



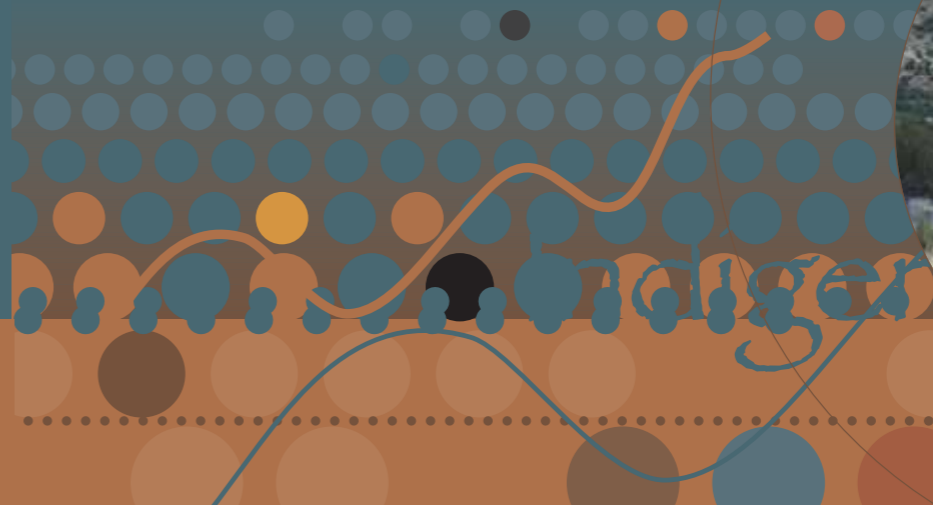
Natural Heritage Trust  
*Helping Communities Helping Australia*  
An Australian Government Initiative

Indigenous Knowledge Forum  
Alice Springs 28-29 May 2003

# Workshop Outcomes



www.expression-s.com



## INTRODUCTION

A planning workshop was held at Desert Park, Alice Springs on 28–29 May 2003, hosted by the Biodiversity Trends Section of the Department of the Environment and Heritage.

This workshop builds on a number of previous workshops hosted by the Department of the Environment and Heritage, including the Indigenous Knowledge Workshop held on 14–15 February 2002 in Canberra, which highlighted the need for urgent action to address:

- the rapid Indigenous knowledge loss currently occurring throughout Australia
- improved protection, documentation and recording of current Indigenous knowledge in ways that maintain integrity of knowledge ownership within Indigenous communities
- the rapidly declining transfer of Indigenous knowledge from one generation to the next

## Participants

The participants of the workshop included:

Name	Title	Organisation
Harry Abrahams	Director	Nth Qld and NT Section CRNRM, Department of the Environment and Heritage
Mark Ashley	Rangelands Management Co-ordinator	Northern Land Council Casuarina NT
Rick Beviss	Project Officer	Biodiversity Trends Section Department of the Environment and Heritage
Paul Bowers	WA Indigenous Land Management Facilitator	Department of Indigenous Affairs WA Aboriginal Lands Trust Perth WA
John Chester	SA Indigenous Land Management Facilitator	South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust Ingle Farm SA
Wayne Davis	Landcare Manager	Tangentyere Council Alice Springs NT
John DeSatge	Indigenous Land Management Facilitator	Department of Land and Water Conservation Sydney NSW

The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Government or the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

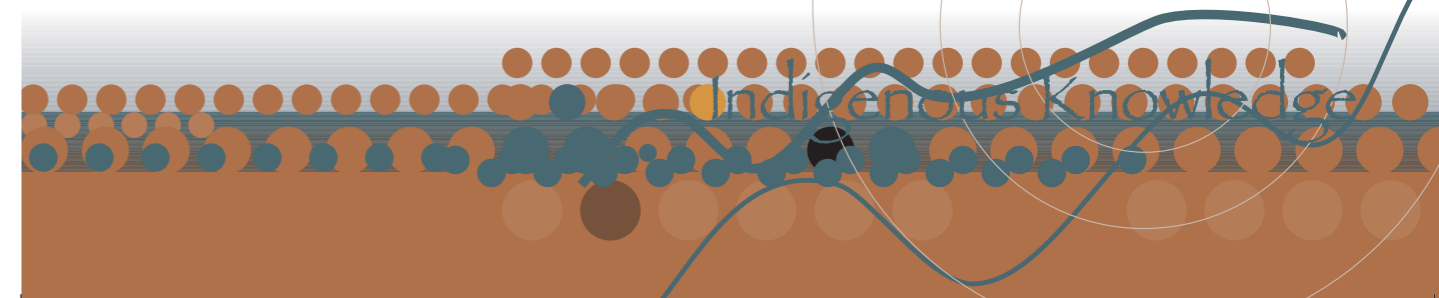
While reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that the contents of this publication are factually correct, the Commonwealth does not accept responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of the contents, and shall not be liable for any loss or damage that may be occasioned directly or indirectly through the use of, or reliance on, the contents of this publication.

ISBN 064 255 0360

© Commonwealth of Australia 2004

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Commonwealth, available from the Department of the Environment and Heritage. Requests and inquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to:

Assistant Secretary  
Rhonda Dickson  
Department of the Environment and Heritage  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601



Name	Title	Organisation
Pearl Eatts	Project Manager	Kirrendirri Aboriginal Corporation Winton QLD
Jean Fenton	Qld Indigenous Coastcare Facilitator	Environment Protection Agency Cairns QLD
Nick Gambold	Land Management Officer	Land Management Unit Central Land Council Alice Springs NT
Melissa George	Member	Indigenous Advisory Council Magnetic Island QLD
Clifford Hampton		Tangentyere Council Alice Springs NT
Marilyn Hubner	Phd student	Natural and Rural Systems Management University of Queensland Gatton QLD
Larry Johns	Weeds Officer	Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment Timber Creek via Katherine NT
Glen Kelly	Deputy Chair	Indigenous Advisory Council Perth WA
Pat Laughton	Indigenous Land Management Facilitator	Southern NT Region
John Lumb	Nth Qld and NT Section	CRNRM Department of the Environment and Heritage
Samantha Mitchell	Observer	Department of the Environment and Heritage
Kado Muir	Editor	Mamta Media Pty Ltd Kalgoorlie WA
Garry Richardson	Staff member	Northern Land Council Katherine NT
Steve Roeger	Director	Dhimurru Land Management Unit Nhulunbuy NT
Bruce Rose	Director Indigenous Policy and Co-ordination Section	Department of the Environment and Heritage
Victor Steffensen	Project Officer, Kuku-Thaypan Project	Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation Cairns QLD
Olive Veverbrants	Co-ordinator	Arid Zone Environmental Learning Centre Alice Springs NT
Vanessa Voxshall	Committee member for Indigenous interests	Tangentyere Council Alice Springs NT
Kevin Walley	Director	Rangelands NRMCG Meekathara WA
Annemarie Watt	Biodiversity Trends Section	Department of the Environment and Heritage

