA Coordinator</td>
<td>“From my perspective, interviews are useful as they force us to verbalize that which may be only conceptual up to that point. A process of speaking thoughts out loud in a sense. Also, it is interesting to reflect on interviews conducted between you and our GIPACC partners. They provide an insight/snapshot of where there thinking and perceptions are about the IPA and GIPACC processes.”</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 5.2. The value of the interview process.

Participants framed the interview process as useful and valuable, and raised its importance in facilitating reflection (Fisheries QLD) and in identifying the challenges and successes within partnerships (IPA Coordinator, Marine Parks, WTMA). They also play a role in clarifying and articulating ideas about the partnerships that may have been conceptual up until that point. In this sense, they are stimulus for more critical examination (IPA
Coordinator, WTMA). Additionally, the perceived value of the interviews was also indicated by the apparent dismay of those who were not interviewed due to the constraints of the research project.

‘It was curious that those members who weren’t interviewed expressed a desire to be interviewed or described a sort of ‘left out’ feeling.’ Girringun IPA Coordinator.

I frame the interviews as ‘engineered’ spaces for self-reflection, and in conjunction with the delivery of a partnership evaluation snapshot, a possible example of an appropriate evaluation process. Additionally I frame the responses of participants in Table 5.2 as examples of facilitated reflexivity and, located in a collaborative forum, stimulus for reflection about what was learned by the entire GIPACC.

The remainder of this chapter addresses three subsequent discussions that emerged during the summary workshop: the value of partnerships, the role of individuals as advocates within organisations, and evaluation processes into the future.

### 5.3.2 THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships and collaboration are not only essential to the co-management of the Girringun IPA but also to the long history of Girringun as an organisation. This history is one of significant effort on behalf of Traditional Owners to collaborate together under the Girringun umbrella.

‘What seems like ludicrous, unachievable initiatives to others probably isn’t much of a challenge to us. Because of those foundations. Because of those relationships we have with others. And the relationships mean everything, and out of those really constructive relationships you build confidence in other people…’ Girringun CEO

Thus partnerships can be framed as a foundational reality in the Girringun region. However, while exploring the concept of partnership evaluation in the GIPACC forum, there was a considerable amount of debate amongst the committee members around how to quantify and define a ‘partnership’.

‘I suppose it also made me consider the definition of “partnership” between our agency and Girringun and also between the other agencies involved in the IPA implementation.’ Fisheries QLD

This examination is particularly relevant in the context of justifying investment in partnership development to senior managers and funding bodies. This theme was raised numerous times throughout the interview process. The catalyst for renewed discussion at
the GIPACC emerged from comments made by a representative from the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC), the funding body for the IPA program.

“We fund the IPA on the basis that it manages the area according to IUCN standards... we don’t fund it to build partnerships... I’m not in any way discounting their value...” DPMC

While this concern was also voiced by the partner sample during the interviews, participants and other members of the GIPACC refuted the statement by the DPMC representative. Instead they argued that partnerships are essential in bridging the complexity of the region and instrumental to the past and future success of Girringun and its co-management arrangements (see Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012). Girringun’s CEO drew attention to the fact that the Girringun IPA is located in a region characterised by extensive development and polycentrism, where Traditional Owners don’t own significant amounts of land, a reality canvased numerous times throughout this thesis.

‘The value of partnerships is huge in this region, in urban Australia, they are make or break... they’re sink or swim.’ Girringun CEO

This view was supported by the majority of GIPACC members, with many of whom having been involved with Girringun for many years prior to the IPA declaration. This reiterates the reality that the Girringun IPA is clearly an experimental and innovative example of Indigenous lead environmental governance, which sits at the cutting edge of the Federal Government IPA program (Rose et al. 2012). This point was raised by Dermot Smyth during the workshop as well as one of the partners:

’I think what came out of the process of the interviews and your studies is that it is a new process and quite revolutionary both nationally and internationally’ Queensland Fisheries

Finally, one GIPACC member argued that the IPA, declared under the IUCN framework, necessitated the development of partnerships with Traditional Owners, not just attention to biodiversity values. If we recall the paradigm shift in protected area management, and the fact that the majority of protected areas are declared under IUCN categories V and VI, there has been a considerable opening up of what constitutes a protected area. Indeed, the Girringun IPA management plan demonstrates that this IPA is declared under multiple IUCN categories: III, IV and VI (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 2013a). Co-management is predicated on, and cannot function effectively nor equitably without, strong relationships and partnerships between a diversity of partners. Bauman et al. (2013) argue that co-management is not just a product of an institutionalised arrangement, rather, that it is an
ongoing process of negotiation, a development of partnerships and an establishment and maintenance of relationships. Discussion between members of the GIPACC prompted the representative from DPMC to re-visit their previous statement, drawing on their own experience in attempting to understand the perspectives of the GIPACC and the on-ground experience of its long-term members.

‘Within Government, between our departments it’s important to have strong partnerships. Key to this process is the maturity of individuals, and the opportunity to pause... and reflect... so engineering space for this is important...’ DPMC

The discussion and statement above is an example of social learning, where ideas and rich contextual experiences are shared with others (Keen et al. 2005; Plummer et al. 2013; Plummer & Armitage 2007). In the context of monitoring and evaluation processes this can be framed as knowledge sharing and awareness raising by multiple actors who bring different perspectives and interpretations of relationships and situations (Cundill & Fabricius 2009, p3208). The clarifying statement from DPMC highlights the importance of self-reflection, again endorsing the value of the interview process and leading to the next important question raised by the forum, ‘where to with evaluation from here’?

5.3.3 THE EVALUATION ITSELF

The implementation of any co-management arrangement relies on robust and adaptive partnerships (Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012). However, there remains a key challenge: partnerships remain ‘intangible,’ they are the ‘process’, that enables the ‘outcomes’ that funding bodies and higher level managers are responsible for, and are interested in. This is illustrated by the following comment:

‘Evaluation and producing data is important for my managers as value isn’t seen in the ‘partnership’ but the outcomes.’ WTMA

In the context of the busy schedules of IPA partners and Girringun staff, the likelihood of individuals independently making space to critically evaluate partnerships is low. An evaluation of co-management partnerships has not been attempted since Zurba conducted an evaluation of co management with a suite of partners in 2010 as part of a Master’s thesis. Before this Izurieta developed an evaluation process for the Cardwell Indigenous Ranger Unit, now Girringun Aboriginal Ranger Unit, which was finalised in 2007. In the case of this
research project, the desire of Girringun and its IPA partners to make their recently declared experimental and innovative IPA ‘work’, coupled with the additional input and resources of an Honours student have provided enough impetus to embark on a partnership evaluation process. While putting collaboration and evaluation back on the table is an achievement, as noted by Cundill & Fabricus (2009), these processes can just as easily fall off again.