## Purpose

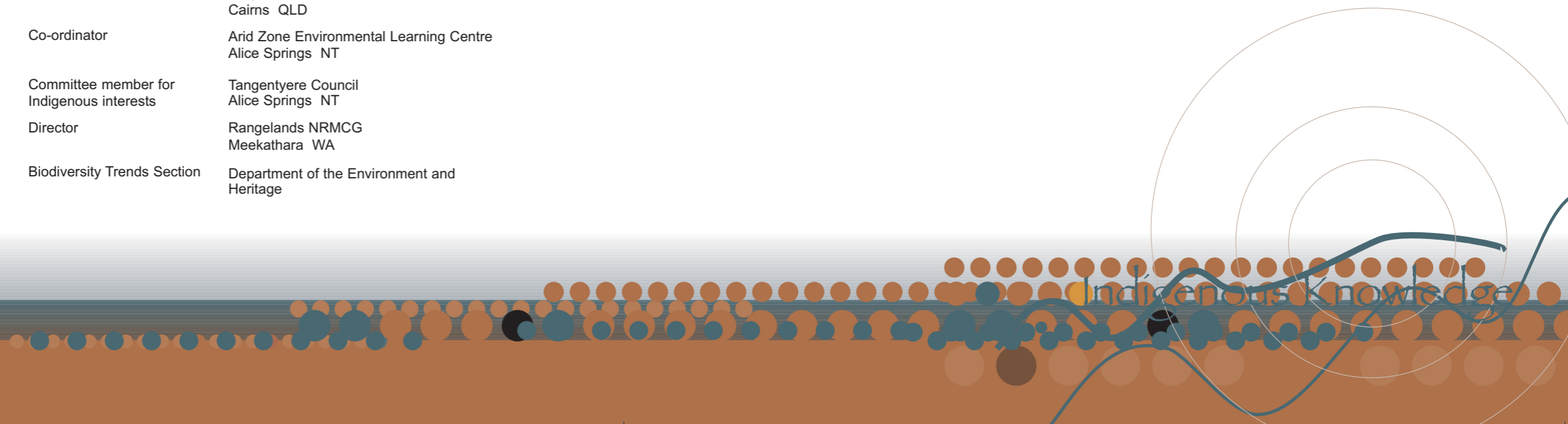
The purpose of the workshop was to recommend how Indigenous knowledge works with regional delivery of natural resource management in the rangelands.

The outcomes of the workshop were:

- clarification of how regional delivery of natural resource management planning will occur
- identification of issues that support Indigenous knowledge
- design of a framework for working with Indigenous knowledge in regional planning
- development of processes and protocols for implementing at the ground level
- specified ways forward at the community, regional group and agency levels

The outcomes are expressed in three documents:

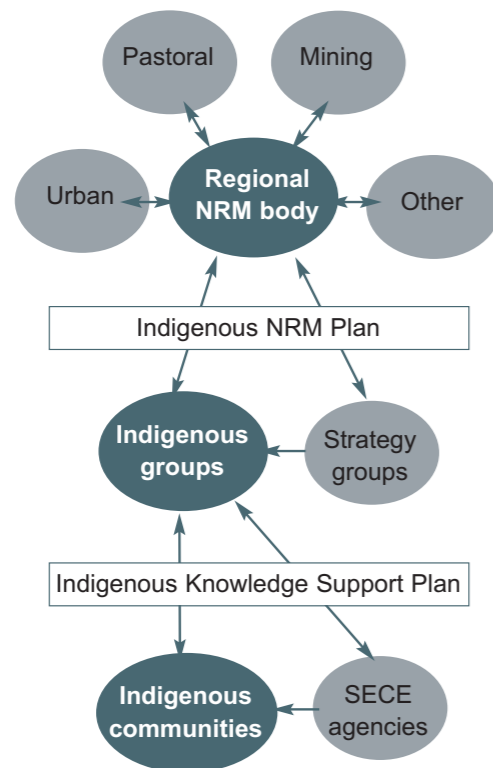
- for Indigenous communities - ideas on how to get Indigenous knowledge into the heart of land management practices in the community
- for regional planning groups - a simple outline that indicates:
  - expectations
  - a draft framework
  - protocols
  - processes
when they are working with Indigenous knowledge
- for Australian Government agencies - recommendations on how they can work more effectively with Indigenous knowledge



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To address the issues involved in supporting Indigenous knowledge in regional natural resource management planning, the following initiatives are recommended:

- an Indigenous Natural Resource Management Plan developed at the regional level by Indigenous groups (with help from Indigenous facilitators) and supported through a framework of principles and agreed protocols for engagement
- an Indigenous Knowledge Support Plan developed within Indigenous communities to define issues, priorities and linkages to existing structures and specific Indigenous knowledge projects
- linkages between the two spheres, that is:



Recommendations to improve the process at the Australian Government agency level, regional body level and community level are provided.