A challenge raised in the literature, evidenced in the sample partner snapshot (Table 5.3.) and the summary workshop, is that in any attempt to undertake participatory evaluation, no single set of mutually inclusive outcomes emerges. Instead, what becomes apparent is a diversity of desired outcomes unique to each stakeholder (Izurieta et al. 2012; Sayer et al. 2007). Thus, sharing the perspectives of the IPA partners with the wider GIPACC forum provided a means of identifying where evaluation might be taken by IPA partners and an opportunity to establish co-ownership beyond the influence of the researcher. In correspondence following the summary workshop, the IPA partner sample present were asked again, ‘where to with evaluation?’ Not all partners had a response, and the thinking of some remains more detailed than others. The table below summarises these responses as well as comments of a similar nature from some GIPACC members following the summary workshop.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Where to with evaluation?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IPA partner sample</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marine Parks</td>
<td>“...personally, being a relatively new person in the partnership there is not much around which actually quantifies improvement over time...When we progress the works contract we will need to have some measure of performance in here as well, we will definitely be keeping these focused on outcomes, Traditional Owners working on country.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland Fisheries</td>
<td>“...there are certain hurdles and road blocks within government at times and I think this partnership process through the MoUs and letters of support is to try and smooth some of these out.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girringun</strong></td>
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</table>
“I would like to keep evaluation on the table, so to speak, as the GIPACC progresses. As in, self and group evaluation is an important aspect to any ongoing governance arrangements. I will probably look to incorporate some Most Significant Change (MSC) style interviews with partners next year. I would also like to map Girringun IPA partnerships as a visual representation of on ground and strategic partnership activities. Actions speak louder than words and it will be increasingly evident who our most engaged/active partners are on the IPA by the amount of co-management activities mapped.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIPACC Members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NQ Dry Tropics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QPWS (GIPACC Member)</td>
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</table>

Table 5.3 Where to with evaluation: Girringun, IPA partner sample and GIPACC members.

The general consensus of ‘where to with evaluation’ from the discussion in the summary workshop and follow-up correspondence with interview participants was that the answer to the problem of the ‘Golden Tool’ would involve a fusion of qualitative and quantitative methods. This could take the form of quantitative measurements of co-management activities, incorporating both biophysical, social cultural and economic measures as well as qualitative data from reflective spaces including those facilitated by this research project. The perspective that evaluation to track ‘progress’ was again raised indicating that evidencing outcomes remains a key concern of IPA partners. A more detailed examination and cross referencing of individual IPA partner work plans and existing funding body and management reports might form the basis of this qualitative component. This might serve to satisfy the monitoring and evaluation desires of some partners, however, this process lies beyond the scope of this project. However, what is particularly encouraging is the perspective of the Girringun IPA Coordinator who frames the interview process with IPA partners as a means of developing future evaluations. Additionally, the IPA Coordinators’ innovative concept for mapping co-management activities spatially as a quantitative record
of co-management commitment and delivery is certainly worthy of further investigation and support.

5.3.4 POLICY ENTREPRENEURS: INDIVIDUALS AS ADVOCATES

In this section I seek to unpack the role of individuals in innovating and making it ‘work’ based on observations made during this research project. During the interviews a number of participants independently articulated the extent of their own efforts and motivations to support innovative solutions and opportunities with Traditional Owners within their organisations. I have termed this moving ‘beyond job descriptions’ recognising the role of individuals as champions and advocates for Girringun, and Traditional Owners within their own organisations. Along with others, I argue that the contribution of these personal and interpersonal factors in building a spirit of trust and goodwill in many cases is able to overcome the real and perceived barriers to co-management inherent in the regional complexity of the Girringun region (Bauman et al. 2013, p69; Maclean et al. 2013; Zurba et al. 2012; Zurba 2010).

Discussions during the GIPACC summary workshop indicated that the GIPACC members embraced the notion of advocacy within their own organisations. This draws a number of links with the concept of ‘multi-positioned’ individuals who are able to share significant

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**BOX 5.8 SUPERVISOR AND POLICY ENTREPRENEUR?**

Dermot Smyth is one of two supervisors for this project; simultaneously he is arguably the preeminent policy entrepreneur for the development and continued innovation of the IPA concept over the last 20 years in Australia. The term policy entrepreneur is predominantly used in the political science literature (Brouwer & Biermann 2011; Mintrom et al. 2014) however it finds significant relevance here despite Dermot’s position as an independent consultant communicating, indeed it is a term Dermot has used himself in the context of the IPA program (Smyth 2014). Dermot undertook the consultancy that led to the first pilot IPAs and the IPA Program, and IPA concept as they exist today. During this time he developed the term Indigenous Protected Area, which gained acceptance over the term Indigenous Managed Protected Area, preferred by government at the time. Dermot also initiated the concept of multi tenure IPAs, a natural extension of his work in developing the concept of county based planning. Dermot’s involvement in multi-tenure IPAs continued as the consultant planner for the Mandingalbay Yidinji IPA and provision of advice to the Girringun IPA planner.

In this sense, far from being a neutral supervisor, Dermot is deeply interested and invested personally and intellectually in the IPA concept and including the Girringun IPA. Instead, Dermot articulates his position in relation to this project as someone deeply interested in supporting a research project that would further nurture the IPA concept.
values across the partner divide (Bauman et al. 2013, p75). Table 5.4 below details comments from participants within interviews and the summary workshop as well comments from GIPACC members not part of the IPA sample. Participants detailed the personal challenges and ‘injuries’ that can be suffered by pushing a co-management concept is in its infancy (QPWS). As well as the admission that sometimes commitment to Traditional Owners transcends that of their job description or core values of an organisation (WTMA).

And finally, participants articulated that successful engagement in the cultural dimensions of Country management remains linked to individual interests and motivations (IPA coordinator) Hill et al. (2011, p82) support such a position arguing that within an intercultural field, agency is exercised by social actors according to their interests. Finally, the comments of the Girringun CEO during the summary workshop suggest that strong relationships have the capacity to break down the binary of ‘us and them’ within partnerships (Bauman et al. 2013). Instead of a room full of agencies and organisations, it can become one filled with friends, something validated by the number of hugs and fond farewells given as the GIPACC meeting drew to a close.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Beyond job descriptions?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviews</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>QPWS</td>
<td>‘I get a lot of gravel rash, broken bones, cuffed ears, hurt feelings – but I get out there and do it I’m trying to push this stuff at a higher level... these guys [Executive management staff] have explicit responsibilities and want to see tangible outcomes, not three steps away, one step away only ever one step away...I don’t let too many things get in my way, plenty of gravel rash but shit if you don’t try I’m going to retire’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTMA</td>
<td>‘Because my head is always with sort of advocacy I guess, and helping TO’s [Traditional Owners] move forward. And yeah, of course the World Heritage is important and all that, but my first love is for them rather than that, which is probably very disloyal of me... It’s what drives me for sure’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girringun IPA coordinator</td>
<td>‘I suppose you could define it as a minority issue [cultural business], you know if you’re looking at it from a mainstream perspective...there’s no real necessity for you to engage with it, unless you choose to or are interested in'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Girringun CEO  ‘That’s always in my back pocket. But in my front pocket, in my hand, is this relationship that we develop with each other...I’m the MoU. You’re the MoU... So the relationship and the MoU are between people if you like. Not something on a piece of paper...’

GIPACC Workshop

QPWS  ‘I have a keen interest in the partnership... there have been a number of bold people on both sides over the years...’.

Girringun CEO  ‘When I sit around this table I don’t see government departments, or organisations, I see friends with their own battles and struggles within their own organisations.’.

Queensland Fisheries  ‘I thought [Girringun CEO] comment that he doesn’t see a room full of government, but friends, really interesting and very nice.’

GIPACC Members  GIPACC Workshop

DPMC  ‘...Key to this process [Partnerships] is the maturity of individuals involved...’

Table 5.4 Beyond Job descriptions: the role of Individuals in innovation.

The ethnographic workshop provided space for GIPACC members to share experiences and understandings of championing and advocating the Girringun IPA within their organisations. This sharing of experience raises awareness of different perspectives and ways of conceptualising the partnership and individuals within it and opens up dialogue and space for social learning about these processes within the partnership (Armitage et al. 2008; Cundill & Fabricius 2009).

Another outcome of the workshop was recognition from several IPA partners that while they can, and in many cases, do perform an advocate role for the Girringun IPA, they can only (and are willing to) respond to innovations led by Traditional Owners.
‘QPWS has experience in many areas, however innovating in this area is not something we are good and I think that this is where we look to Girringun’ QPWS (GIPACC Member)

This can be considered a significant endorsement of the approach and effort invested by Girringun in its whole of country approach to cultural and natural resource management in the Girringun region. More broadly this is endorsement of the innovation applied to the IPA concept to suit the needs of Traditional Owners, both in the Girringun region and elsewhere.

Bauman et al. (2013) argue that at the individual level it is challenging to change deeply embedded social and political structures, but that there is potential to facilitate these processes through ‘communities of practice’. Defined simply, this is a community of actors who share knowledge, ideas and experience (see Roberts 2006; Wenger 1998; 2000), I frame the GIPACC in this context, a suite of local, regional and national actors who, through a no-legal agreement form this community. Advocacy of individuals within IPA partnerships can contribute to such policy change, for example responding to Traditional Owners desire to declare a co-managed IPA across an incredibly complex region by with endorsement through letters of Support and MoUs. However, the initial innovation is led by Traditional Owners and must acknowledge the work of key individuals involved in promoting innovation and experimentation within the IPA concept.

The term ‘policy entrepreneur’ is one adopted more recently within the political science literature and refers to actors characterised by a willingness to take risks throughout the policy change process (Brouwer & Biermann 2011; Mintrom et al. 2014). If we return to the question of shared visions posed to participants in Chapter Four section 4.3.1,

‘…this is brand new stuff, this is multi-tenure, this has never been done before, but we’re going into that battle together. As brothers in arms.’ Girringun CEO

The CEO acknowledges the experimental nature of the Girringun IPA, and frames the IPA partners and Girringun taking as risk takers, traveling into the unknown - together. Girringuns CEO has a demonstrated history of innovations and experimental successes, captured by (Maclean et al. 2013; Nursey-Bray & Rist 2009 Zurba et al. 2012; Zurba 2010), of which the declaration of the IPA is the latest. This history of experimentation, and innovation, pushing the boundaries of current Australian practice draws many parallels with the work and history of Dermot Smyth (Box 5.8
) and I argue that Girringuns CEO is likewise a policy entrepreneur. Together individuals like
Girringuns CEO and Dermot Smyth, the Girringun team, and Individuals form partner
organisations form a community policy entrepreneurs contributing in different and unique
ways not only to making the Girringun IPA work, but stretching the IPA concept to suit the
needs of Traditional Owners.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

This project is embedded within a community of policy entrepreneurs, It must be
acknowledged that the agency and transformation explored in this chapter is a product not
only of the research project but the willingness of this community to experiment, innovate
and make things ‘work’. I have outlined the way in which this research process has been
transformative personally (5.1), as well as the agency of interview participants following
facilitated self-reflection. I have framed the GIPACC as a forum conducive to social learning
and deliberately examined the learning outcomes associated with opening up the finding of
this research project to this forum (Armitage et al. 2007). The facilitated summary workshop
provided an opportunity for knowledge and experiences to be shared and awareness of a
number of challenges facing the Girringun IPA to be discussed collaboratively. This process is
supported by the work of Hoffman et al. (2012, p. 46) who frame a two day facilitated
mediation workshop with partners and staff of the Dhimurru IPA facilitated by an external
consultant for as essential in enhancing reflection, collaborative effort, function and working
relationships between partners. Finally, the summary workshop gave GIPACC members and
interview participants a space to validate the initial findings and point out limitations in the
research project methodology, these are included in Chapter 3, under limitations. The
workshop facilitated by this Honors project is by no means as comprehensive as the example
outlined above; nonetheless, it was able to stimulate similar outcomes on a smaller scale.
Participatory evaluation process and a PAR research process do not always produce neat
disentangled outcomes, in this case there was no ‘golden tool’. Instead, what has emerged is
one example of an appropriate evaluation process, the value of which was endorsed by the
IPA partner sample.
The Girringun Aboriginal Corporation is defined by innovative, experimental Indigenous collaborative governance. This is demonstrated through existing research and the recent declaration of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas. This research project, developed collaboratively with Girringun is embedded in and engages with this context in multiple ways.

The experimental nature of the co-managed Girringun IPA is framed in a number of ways. These include the scale of the Girringun IPA declared over a large geographical area including: multiple tenures, partners as well as land and sea country. Despite building on an extensive history of co-management, as an innovative example of the IPA it remains important that an evaluation process was conducted to determine how well this collaborative process is working for everyone.