## OUTCOME ONE: REGIONAL DELIVERY OF NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Harry Abrahams from the Department of the Environment and Heritage provided an institutional context for the workshop that included the following points:

- lessons learnt from the first phase of the Natural Heritage Trust will be applied to the second phase of the Trust and the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
- the extension (second phase) of the Trust focuses on investing in large strategic projects at the regional level
- integrated natural resource management plans and investment strategies that identify investment priorities to implement the plans are the foundation of regional delivery
- regional plans ensure that investment is targeted at achieving outcomes in the sustainable use of resources, conservation of biodiversity, capacity building at an appropriate scale and addressing the most important issues in each region
- the 'accreditation criteria for integrated catchment/regional natural resource management plans' is the guide for the development of integrated regional natural resource management plans
- the accreditation criteria identify the key elements needed to provide a sound basis for investment in integrated outcomes
- regional bodies, in consultation with a range of community interests, are responsible for developing and implementing plans
- the accreditation criteria identify the need to effectively engage all key stakeholders, including Indigenous communities



Indigenous Knowledge

## Challenges recognised

The following challenges are recognised for regional delivery:

- devolution of responsibilities will put pressure on regional structures
- requirements for enhanced capacity at the regional level
- issues of accountability
- measurement of success through monitoring and evaluation
- need for effective participation

## Issues arising

The following issues need to be addressed:

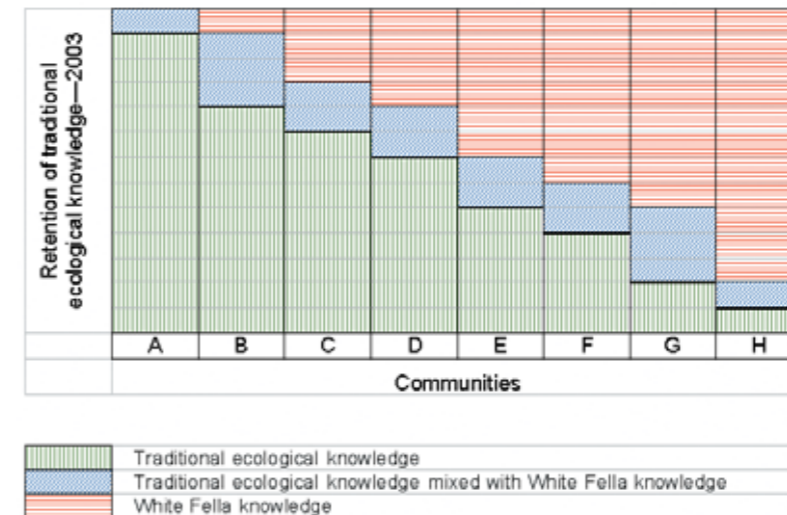
- Australian Government concern that regions may not meet Australian Government objectives
- maintaining momentum during the transition
- prioritising investments effectively
- maintaining communication as the goalposts shift
- ensuring effective participation

## Regional delivery lessons learned so far

- need to link with Australian and State Government programs and initiatives
- timing has been too optimistic
- plans have focused on content and purpose instead of on targets
- targets and baselines for resource, social and economic parameters are missing
- investment strategies need more prioritisation
- community participation needs to be strengthened
- solving of complex issues will need involvement and participation through the regional bodies

## Community perspectives

**Rick Beviss** of the Department of the Environment and Heritage presented a pictorial summary of the effect of White Fella contact on the preservation of traditional ecological knowledge.



It was noted by the workshop that the horizontal axis represents the range of communities rather than a timeline since European contact.

**Victor Steffenson** of the Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation provided an outline of how his community attempts to work from the traditional ecological knowledge segment of the diagram.

The principles are:

- build up strength in the Indigenous knowledge area in order to be able to interact with the Western science approaches - this means building understanding of Indigenous knowledge, building trust and going back to the old people for guidance
- as a first priority, there is a need to record Indigenous knowledge so that it is saved for future generations
- the community uses digital camera recordings of story places to:
  - increase understanding of their importance
  - highlight management concerns
  - inform people of traditional management plans

Indigenous Knowledge

- this is research from the traditional point of view. From this, aspects are floated into the Western science area and, where these floaters accord with natural resource management priorities or actions, agreement is reached, e.g. the conservation or protection of a specific lagoon.

**Paul Bowers**, WA Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, Department of Indigenous Affairs, outlined the difficulties in south Western Australia where communities are operating largely from a Western science or Western science/Indigenous knowledge context:

- The difficulty that people have is who to talk to.
- How does a community go about talking to a Regional body?
- How do people understand what the criteria mean in project applications?
- How do we tackle the difficulties of starting from a low base of understanding of the scientific/administrative approach?



## OUTCOME TWO: ISSUES IN SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Participants worked individually to address the focus question:

*“What issues are involved in supporting Indigenous knowledge in the regional delivery of natural resource management in the rangelands?”*

Working as a group, the responses were clustered together to identify the following issues:

- **poor understanding of Indigenous knowledge**
- **devaluation of Indigenous knowledge by Western science devalues Indigenous knowledge**
- **low cultural awareness**
- **not consulting the right people**
- **lack of mechanisms to protect Indigenous knowledge**
- **Aboriginal organisations not working together**
- **lack of resources and frameworks for Indigenous knowledge**
- **community needs are not being met**
- **accountability processes are unclear**
- **current planning processes are inappropriate**
- **poor information access and flow**
- **problems of distance and dispersal in desert regions**

In more detail, these issues are:

### Poor understanding of Indigenous knowledge

- recognition, understanding and acceptance of different knowledge systems (Indigenous and science-based)
- recognition of Indigenous knowledge and appropriate status accorded to it
- lack of knowledge of Indigenous issues to enable input into regional planning
- recognition of whole of culture, not only parts in isolation
- poor acceptance of an Indigenous world view - no recognition that Tjukurrpa (Dreaming) is the highest priority
- although no compromising of the values, a recognition of the need for a possible compromise in outcomes.

Indigenous Knowledge

### Devaluation of Indigenous knowledge by Western science

- valuing of Indigenous skills and knowledge, not just used as 'labourers'
- little flexibility in programs to recognise Indigenous Elders' skills and knowledge
- Western science paradigm:
  - not recognising other knowledge
  - not able to measure other knowledge
  - diminishing the status of Indigenous knowledge
- Elders:
  - need for role of men to be brought forward
  - 'men and women' together

### Low cultural awareness

- one way flow:
  - more equity in transfer of information
  - respect for people and culture
- need for cross-cultural awareness on both sides:
  - law and lore
  - indoors/outdoors
  - on country
  - recognition of the status of Elders
- quadruple bottom line - add cultural dimension, i.e. the humanness of country
- recognition of the connection to land, both physical and spiritual
- need for policy makers to have experience of Aboriginal culture
- building of working relationships based on trust and equity - 'two way street' - sharing, not just taking knowledge.