As an example of collaborative governance, research methodologies were collaborative, participatory, and action oriented in order to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes for all. Ownership and input were integral to responding to the needs of research partners,
particularly in a cross-cultural context. Research engaging at the individual level should be ‘opened up’ to the collaborative forum to promote co-ownership and social learning. In Chapter Three I provided a rationale for the Participatory Action Research typology and collaborative evaluation approach employed. In Chapter Five I explored the outcomes of opening up the project and framed this as an opportunity for social learning to occur.

The Girringun IPA is an innovative space facilitated and shaped by a community of policy entrepreneurs. Key individuals are framed as policy entrepreneurs in their own right with deep personal and intellectual investments in experimenting and innovating within the IPA concept. Strategic leadership and risk taking by these Individuals was complemented by individuals within the Girringun IPA partner organisations who take on advocacy roles within their own organisations. In this way it is this community of policy entrepreneurs who have fostered the conditions on the ground to support innovation beyond existing policy. These conditions on the ground and the desire of individuals to make it work contributes to the continual evolution IPA concept. Likewise it is this community of deeply involved individuals who have enabled this project to take place. The principals of participation and collaboration were deeply embedded in the methodological approach of this research project and Girringun’s approach to multi-stakeholder engagement for management of country. Thus the measure of the value of this participatory research is its contribution to the deepening of relationships, and collaborative problem solving. The research project and the organisations and individuals it has engaged with have delivered three distinct but entangled outcomes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Thesis Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research training</td>
<td>➢ Methodological considerations: Chapter Three, In the field: Chapter Four, Chapter Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate evaluation process</td>
<td>➢ Chapter Four, Chapter Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership evaluation snapshot</td>
<td>➢ Chapter Four</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.6 Thesis outcomes**
RESEARCH TRAINING

This research project has taken me on a personal journey, as researcher in training it has been both transformative and deeply personal. I have influenced the research process, and in the research process has influenced me. I have woven entries from my research diary throughout this thesis in an effort to enhance not only my own reflexivity but to communicate some of these transformations.

APPROPRIATE EVALUATION PROCESS

This research project has developed and implemented an example of a two-step process for partnership self-evaluation. The first step is defined by ‘engineered’ spaces for self-reflection at the individual level. The second step involves the opening up of the initial findings from these individuals to the research findings of participants in collaborative forum.

PARTNERSHIP EVALUATION SNAPSHOT

An emergent outcome of this process was the baseline partnership evaluation snapshot. The snapshot produced anecdotal evidence of what partnerships had delivered to Girringun, the Girringun IPA and individual partner organisations and agencies. Second, the snapshot flags a number of challenges and successes which have emerged in the first year of the Girringun IPAs implementation. These are presented as areas that may require monitoring to track improvement into the future as well as stimulus for social learning when presented in a collaborative forum.

WHERE TO WITH EVALUATION?

The general consensus on ‘where to with evaluation’ was that facilitated spaces for evaluation could form a component of future evaluation. However, the GIPACC members did see future evaluation processes including additional quantitative biophysical, social, cultural and economic measures. I flag this as an area for future attention from Girringun and its IPA partners. A more detailed examination and overlay of IPA partner work plans and existing funding body and management reports to deliver this qualitative data was beyond the scope of this project. However, based on the successful outcomes of this collaborative research, there is undoubtedly potential to link what quantitative data does already exist with the
baseline partnership snapshot. An example of an innovative mapping solution raised in Chapter Five section 5.3.3 is also worthy of further investigation.

This research project has undergone a series of transformations, doing away with the ‘golden tool’, the processes have become the outcomes and the outcomes are ongoing. The summary workshop in particular was a focal point for the sharing of perspectives and values, and demonstrated that a community of innovators can bring about shifts in established thinking and foster social learning.

This project is nestled within a larger overarching agenda, a small, strategically placed cog in a web of complex relationships all helping drive the strategic vision of a community of policy entrepreneurs to strengthen Girringun and support Country based planning. It is in this sense that I frame this project as a modest contribution to a real world challenge, a contribution only possible due to Individuals on the ground who are determined to make things work.
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## APPENDIX A: TABLE OF INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Organisation Abbreviation</th>
<th>Office location</th>
<th>Interview Location</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17/06/14</td>
<td>Terrain Natural Resource Management Department of Environment and Heritage</td>
<td>Terrain</td>
<td>Gordonvale</td>
<td>Participants office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/06/14</td>
<td>Department of Environment and Heritage</td>
<td>DERM</td>
<td>Cairns city</td>
<td>Local Cafe</td>
<td>First interview not recorded due to operator error. Second interview conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/06/14</td>
<td>Wet Tropics Management Authority</td>
<td>WTMA</td>
<td>Cairns city</td>
<td>WTMA Board room</td>
<td>First interview not recorded. Second interview conducted 01/07/14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/06/14</td>
<td>Queensland Parks and Wildlife</td>
<td>Marine Parks</td>
<td>Cairns port</td>
<td>Marine Parks office</td>
<td>First interview not recorded.. Second interview conducted over the phone 21/07/14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/06/14</td>
<td>Queensland Parks and Wildlife</td>
<td>QPWS</td>
<td>Cairns city</td>
<td>Cairns office</td>
<td>First interview not recorded due to operator error. Second interview conducted 01/07/14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/06/14</td>
<td>Girringun Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td>Girringun</td>
<td>Cardwell</td>
<td>CardwellParticipants’ offices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/06/14</td>
<td>Girringun Aboriginal Corporation</td>
<td>Girringun</td>
<td>Cardwell</td>
<td>Cardwell participant’s home</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/06/14</td>
<td>Fisheries Queensland</td>
<td>Fisheries QLD</td>
<td>Cairns port</td>
<td>Cardwell Participants office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/07/14</td>
<td>Cassowary Coast Regional Council</td>
<td></td>
<td>Innisfail</td>
<td>Cairns Café</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B: ETHICS APPROVAL AFTER REVIEW

APPREVAL after review
In reply please quote: HE14/070
Further Enquiries Phone: 4221 3388
22 April 2014

Dr Michael Adams
Dr Michael Adams
School of Health and Society
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Wollongong
NSW 2522
×4282

Dear Dr Adams

Thank you for your letter responding to the HREC review letter. I am pleased to advise that the Human Research Ethics application referred to below has been approved.

Ethics Number: HE14/070
Project Title: A review and analysis of Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plans within the Gerringong Regional Indigenous Protected Area in relation to cultural resource management.
Researchers: Dr Michael Adams, Mr Eli Taylor
Approval Date: 17 January 2014
Expiry Date: 16 April 2015

The University of Wollongong/Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District Social Sciences
HREC is constituted and functions in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement
on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. The HREC has reviewed the research proposal
for compliance with the National Statement and approval of this project is conditional
upon your continuing compliance with this document.

A condition of approval by the HREC is the submission of a progress report annually and
a final report on completion of your project. The progress report template is available at
http://www.uow.edu.au/research/rso/ethics/UOW083385.html. This report must be
completed, signed by the appropriate Head of School, and returned to the Research
Services Office prior to the expiry date.

As evidence of continuing compliance, the Human Research Ethics Committee also
requires that researchers immediately report:
- proposed changes to the protocol including changes to investigators involved
- serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants
- unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

Ethics Unit, Research Services Office
University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia
Telephone (02) 4221 3388 Facsimile (02) 4221 4338
Email: rso-ethics@uow.edu.au Web: www.uow.edu.au
APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

In reply please quote: HE14/070

4 April 2014

Mr Eli Taylor
School of Health and Society
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Wollongong
NSW 2522

Dear Mr Taylor

Thank you for submitting your proposal to the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Ethics Number: HE14/070

Project Title: A review and analysis of Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plans within the Gerringan Regional Indigenous Protected Area, in relation to cultural resource management.

Researchers: Dr Michael Adams, Mr Eli Taylor

Reviewed Date: 20 March 2014

The Committee has reviewed the application in accordance with the NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and has asked for the following additional information/modifications which can be considered by the Executive Committee:

1. Please provide letters of support from Gerringan Regional Indigenous Protected Area (GRIPA) and GAC (and their partner organisations) indicating approval and willingness to participate in the research project.

2. A person’s decision to participate in research must be voluntary and based on sufficient and suitably presented information so that the potential participant has an adequate understanding of both the proposed research and the implications of participation (National Statement, Sections 2.2.1 – 2.2.3). Please amend the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form (CF) to include the following:
   a. Please modify the language to be less academic and more suitable for a lay audience.
   b. Please justify the use of a separate Indigenous and non-Indigenous PIS.
   c. Please provide some sample interview questions on the PIS.
   d. Please indicate on the PIS that this is an Honours student project.
   e. Please use the Ethics Office contact details available on the template: http://www.uow.edu.au/research/ethics/human/UOW127999.html

Please send a written response clearly addressing each point above to the Ethics Officer, Research Services Office, University of Wollongong or email it to res-officers@uow.edu.au along with the revised document(s) showing changes by either highlighting or using Track Changes.
APPENDIX D: GIRRINGUN ABORIGINAL CORPORATION LETTER OF SUPPORT

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

235 Victoria Street, CARDWELL, QLD 4849
PO Box 392, CARDWELL, QLD 4849
Tel: (07) 4094 3000  Fax: (07) 4094 3555
Email: admin@girringun.com.au  Web: www.girringun.com.au

Human Research and Ethics Committee,
Research Services Office
Building 20
University of Wollongong
NSW 2522

University of Wollongong Human Research and Ethics Committee,

This letter is to confirm the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (GAC) approves and supports the research project to be undertaken by Eli Taylor of University of Wollongong in consultation with GAC.

Girringun is prepared to offer support to the project (and has already done so) in exchange for the project outcomes contributing towards our aims. It is on this basis that the specific project has been negotiated.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Philip Res, Executive Officer
Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
Cardwell, Queensland 4849
Response to HREC Initial Review Letter received on 04/04/2014.

Ethics Number: HE14/070

Project Title: A review and analysis of Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plans within the Girringun Regional Indigenous Protected Area, in relation to cultural resource management.

Researchers: Dr Michael Adams, Mr Eli Taylor

Reviewed Date: 20 March 2014

The following requests for additional information/modification have been addressed:

1. Please provide letters of support from Girringun Regional Indigenous Protected Area (GRIPA) and GAC (and their partner organisations) indicating approval and willingness to participate in the research project.

A formal letter of support from Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (signed by the CEO) is attached.

Girringun Regional Indigenous Protected Areas partner organisations will be chosen following advice from Girringun and though future negotiation with the organisations themselves. We will forward correspondence indicating partner organisations' approval and willingness to participate when available.

2. A person's decision to participate in research must be voluntary and based on sufficient and suitably presented information so that the potential participant has an adequate understanding of both the proposed research and the implications of participation (National Statement, Sections 2.2.1 – 2.2.3). Please amend the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and Consent Form (CF) to include the following:

   a. Please modify the language to be less academic and more suitable for a lay audience.

      The use of academic terminology has been addressed. Changes have been made throughout the documents and are outlined in track changes in both the PIS and CF.

   b. Please justify the use of a separate Indigenous and non-Indigenous PIS.
A decision has been made to use only one PIS, the difference between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous PIS was minimal. Relating to the return of data to Indigenous participants following the completion of the research project in line with the AIATISIS research principals, as well as noting that verbal consent was acceptable for participation in the research project should that be the wish of Indigenous participants. The single PIS now covers both of these points, the changes have been outlined in track changes.

c. Please provide some sample interview questions on the PIS.

Examples of two interview questions have been included on the PIS in italics. These examples are outlined using track changes.

d. Please indicate on the PIS that this is an Honours student project.

The PIS now clearly articulates that the project is a student Honours project under the ‘Purpose’ heading at the beginning of the document. This has been outlined using track changes.

e. Please use the Ethics Office contact details available on the template: http://www.uow.edu.au/research/ethics/human/UOW127093.html

The PIS and CF forms have been updated to reflect the correct Ethics Office contact details. The changes are outlined using track changes.

Thank you for your assistance and recommendations.

Kind Regards,

Eli Taylor
Sample Interview Questions (Aggregated)

Broad partnership evaluation categories of interest to Girringun:

- *Reporting*
- *Information sharing*
- *Capacity*
- *On-ground*

**Participant:**

- For my records, could you please state your name?
- What is your current occupation/position?
- What are your current roles and responsibilities?
- What other experience/qualifications have you obtained in this field?

**IPA and Partnership:**

- Could you briefly explain to me your understanding of the Girringun Indigenous Protected Areas?
- Could you outline your key responsibilities in the region as they relate to the Girringun IPA?
- Could you explain the nature of the partnership between your organisation and the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation?

**Reporting**

*Evaluation context*

1. From your perspective what reason do you see to evaluate the partnership?
   a. What are we trying to achieve?

2. Do you have any internal evaluations or indicators, which are currently used to evaluate the performance or value of your IPA partnership? **YES / NO**
   a. If so, how does this process work? What are you measuring?