### Not consulting the right people

- not enough recognition of Traditional Owners and their place in processes as:
  - appropriate
  - empowering
- representation in governance
  - who can speak for 'country'?

- the people with the knowledge are not at the table:
  - not all in a group have access
  - knowledge is passed on when you demonstrate your capacity to understand it
- Elders need to want to transfer knowledge

### Lack of mechanisms to protect Indigenous knowledge

- mechanisms to protect Indigenous knowledge
- time is running out to record Indigenous knowledge
- no resources to record
- lack of mechanisms to ensure protection, recording and management of knowledge
- intellectual property rights - who owns the knowledge?
- intellectual property rights by and for Indigenous groups
- intellectual property rights:
  - maintaining Indigenous control of information passing to the regional NRM process
  - accepting token information rather than more holistic Indigenous knowledge

### Aboriginal organisations not working together

- lack of co-ordination between major Aboriginal organisations (especially in a crowded policy landscape)
- lack of knowledge about what Native Title is:
  - lack of knowledge about what is 'country'
  - what you can do on country without waiting.

### Lack of resources and frameworks for Indigenous knowledge

- lack of resourcing, consultation, co-ordination and effective participation
- no framework for putting Indigenous knowledge on the table
- need for empowerment and capacity for knowledge holders to be engaged in processes:
  - education
  - resources
  - community-based



### Community needs not being met

- continuity of Indigenous knowledge requires support for living on country:
  - housing
  - health
  - outstations
- need to support the integrity of Indigenous knowledge which is relevant to the priorities, needs and desires of communities:
  - continuity
  - sustaining the people to pass it on
  - underlying basic issues e.g. health and education
- need to recognise community priorities and needs, not funding and Government needs:
  - silo policies (Government funding hoops)
  - community based perspectives
- access to country as a priority:
  - people 'need' permission to enter pastoral leases
- absence of males:
  - due to life expectancy of fifty-four years
  - high incarceration rates
  - lower participation than women (one in three) in the adult education system
- Indigenous culture is based on kinship, and Aboriginal people's health in the desert is well below standard, so:
  - they suffer from multiple grief and lose more family than mainstream
  - meetings are postponed due to 'sorry' business, i.e. another funeral (e.g. a community member in Tennant Creek had to attend seventeen funerals in twelve months)
- when a person dies, the family has to abandon the home and go elsewhere for a period of time (possibly without telephone access)
- grandmothers (child carers) at meetings may have grandchildren with them so their attention is divided
- English is mostly a second or subsequent language

### Accountability processes are unclear

- no performance indicators to assess effective Aboriginal involvement
- even total Indigenous management and control is subject to outside priorities, outcomes and reporting on money and resources

### Current planning processes are inappropriate

- planning problems:
  - ownership of plan is uncertain
  - appropriate processes are missing
  - recognition is lacking
  - current planning models are not culturally appropriate
- regional boundaries don't necessarily recognise cultural boundaries:
  - scale is not appropriate
  - splitting of groups occurs
  - continuity across regions is difficult
  - plan becomes so broad that decisions are impossible
- existing frameworks are not being recognised and resourced, e.g. NAILSMA and KLC Healthy Country are opportunities that could be used
- criteria for developing projects do not always facilitate input

### Poor information access and flow

- ad hoc information flow to all Indigenous groups about knowledge (including workshop participants)
- no capacity building
- no clearing house
- there is information and knowledge within the NRM regions that Indigenous communities haven't been able to access and interpret, which causes distrust

### Problems of distance and dispersal in desert regions

- getting indigenous and non-indigenous people together:
  - neutral ground?
  - Aboriginal land?
  - town(s)?
- availability of people
- distance for communication:
  - dispersal policies
  - poor transport (public)
  - poor communication
  - information lag
- long distances to travel:
  - unmade (dirt) roads
  - no public transport
  - no telephones

Indigenous Knowledge



# OUTCOME THREE: A FRAMEWORK FOR WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

## Regional perspectives

**Melissa George** of the Indigenous Advisory Council, Queensland, provided an outline of how Traditional Owners are involved in natural resource management planning in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region:



- process to date:
  - 1997: Regional Strategy developed
  - 1997: Three Sub-Regional Strategies developed:
    - Burdekin Rangelands
    - Burdekin Bowen Floodplains
    - Townsville Thuringowa Coastal Plans
  - however, no real attempt to engage 'Traditional Owners' in the planning
- overall goal:
  - to facilitate sustainable natural resource management in the Burdekin Dry Tropics region through the development of true partnerships
- issue areas to be addressed:
  - catchment management and awareness
  - water management and quality
  - vegetation management
  - habitat and biodiversity protection
  - pest management
  - soil conservation
  - coastal and marine area management
  - social and economic issues
- four sub-regional groups formed:
  - Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group (BRIG)
  - Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee (BBIFMAC)
  - Townsville Thuringowa Natural Resource & Environment Forum (NaREF)
  - Belyando-Suttor Implementation Group

- Sub-Regional Strategy developed for each group
- Indigenous involvement:
  - catchment area of 147,000 km<sup>2</sup>
  - up to thirteen different Traditional Owner groups
  - only one Traditional Owner group had aspirations expressed in a Sub-Regional Strategy
- the reality:
  - each Traditional Owner group has its own aspirations
  - cultural resource management is poorly understood by the wider community
  - these groups are managing a resource for cultural maintenance and sustainability
  - they are trying to ensure intergenerational equity
- engagement of Traditional Owners in the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality (NAPSWQ):
  - development of an Engagement Framework (regional and sub-regional) and workshops for inclusion of Traditional Owner matters into sub-regional plans
  - development and implementation of monitoring and evaluation tools
  - Traditional Owner social and economic analysis incorporated in State of the Catchment/NRM Plan/RIS
  - Traditional Owner cultural resource geographic information system
- objectives:
  - establish a relationship based on respect, trust and agreed outcomes to achieve sustainable social, economic, biophysical and cultural wellbeing (this includes building social capital)
  - develop and implement:
    - a framework
    - tools and process for undertaking social, economic and biophysical environment analysis
    - planning
    - project implementation evaluation by Traditional Owners in collaboration with the NRM Board, sub-regional groups and stakeholders
    - develop a regional, web-based, Traditional Owner information management system, including agreed protocols for accessing information to inform the NRM Plan and associated activities