3. Do you feel that the development of a partnership evaluation tool would be valuable to your organisation? **YES / NO**
   a. Personally, is this something you think would help you?
   b. Do you recall the early development of such a tool in 2007?

4. What do you think the development of such a tool would change?
Evaluating partnerships

1. Do you feel that your partnership with Girringun is based on a clearly articulated vision or goal?

   Not clear  Not very clear  Fairly clear  Very clear

   a. What is this vision?
   b. Is your role in this vision clearly articulated? YES / NO
      i. Do you think your role clearly understood by Girringun? YES/NO
   c. How achievable is the vision?

2. In what way does the partnership benefit your organisation?
   a. Considering your own organisational objectives or management plans?
   b. Cultural, biodiversity outcomes, TO engagement? Aspects of your management responsibilities in the region?

3. How would you rate the productivity of your partnership with Girringun

   Not productive  Not very productive  Fairly productive  Very Productive

   a. Briefly, could you explain your choice

4. How satisfied are you with your partnership with Girringun?

   Not satisfied  Not very satisfied  Fairly satisfied  Very satisfied

   a. Briefly could you explain your choice

Information sharing

Networking and sharing information

1. How does information about the IPA partnership and co-management projects feed back into your organization?

2. How is this information incorporated into on the ground operations?

Mutual promotion of working relationships
3. Do you promote your co-management partnership and activities to other government and non-government organisations? **YES / NO**
   a. How do you do this?
   b. Media exposure, through web page? Are you able to monitor ‘clicks’ or ‘visits’ as a means of measuring the interest in these projects?

4. How is strategic advice such as; legislative, structural, or funding developments within your organization or within the field of CNRM passed on to key regional partners such as Girringun? **YES / NO**
   a. Is the GIPACC the primary forum?

Capacity

*Girringun co-management committee*

5. Has an organisational representative attended each of the GIPACC meetings? Formerly GRISC. Before declaration/ since declaration, are you aware of the first time these meetings were attended **YES / NO**

6. How would you rate the value of the GIPACC meetings to your organisation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Not very valuable</th>
<th>Fairly valuable</th>
<th>Very valuable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. What is their value from your personal perspective?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Are they worthwhile attending?</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b. What are their strengths?</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. What are their weaknesses?</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. From your perspective, how could they be improved?</td>
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</table>

7. How effective is the GIPACC as a forum to steer the Girringun IPA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not effective</th>
<th>Not very effective</th>
<th>Fairly effective</th>
<th>Very effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. Since the last GIPACC meeting have you achieved the co-management activities that you agreed to undertake? **YES / NO**
   a. If not, why do you think this may be the case?

9. As a forum for multiple partners with different objectives and obligations, have the views of multiple partners been afforded equal consideration and respect?

*Effectiveness of structures, Project management*

1. Could you briefly outline a long-term co-management activity that your organisation is involved in with Girringun?
a. How satisfied are you with the co-management of this project

Not satisfied  Not very satisfied  Fairly satisfied  Very satisfied

b. Briefly, could you explain your choice

2. Have you entered into any new co-management projects with Girringun in the last quarter? YES / NO

3. Girringun considers a culturally assured approach to Land and Sea management as a best practice model, the foundations of which are respect and recognition and responsibility for Traditional Owners and their values.
   a. Could you outline how your organisation might facilitate or support cultural assurance in co-management activities?
   b. In what way has the declaration of the IPA affected QPWS’s cultural resource management responsibilities in the region?

4. What priority is traditional knowledge afforded in your organisation’s development of co-management projects?

Not a priority  Not a very high priority  Fairly high priority  Very high priority

5. Do you feel that two-way knowledge sharing has been incorporated into your partnership with Girringun?

Not incorporated  Not very incorporated  Fairly incorporated  Very incorporated

a. Could you give me a specific example of two-way knowledge sharing? YES / NO Within your partnership? Or a particular project?

b. Would further development of specific knowledge sharing goals, processes and activities be beneficial to the partnership? YES / NO

c. Do you have any ideas or thoughts for a future knowledge sharing project your organisation might be interested in.

Resourcing
6. Do you feel that you are adequately resourced to deliver on your commitments to the partnership? Overall YES / NO
   a. Personnel/skills YES / NO
   b. Financially YES / NO
   c. Other?

7. Do you feel that you have maximized the use of your available resources in supporting the Girringun IPA? YES / NO

8. Do you expect more for your investment into the partnership? YES / NO
   a. Briefly, could you explain your choice?

9. Has your organization invested in its own institutional capacity to better support and enhance IPA delivery? YES / NO
   a. If YES, please give examples of this institutional capacity investment;
   b. Do you see further opportunity to enhance your institution’s capacity? YES / NO. If YES, do you have an example?

1. Girringun articulates a strong desire to build long term employment and contracted services across the region, within the literature, the Indigenous Ranger unit receives particular praise, what is your view of the Girringun rangers capacity to undertake co-management activities?

**Process**

(Vision, Role, Plan to achieve, Commitment/attendance, Integration of GIPA plan, Scope of partnership, Commitments to the Girringun IPA)

1. Does your organization have a copy of the Girringun IPA management plan? YES/NO

2. Do you feel that all partners have a clear and agreed role in the IPA? YES / NO

3. Are you comfortable with the Girringun IPA vision for your region? YES / NO
   a. Are you comfortable with your role in working toward the vision? YES / NO
4. Can you explain briefly how the GRIPA management plan is being, or might be, incorporated into operations and planning conducted by your organisation?
   
a. How are Aboriginal culture, knowledge, and decision making processes supported by your organization?

5. The Girringun IPA is based on negotiated partnership agreements often formalized through Memorandums of Understanding. How effective do you think the MoUs are in guiding the partnerships?

   Not effective       Not very effective       Fairly effective       Very effective

   a. How could the MoUs be improved to better guide the partnership?
   b. Do you see any value in reporting against the MoUs?

6. MoU’s aside, are there additional mechanisms or processes in place that outline the scope or guide implementation of the co-management partnership? YES / NO - if YES, please give examples of additional mechanisms or processes?

7. In the Girringun IPA management plan, Girringun articulates its long-vision to become the soul statutory land and see manager in the region.
   
a. Have you been able to enhance the value of your management responsibilities in the region to Girringun? YES/NO; if YES, please give example(s)

8. Does the partnership provide an effective means of load sharing, specifically in the delivery of your management obligations in the region?