- develop a capacity to operate and maintain a GIS system incorporating Traditional Owner information and train people in access and operation of the system to meet the overall needs of cultural resource management
- broader intended outcomes include:
  - an agreed and implemented framework for a collaborative, sustainable relationship
  - the establishment of a regional Traditional Owner information management system to inform the NRM Plan and support planning and implementation
  - a stronger NRM focus on the Traditional Owner regional group and individual clan groups
  - a group of people trained in data collection and analysis using GIS and other technology
- future steps:
  - Traditional Owner Steering Committee
  - appointment of staff
  - management and protection protocols
  - Terms of Reference (TOR) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Government agencies and other interested groups
  - TOR or MOU amongst Traditional Owner groups
- regional NRM Plan:
  - to include Traditional Owner aspirations, goals and issues
  - to inform investment
  - to provide resources to manage country

**John Chester**, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, South Australian Aboriginal Lands Trust, outlined the progress with the Strategy for Aboriginal Managed Lands in South Australia (SAMLISA):

- development of the Aboriginal Regional Advisory Panel (ARAP) that prioritises all projects in the Aboriginal Lands Region in South Australia (an NHT region) plus any other project that has Aboriginal input in the State
- breaking new ground by initiating a state-wide land management strategy
- starting to get co-operation and use by other agencies

## A framework of principles

*Participants worked together to address the focus question:*

‘What are the guiding principles for a framework agreement on Indigenous knowledge, with Government agencies, regional planning bodies and industry?’

The following key principles were agreed:

- **Indigenous people enjoy a fundamental and continuing relationship to all landscapes and seascapes**
- **Support for the maintenance, protection and continuity of Indigenous knowledge is an NRM regional priority**
- **regional bodies recognise Indigenous rights and interests in planning and implementation of their regional plans.**
- **Natural and cultural resource management involves a partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests**
- **Active involvement of Indigenous people is essential at all levels of decision making on NRM Regional Groups**
- **Indigenous people must be adequately resourced to effectively participate in the development and implementation of Regional NRM Plans**



Indigenous Knowledge

In more detail, this framework is:

**Indigenous people enjoy a fundamental and continuing relationship to all landscapes and seascapes:**

- incorporating social, spiritual, economic and health aspects
- respecting Indigenous values systems and their practices
- recognising cultural traditions and the need to access land and sea
- making management decisions incorporating principles arising from an Indigenous knowledge base
- identifying Indigenous aspirations on country and assisting and supporting Traditional Owner groups to achieve their management aspirations
- utilising a quadruple bottom line framework (inclusive of culture)

**Support for the maintenance, protection and continuity of Indigenous knowledge is an NRM regional priority:**

- acknowledgement of the benefits that can flow from the Indigenous knowledge process
- need to share any benefits derived from Traditional knowledge and its commercialisation or use with the original owners of the knowledge
- recognition that all Indigenous knowledge belongs to its Indigenous owners (according to their rules and laws, etc), including the creation and research of literary and artistic works and scientific discoveries arising from an Indigenous knowledge base.

**Regional bodies recognise Indigenous rights and interests in planning and implementation of their regional plans:**

- recognition of Traditional Owners and Custodians by acknowledging different world views and approaches to life and country:
  - NRM Group recognition of Indigenous view points
  - NRM Group recognition of the diversity of Traditional Owners' view points
- recognising values and cultural diversity within each region
- recognition of who can speak for country within each NRM region:
  - recognition of overlap of boundaries and the confusion caused
  - recognition of Traditional Owners as the first contact
  - development of protocols for input where Traditional Owner groups exist across 'regional' boundaries
- demonstrated knowledge and understanding of:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander customs, cultures and communities

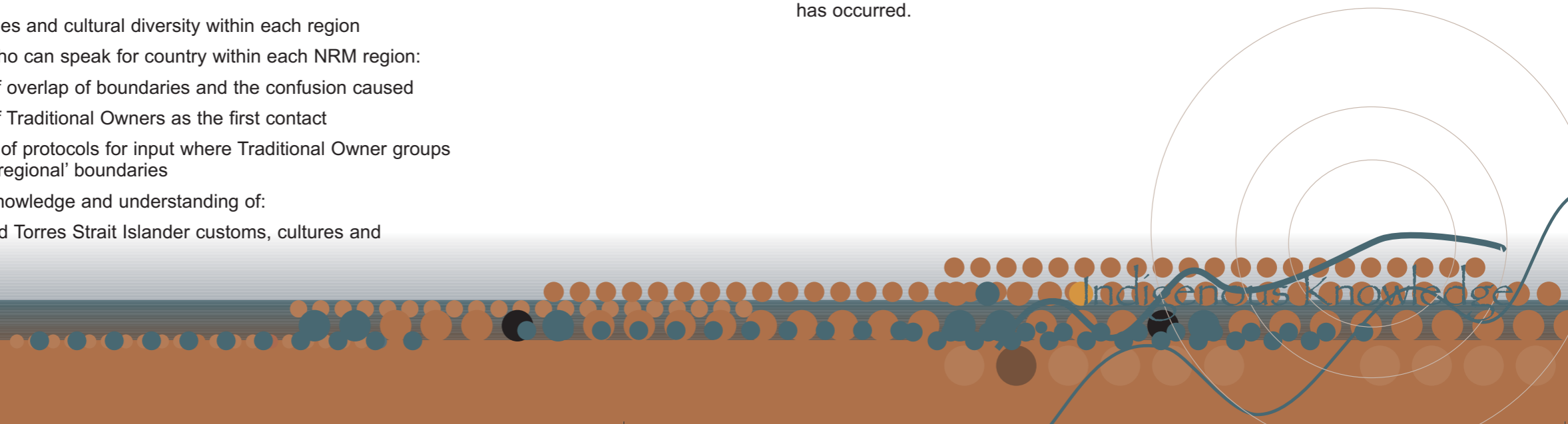
- Indigenous Society, both traditional and contemporary, and the impacts
- a preamble to the NRM Regional Body constitution and regional investment strategy, i.e. 'we recognise and accept Indigenous cultural values, equal partnerships, skills and knowledge'
- this is part of the core business of Regional Bodies, Government and industry