   Not effective       Not very effective       Fairly effective       Very effective

   a. Does the partnership place additional load on your organisation?  
      YES / NO

On-ground

Access

Challenges
Moving forward

1. The Girringun IPA is one of only a handful of IPAs across Australia with multiple tenures, and multiple partners, further, the Traditional Owners in the region do not own much land. What impact do you think this has with regards to on-the-ground management of the IPA?
   a. Have issues associated with tenure had a positive or negative effect on the partnership from your perspective? **POSITIVE / NEGATIVE**
   b. From your perspective are there yet untried means of navigating issues arising from access to restricted tenures? **YES / NO**

2. Are you satisfied with the co-management on-ground delivery that Girringun has undertaken with or on behalf of your organisation?

   Not satisfied  Not very satisfied  Fairly satisfied  Very satisfied

   a. Briefly, could you explain your choice?

3. What do you perceive to be the most important factors increasing co-management capacity on-the-ground, between the Girrigun Rangers and QPWS staff?

4. In what ways do you think your own institution supports co-management on-the-ground?
   a. In what ways do you feel it may impinge on co-management on the ground?

4. Section 3.2.1 (Specific Management Programs) of the MoU between QPWS and Girringun outlines QPWS commitment to assist in the training of Girringun Aboriginal Ranger staff in best practice natural resource and protected area management.
   a. Has this been occurring on a regular basis? **YES / NO** if not, **Why**?
   b. Bruce Rampton - ‘we want to get serious’ about the Girringun rangers long term desire to take on more fee for service/statutory responsibility for managing country Rangers needed to be learning more western NRM science. – What are these skills he is talking about?
   c. What is your current perception of the NRM capacity of the Girringun ranger unit?

5. How has the work of the Girringun Ranger unit been received within your own organisation?

6. Do you feel that challenges emerging on-the-ground during co-management activities are adequately communicated to the GIPACC or to Girringun staff? **YES / NO**
   a. Once communicated how satisfied have you been with Girringuns response?

   Not satisfied  Not very satisfied  Fairly satisfied  Very satisfied
Closing comments:

7. It has been almost one year since the declaration of the GRIPA, have your initial expectations of the partnership been met? **YES** / **NO**
   a. What was your institution’s greatest achievement in the past year? What are you proud of, what have you enjoyed?
   b. What makes being part of the IPA, rewarding, and satisfying?
   c. What was the greatest challenge in the past year? Was there a time where from your perspective, you, your organisation or partners may have needed additional support, why?
   d. Are there challenges that you see emerging into the future?
      i. Have these been raised with Girringun or other IPA partners?
   e. What are your key focus areas for the partnership into the future?
Appendix G: Revised Consent Form

Version 02. 01/03/2014

Consent Form

A review and analysis of Natural Resource Management (NRM) Plans within the Girringun Region Indigenous Protected Areas (GRIPA): in relation to cultural resource management.

Project organiser: Eli Taylor  Email: elitaylor@me.com  Ph: 0447671807  Address: 4/29 Robsons Road Keiraville

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. If you have any further questions you can contact myself or my project supervisor (over page).

This form indicates my consent to be involved in the project. I have been given a project information sheet and understand the purpose of the project. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions I may have about the project.

I am consenting to:

☐ participate in an interview lasting between 30-60 minutes

☐ have the interview recorded (or not), for transcription.

I understand I am not committed to finishing the interview once it begins, my consent can be withdrawn at any time. Withdrawal of consent will have no impact on myself and will result in the removal and return of any of my information from the research.

I consent to having any information I provide used in Eli Taylor’s Honours thesis, and academic journals.

In this research I wish to be identified by:

☐ full name and organisational title.

☐ organisation title (name withheld).

☐ an ID code (name and title withheld)
I have discussed with the researcher how the information I provide will be stored after the projects completion on 15/10/2014.

I am aware that I have the option to have my information returned to me upon the completion of the research project.

I understand that I can direct any questions about the research to Eli Taylor or his supervisor, and I am aware that the University of Wollongong Ethics Officer can be contacted by telephone (02) 4221 3386, Facsimile (02) 4221 4338 or email rsoethics@uow.edu.au.

Name:

Signed:                                                                              Date:

**Project supervisor:**

Dr Michael Adams  Associate Professor    **Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities**  
University of Wollongong  Ph: (02) 4221 4284 madams@uow.edu.au
Participant Information Sheet

Developing a co-management diagnostic tool: self-evaluation and reporting on institutional partnerships within the Girringun Region Indigenous Protected Areas.

The Project: The Girringun IPA, implemented in June 2013, involves a large number of government and non-government partners and land owners. Successful implementation of the GRIPA management plan requires improved understandings of partner expectations and shared management objectives and initiatives.

The Purpose: This is a student Honours research project conducted in partnership with Girringun Aboriginal Corporation.

The focus of the project is the collaborative development of a tool that facilitates self-evaluation of Girringun IPA partnerships between external stakeholders and Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. The development of such a tool aims to assist in nurturing rigor within IPA committee meetings, enhance partner commitment to the IPA process and more clearly record and articulate the successes, challenges and expectations unique to each partnership.

The purpose of the initial interviews is to collaboratively explore the development of indicators that will assist in informing the partnership evaluation tool.

What you will be asked to do: This project involves participating in an interview in which you will be asked share your knowledge and personal/organisation/corporation opinions.

You will be asked to answer questions that are structured to produce a conversation. We are interested in your ideas, experiences and feelings. There are no right and wrong answers. The interview may take between 30-60 minutes, depending on the time you have available. Examples of questions you may be asked are outlined below:

1. Can you explain briefly how the GRIPA management plan is being, or might be, incorporated into operations and planning conducted by your agency
2. **In what ways do you think co-management as it currently exists ‘on-the-ground’ could be improved in the region**

3. **What have you achieved since the last GIPACC meeting? Did you achieve what you set out to do? If not, why do you think this may be the case**

As a participant you have the right to stop the interview at any time. You may withdraw information you have contributed at any time. With your permission, interviews will be recorded and transcribed to assist interpretation. Transcripts always remain confidential, access is restricted to the researchers. Any information provided may be used in my thesis, and academic journal articles, however your confidentiality and privacy will be maintained through the use of pseudonyms in any final publications (should that be your wish).

Please note that verbal consent to participate in this project will be accepted for Indigenous participants if that is preferred. Indigenous participants may also request their data be returned to them upon the completion of the project.