**Natural and cultural resource management involves a partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous interests:**

- establishment of a realistic framework for collaboration in the management of natural resources in Aboriginal communities
- development of partnerships between Aboriginal community groups and landholding authorities, providing a stronger Indigenous voice and better decision-making
- commitment to building bridges and relationships

**Active involvement of Indigenous people is essential at all levels of decision-making on NRM Regional regional Groups groups:**

- representation of Indigenous people on every Regional NRM Body
- representation at a sub-regional level, as well as a regional level
- representation of Indigenous people on Regional NRM Bodies, regardless of land tenure:
  - not all have access to country
  - consultation regardless of Native Title
- ensuring of equity in decision making through:
  - membership
  - consideration of world view and knowledge
- need for NRM regional plans with appropriate performance indicators to assess the adequacy of Indigenous participation and documented support from Indigenous organisations that appropriate and effective consultation has occurred.



**Indigenous people must be adequately resourced to effectively participate in the development and implementation of regional NRM Plans:**

- adequate resourcing of Indigenous people, who may be affected by the actions of the plan, to effectively participate in the development and implementation of Regional NRM Plans
- investment in people as well as achieving NRM outcomes
- recognition that Indigenous interests go beyond planning, to active and on-going involvement in implementation
- need for the planning process to be inclusive so outcomes are clearly understood and communities are able to participate meaningfully in the outcomes (understanding the outcomes is just as important as the initial planning)
- valuing of outcomes rather than outputs
- need for the process to be owned by the community to ensure longevity of the process



## OUTCOME FOUR: PROCESSES AND PROTOCOLS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### Context

**Kado Muir** of Marnta Media, **Steve Roeger** of the Dhimurru Land Management Unit and **Mark Ashby**, Rangelands Management Co-ordinator with the Northern Land Council gave examples of the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in ground-level planning.

### Processes

Participants worked in small groups to identify processes for better implementation.

#### Knowledge that can be shared

One group identified the knowledge and cultural obligations that can be shared with non-Indigenous people.

These include:

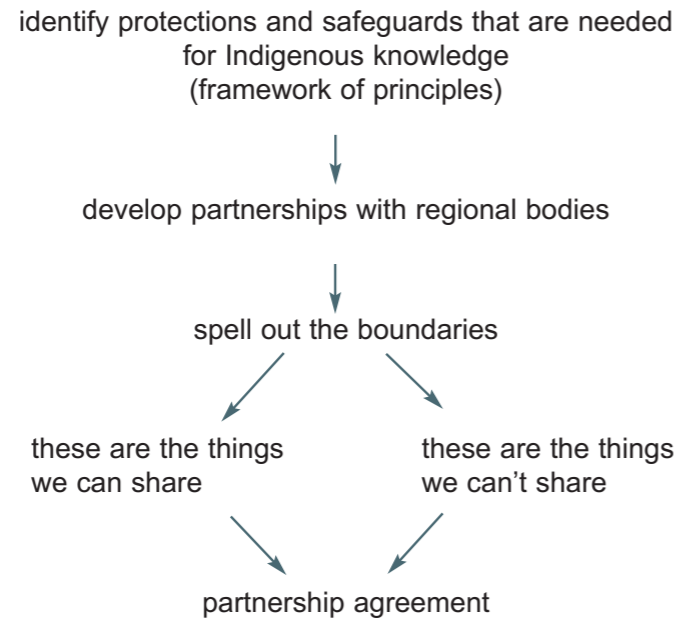
- historical and colonial information, i.e. past events, impacts and processes
- contemporary knowledge, i.e. public knowledge
- Aboriginal way of life, i.e. how our communities operate
- the communities' (Traditional Owners') aspirations
- basic principles of Indigenous customary lores, practices and ways of management.

#### Knowledge and cultural obligations that cannot be shared

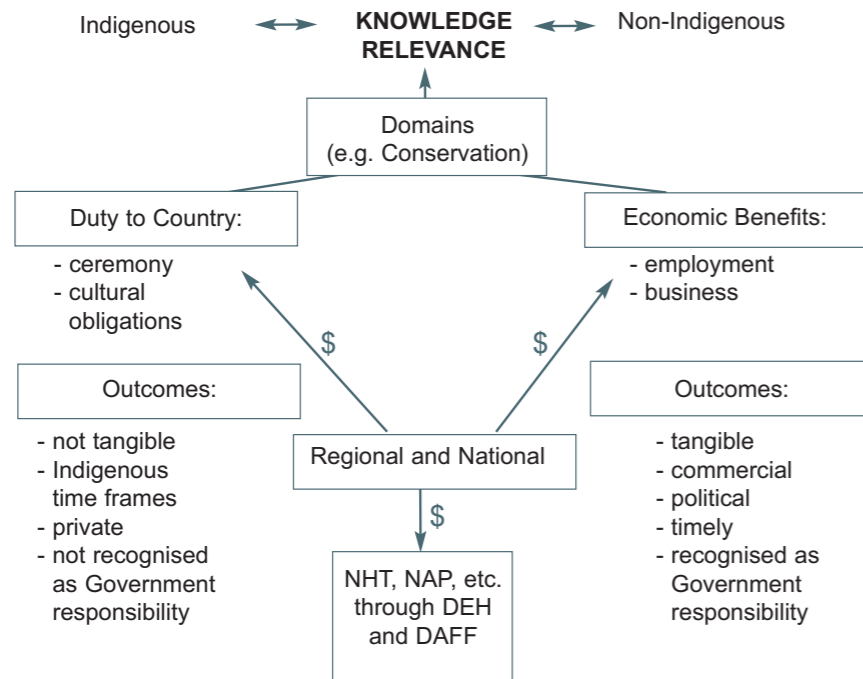
- anything within Aboriginal lore that Elders will not allow to be shared
- community politics, e.g. Native Title issues; overlaps and ceremonial issues ('sorting our politics' is personal business)
- knowledge of and locations of sacred sites, landscapes and sites of significance

## Working together

The following process was developed:



## Environment to be created



Currently, the emphasis is on the right hand side of the diagram. There needs to be a balance and to achieve this it may be necessary to shift the focus to the left hand side of the diagram.

## Indigenous Knowledge Support Plan

To address the left hand (or Indigenous) side, the following needs to occur:



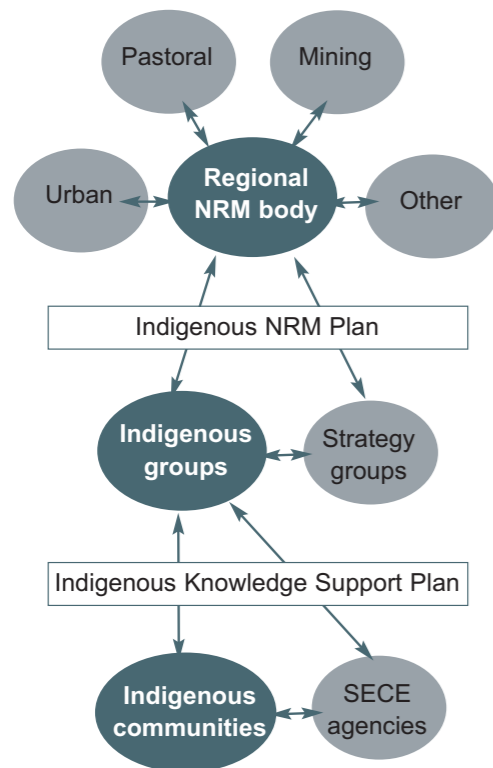
Indigenous Knowledge Support (IKS) Plan:

- offered as an incentive to participate in the regional process
- funded by a broad range of agencies
- used by Indigenous people as appropriate to their situation
- helping to keep Indigenous groups strong
- develop by employing people to work with Indigenous communities to define issues, priorities, linkages to existing structures and specific Indigenous knowledge projects



Indigenous Knowledge

## Indigenous NRM Plan



- Indigenous Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plan
  - is written like an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Plan
  - Strategy group is reflecting the IPA approach
  - is an overview of the issues
  - informs local plans
- Existing regional initiatives are the vehicles to push into regional strategies, i.e.
  - NAILSMA
  - KLC *Healthy Country*
  - NLC *Caring for Country*
  - SAMLISA in South Australia
  - SAMLIV in Victoria
- Need to add cross-cultural and participatory support to the planning process within the Regional NRM Body

## Protocols

Indigenous Natural Resource Management (INRM) Plans must demonstrate proper consultation with Indigenous groups in their region. These draft protocols have been prepared by the Indigenous Policy and Co-ordination Section of the Department of the Environment and Heritage to assist Australian Government officers in the assessment of regional plans submitted for comment.

Good practice in Indigenous consultation and involvement in integrated regional NRM planning will be reflected by:

- the inclusion of at least two Indigenous people on each regional body
- a list of local Indigenous people and organisations with interests in land management issues in the region
- a list of the Indigenous organisations and individuals who were consulted in the process of developing the INRM plans (these last two dot points address the requirement to demonstrate consultation has occurred)
- the identification of Aboriginal-owned properties in the region or the percentage of Aboriginal-owned land in the region; identification of areas of public land where Native Title rights and interests may continue
- the plan explicitly seeking to build partnerships with local Indigenous organisations
- each plan having a Statement on the region's Indigenous history, heritage and interests
- the plan recognising that there are Indigenous interests in most, if not all natural resources, i.e. there will be spiritual, totemic and economic relationships with many plants and animals (biodiversity) and Indigenous people have rights and responsibilities for these
- the plan recognising Indigenous cultural interests in water management, e.g. lakes, rivers and coastal areas, special places, fishing and environmental flows
- the plan recognising the need for protection of Indigenous cultural heritage places as part of Indigenous Natural Resource Management
- capacity building programs recognising and including Indigenous peoples' traditional ecological knowledge and land management practices
- plans identifying the need for ongoing Indigenous participation in Natural Resource Management, e.g. the development of Indigenous Land Management Facilitator-type positions
- consultation with Indigenous communities commencing in the early stages of the plans - not after everyone else has had their say

Indigenous Knowledge

## OUTCOME FIVE: WAYS FORWARD

The workshop agreed on the following ways forward:

### Overall Process

- issues to be put on the table that continue the education and awareness process
- simple outline of the principles, processes and protocols to be provided to regional bodies
- processes and the concept of IKS Plans to be available to the community
- Australian Government agencies to provide ideas and thinking behind the advice to regional bodies
- implications for the accreditation of regional NRM Plans to be spelt out by Australian Government agencies
- framework for greater involvement with Indigenous natural resource management to be agreed, documented and accountable.

### Support

The information flow should be to:

- Aboriginal Land Councils to facilitate the process
- National and regional ILMFs to take to Traditional Owners
- Traditional Owner groups themselves
- Aboriginal organisations such as ATSISS and ILC
- State departments such as the Department of Indigenous Affairs
- Area Consultative Committees
- Native Title groups
- Aboriginal community-based organisations
- owners of land such as mining interests
- regionally placed NRM coordinators and facilitators

## Ways to improve the process

### Recommendations to improve Australian Government processes:

- adopt policy at a Ministerial level on the protection of Indigenous cultural heritage and the management of Indigenous knowledge, including storage and access issues
- incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the State of the Environment Report
- incorporate and recognise Indigenous knowledge within the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
- Australian Government to recommend that a cultural resource management strategy be an integral part of the regional NRM investment strategy
- Australian Government to provide inducements to regional bodies such that:
  - all regions articulate their current level of operation in regards to Indigenous knowledge (i.e. awareness, recording, encouraging, repatriating, etc)
  - a picture is built up of the current status across all regions
  - decisions can be made on where to invest resources
- Australian Government to recommend that regional bodies acknowledge who holds significant Indigenous knowledge and fund those people to develop an IKS Plan
- support for key cultural people within communities and promoting them as Senior Cultural Advisers
- adding Cultural Ranger positions to the existing ranger programs for community-based resource management
- changes in the emphasis of ILMF positions so that they meet the needs of Indigenous communities, as well as meeting the needs of NRM. The positions:
  - tend to be absorbed into the system, with less Indigenous involvement and contact
  - should be an equal NRM and Indigenous doorway for local communities
  - need to be more proactive in providing skills and knowledge at a local level