You are encouraged to ask any questions you might have regarding this research. If you have any concerns or complaints about the research or how it was conducted, please contact the University of Wollongong Ethics Unit, Research Services Office University of Wollongong NSW 2522 Australia by telephone (02) 4221 3386, Facsimile (02) 4221 4338 or email rsoethics@uow.edu.au.

**Project organiser:**

Eli Taylor - Email: elitaylor@me.com Ph: 04 4767 18

**Or Supervisor:** Michael Adams Associate Professor  
**Department of Geography and Sustainable Communities** University of Wollongong Ph: (02) 4221 4284 madams@uow.edu.au

Thank you for considering your involvement.
## APPENDIX I: PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES INTO THE FUTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Challenges into the future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Terrain</strong></td>
<td>Changes in government – funding arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Girringun have a 5 year contract but that doesn’t seem to stop money disappearing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uncertainty around continued support for programs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WTMA</strong></td>
<td>Maintaining and increasing momentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Between GIPACC meetings, challenges if WTMA changes due to the WHA review being conducted in QLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marine Parks</strong></td>
<td>Downsizing/ stagnation of Marine parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Challenging transition – step by step – looking to contract specific jobs to Girringun – evaluation of this process is important.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parks</strong></td>
<td>Building and cementing the commercial credibility and capacity of Girringun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To the point that Girringun has recognised credibility and ability to plan, implement and apply, monitor and report back.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Fisheries QLD</strong></td>
<td>Maintaining good links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Relationships with Girringun are channeled through individuals, what happens if that employee leaves – succession planning, knowledge management, cultural assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CCRC</strong></td>
<td>Organisational structure/ succession planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What happens when Damon, Phil or Karman move on or can no longer sit in their positions?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Perception that CCRC ‘holding up’ partnership in the transition from Aturo to Karman?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Girringun CEO</strong></td>
<td>Culture of the organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensuring that blackfella business is considered ‘core business’ and that it is actively supported by all of the staff and not undermined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girringun IPA coordinator</strong></td>
<td>Engagement – external and internal partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Getting everyone to understand what it is an what it isn’t, new concept – significant inroads made on this front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girringun Ranger Coordinator</strong></td>
<td>Staff management and human relations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Clashes within Girringun – relationships between staff, particularly the rangers. Issues with disrespectful behavior toward other rangers and Girringun staff</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maintain cohesion of our different management units</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Specializing rangers into different fields, Junior rangers, Sea Country management, Fire crew, track maintenance – meeting these requirements without fracturing the team apart</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Maintain cohesion of the broader Girringun projects – Biodiversity, Rangers, IPA.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX J: KEY FOCUS FOR PARTNERSHIPS INTO THE FUTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Key Focus for partnership into the future</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Terrain** | 1. Revise and revisit MoU.  
  a. To include more detail and actionable content, what are Girringun’s needs and what are our needs.  
  2. Potential for web of MoUs.  
  a. Rather than a spoked wheel of MoUs with Girringun in the middle - include more than two partners and reflect the nature of the GIPACC partnerships. |
| **WTMA** | 1. Assist in positioning Girringun for new avenues of investment  
  a. Philanthropic, corporate, Social Ventures Australia  
  2. Focus on supporting projects driven by Girringun  
  a. WTMA can tap into and support – deliver tangible outcomes which relate back to employment and wellbeing  
  3. Maintain momentum within the partnership  
| **Marine Parks** | 1. Maintain regular communication at a high level  
  a. Ensure communication is good between Girringun ranger coordinator and on-ground Marine Parks officer.  
  2. Focus on supporting projects driven by Girringun  
  a. Projects Marine Parks can then tap into and support – INTERVIEW #2 – loss of RIC position, potential to use this funding to outsource management responsibility to Girringun – different way of doing things.  
  3. Establish a better understanding of Girringun’s on-ground capacity  
  a. Personal interest of Dan Shaper -what assets do they have, what training have the rangers got. |
| **Parks** | 1. Work on improving the technical capacity of the Girringun Rangers  
  a. Improve or better communicated their professional standing  
  b. At the moment perception of capacity is one which could use these technical skills.  
  2. Improve the cultural capacity of QPWS  
  3. Communicate and progress the concept of ‘contestability’ within QPWS  
  a. Particularly in regard to the on-ground staff – cultural change around perception of ‘asset ownership’ |
| **Fisheries QLD** | 1. Fisheries review  
  a. Significant project this year as well as ongoing review and re-writing of the Fisheries Act 1994 – making sure Girringun have their voice in there is very important.  
  2. Compliance and joint boat patrol  
  a. Requires better communication between local Boating Patrol and Girringun and incorporation into each workplan.  
  3. Any other opportunities in relation to long-term monitoring or research  
  a. Long-term limited to the next 3-5 years. |
### CCRC

1. **Build Girringuns image**
   - Building their image through ‘what do they want to do and how’ through practical examples and mediums, within the community. Tourism, direct communication with councilors, Bagu on the beachfront.

2. **Build Girringuns capacity**
   - Whole capacity – from little works, through to developing other companies. Enhance their ability to operate as a corporation, encourage diversification of funding/grant applications.

### Girringun CEO

1. **Work on blackfella business**
   - Ensuring that the PBC’s are happy (more frequent meetings), increasing communication with Girringun members through workshops, senior elders leadership forum.

2. **Relinquish Native Title right to hunt Green turtle and Dugong.**
   - Move forward on compensation, offsets and incentives package – work on a deal with federal/state government in an effort to limit impact on these threatened species. Demonstrate to the world that we are responsible managers.

3. **Moving from Girringun’s current location to the new property**

### Girringun IPA coordinator

1. **Engagement**
   - On the committee, coming to Girringun with ideas for support. Ties into communication position
   - Desire to create PBC support position to support TO drive of new projects, increase PBC capacity.

2. **Awareness of IPA raised – within their organisations and within the wider community**
   - Communication position will increase capacity significantly – allow high level communication with partners, broadcasting our work what we do.

### Girringun Ranger Coordinator

1. **Improve Girringun Ranger autonomy and professionalism and cultural capacity**
   - Work on small project that aren’t piggy backing on anyone else, focus on tangible outcomes – concrete slabs, fire projects done with their own permits from initiation to black out, discovery of Mahogany glider populations on the range and incorporating this into the fire plan.
   - Unsure of how to navigate stronger cultural emphasis – integrate art center ‘old ladies’ and seek input of elders, colonial history means Rangers must learn while they increase their cultural capacity.
   - Work on shared space ‘Girringun led projects’ rangers currently a couple of years off running their own smaller scale projects – funded until 2018. Self-confidence rather than a serious lack of capacity.