Indigenous Knowledge



- Department of the Environment and Heritage to reconsider terms of contracts to account for intellectual property and Indigenous knowledge:
  - for example, the Envirofunds application forms should have a standard intellectual property clause in them
  - there needs to be specific Indigenous intellectual property clauses in the application forms
- dissemination of information through clearing houses for publications, internet and combinations of media
- increased support for ways of communicating Indigenous knowledge, through language programs and innovative communication methods

#### Recommendations to improve regional body processes:

- agreement that recognition of Indigenous peoples' profile and credibility is valid and valued and should not be negotiated or questioned
- agreement that the IKS Plan should remain within the community but its outcomes should be incorporated into an Indigenous NRM Plan for the region
- NRM Groups to lobby corporations, organisations and Aboriginal Corporations for support, recognition and acknowledgement that traditional knowledge belongs to the Traditional Owner groups
- recognition that Indigenous knowledge is culturally appropriate to specific Indigenous groups and communities, e.g. ethnological surveys:
  - ownership is confused between the NRM Group, the Australian Government and the community
  - regional bodies try to appropriate the knowledge from the surveys and refuse funding unless information is provided
  - regional bodies should support ethnobotanical surveys on the condition that the knowledge remains in the community, reports are provided and benefits are shared
  - these safeguards need to be built into agreements
- Regional bodies should include jurisdictions in their terms of reference, as all jurisdictions are already committed but not meeting their commitments
- funding of projects that research best practice ways to protect and enhance Indigenous knowledge
- capacity building now, as time is critical to protecting Indigenous knowledge
- cross-cultural training for everyone, prior to any business being conducted

#### Recommendations to improve community processes:

- projects, driven by Elders, that provide the opportunity for Elders to restore and maintain their traditional ecological knowledge, and play their traditional roles as leaders of cultural and land management practices
- use of the IKS Plan process to communicate Indigenous priorities for natural and cultural resource management
- support mechanisms and resources for cultural camps for men and for women
- allow for the maintenance of cultural landscapes and sites (although information cannot be shared)
- allow for use of traditional land management practices, e.g. firestick farming
- walking through country or walking someone through country
- networking to get people together
- use of Indigenous resource kits and educational material
- development of plant-based industries based on traditional ecological knowledge



## Next Steps

- workshop outcomes to be documented and circulated to all participants
  - Indigenous communities to take the key recommendations to regional bodies
  - Australian Government, through the Department of the Environment and Heritage, to take these outcomes and seek support from the Minister:
    - for the outcomes and recommendations
    - to take them to other Ministers as conforming with Council of Australian Governments (COAG) framework and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) obligations
    - to address with State Government Ministers as part of the signed performance agreements
  - Australian Government, through the Department of the Environment and Heritage, to put these outcomes on the table with regional bodies, as requirements and investment priorities:
    - guidelines and details provided
    - Regional Delivery staff disseminate to other regional staff
    - Regional Delivery staff reinforce the message to the regional bodies
  - Australian Government to monitor the progress of the regional NRM Plans, including the level of consultation and involvement with Indigenous communities
  - Australian Government, through the Department of the Environment and Heritage, to develop and enhance mechanisms for sharing information and progress between regions
- Options include:
- a National Secretariat
  - creation of National ILMF positions<sup>1</sup>
  - resourcing of an ILMF network<sup>2</sup>
  - expanding of the ILMF network to include Cultural Management Facilitators employed by regional bodies
  - Regional Delivery team to talk to the Policy and Natural Resource Management teams within the Department of the Environment and Heritage, to examine how the ILMF Network could be expanded
  - Indigenous Advisory Council endorsement for the expanded ILMF Network to be sought

<sup>1</sup> These positions have now been created

<sup>2</sup> This network has now been put into effect.

## REFLECTIONS

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants provided the following comments:

- ‘Fabulous group to work with; feeling encouraged; enjoyed the workshop; didn’t know everyone before the workshop but do now.’
- ‘Timely and constructive.’
- ‘Relevant group to work on this area; lots of fun.’
- ‘Enriching.’
- ‘Great to catch up; greater understanding of State issues; have to interpret to the mob at home.’
- ‘Cautious optimism.’
- ‘Good to see progress happening.’
- ‘Cautiously optimistic.’
- ‘Very interesting.’
- ‘Meeting new people is a real bonus.’
- ‘We run cold and hot in terms of activity; must keep the momentum up.’
- ‘Passionate, with enthusiasm; new beginning, time to change; useful information; great backdrop!’
- ‘Good information; hope it benefits the communities.’
- ‘Lots of good ideas; good backdrop; great venue.’
- ‘Looking forward to networking with people that I’ve met.’
- ‘Tired; admire the enthusiasm of participants; but it is the ‘same old, same old’ for me.’
- ‘Productive; make it happen.’
- ‘All to subscribe to Marnta!; long way to go; time has come to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into Natural Resource Management.’
- ‘Lets go.’
- ‘Productive; created lots of work; going forward.’
- ‘Good to be at this level; about time.’



## Glossary of terms

ATSIS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
ARAP	Aboriginal Regional Advisory Panel
BBIFMAC	Burdekin Bowen Integrated Floodplain Management Advisory Committee
BRIG	Burdekin Rangelands Implementation Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
GIS	Geographic Information System
DAFF	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
DEH	Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage
IAC	Indigenous Advisory Committee
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Support
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILMF	Indigenous Land Management Facilitator
INRM	Indigenous Natural Resource Management Plan
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
KLC	Kimberley Land Council
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAILSMA	Northern Aboriginal and Islander Land and Sea Management Alliance
NAPSWQ (also NAP)	National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality
NAREF	Townsville Thuringowa Natural Resource and Environment Forum
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NRM	Natural Resource Management
On country	In situ; in the actual place
RIS	Regional Investment Strategy
SAMLIV	Strategy for Aboriginal Lands in Victoria
SAMLISA	Strategy for Aboriginal Lands in South Australia
SECE	Social, Economic, Cultural and Environmental
TOR	Terms of Reference