



## SIDE EVENT SUMMARY REPORT

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<b>Event co-leaders:</b>	Lenore Fraser, Ariadne Goring , Colin Ingram, Marcus Sandford and Tran Tran
<b>Time and date:</b>	17 November 2014, 18:30 - 21:30
<b>Rapporteurs:</b>	Emma Lee, Lori-Ann Shibish and Tran Tran
<b>Presenters:</b>	Melissa George, Dermot Smyth, Marcus Sandford, Whitney Rassip, Karman Lippitt, Maxine Walker, Petrice Manton, Peter Sharp, Peter See, Chantelle Murray and Rob Thomas

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Participants at this forum shared experiences and stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Traditional Owner communities working together with Government and other stakeholders to manage Protected Areas. The side event was facilitated by Melissa George and Dr Dermot Smyth who also provided a historical and national overview of collaborative management of protected areas in Australia. Collaborative management of protected areas in Australia between Indigenous and non-indigenous parties has come a long way since the first co-managed Protected Area (Garig Gunak Barlu National Park – formerly Gurig national Park) was gazetted in 1981, and the introduction of the Indigenous Protected Areas (IPA) program in Australia in the mid 1990s. There are several pathways to co-management, partnerships and self-management that have emerged over the last 30 years, all of which have demonstrated great environmental, social and cultural outcomes, and that substantially increased, long term investment from governments and others will lead to substantially greater outcomes. In particular, there is great unmet demand for expanding ranger groups in all states and territories and increasing the number of IPAs, including the need to develop a long term funding model beyond the current commitment of the Australian Government to 2018.

For many Traditional Owner groups, the ultimate aim is to become independent and have legal or other arrangements in place that recognise their land management rights and responsibilities. Traditional owners also expressed the need to ensure true partnerships with culturally appropriate timeframes, free prior and informed consent and a balanced power dynamic in negotiating with other parties. There are not only social justice reasons for recognition and quality partnerships but also practical and environmental reasons. Caring for country is relevant to and benefits all Australians and this should be recognised in funding and the allocation of resources. Further, Australia as a nation has international obligations that need to be met in partnership with Indigenous landholders who currently constitute 40 per cent of the existing National Reserve System in the country. Managers of Indigenous protected areas (whether

within the IPA program or through other partnerships) have an impressive collective story to tell which would be enhanced through building networks and capacity at a national scale. What is clear from the side event is that there is need for greater investment in Indigenous land managers as a part of the National Reserve System and build upon the positive momentum that has been achieved so far in getting people back to country and looking after it.

#### **Exemplary case/s and other useful links:**

- **Summary of Indigenous Protected Areas:** IPAs are initiated and voluntarily dedicated by Australian Indigenous people over their land and sea country. Recognition by the Commonwealth Government provides access to 5 year funding agreements. IPAs began in the mid 1990s in support of an emerging Indigenous Land and Sea Management sector, as a non-legal means of recognising Indigenous aspirations for 'Caring for Country' and building Australia's National Reserve System. IPAs have empowered Indigenous communities through a structured participatory planning process, to integrate Indigenous Knowledge with Western Science to manage their land and sea for environmental and cultural outcomes, as well as delivering a range of community development benefits around community cohesion, education, health and wellbeing, and economic development. Recent IPA dedications illustrate the evolution from IPAs solely covering Indigenous land tenures, to those based more broadly on multiple tenures (including sea country) and cooperative management arrangements with key stakeholders and adjoining land managers.  
<http://www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/contact.html>
- **Multi-tenure land management:** Girringun have a multi-tenure co-managed IPA based on a 10 year strategic plan for enhancing 'cultural continuity and connectivity of country'. Their partners include Traditional Owners, multiple levels of government agencies, Natural Resource Management (NRM) bodies, NGOs and private land holders. These partnerships enable wider community development outcomes, increased capacity of Girringun Aboriginal Rangers to undertake and drive management on country and the intergenerational transfer of knowledge within and outside of Girringun. Whitney Rassip is a young third generation Djiru woman involved with Girringun as well as Native Title Prescribed Body Corporate Chair involved in the implementation of the IPA plan. (See: <http://girringun.com.au/ipa>). Girringun was established 20 years ago. The IPA declaration supports regional partnerships and aims to ensure that those partnerships lead to broader recognition of Traditional Owners to be recognised as an authority; integral to any management decisions that are made.
- **Partnerships built on Aboriginal priorities in New South Wales:** Collaborative management has been achieved for 25% of national parks in NSW (1.65 million hectares) and negotiations are occurring to increase this to about 50% of national parks in next few years. This uses different mechanisms (e.g. *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* (NSW) and *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW); Indigenous Land Use Agreements and *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth); and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)). The Worimi

Conservation Lands are an example, with the Worimi Board having strong governance arrangements (with a majority Worimi Aboriginal board as the decision makers for the park), strong employment, capacity and good partnerships with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service. Aboriginal land use priorities also involve a balance of tourism and recreational activities to enable both financial return and the protection of key cultural sites. There are also strong Aboriginal networks facilitated through annual Joint Management Custodian meetings, with representatives of joint management boards and committees from around the state, hosted by different communities on different areas of country. In NSW there has been recent dialogue about Aboriginal priorities rather than underlying tenure (or “the lines on the map”). See further:

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/jointmanagement/> and  
<http://www.worimiconservationlands.com>

- **Customary activities as a mechanism for facilitating collaborative management in the South West of Western Australia:** Amendments have been made to legislation enabling Aboriginal people in Western Australia to carry out customary activities (such as hunting, ceremonies, camping, taking plants and animals etc.) on the conservation estate (including national parks, marine parks, nature reserves State forest etc.) to ensure consistency between legislation and cultural rights; regardless of any formal recognition under the Native Title Act:  
[http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/parks/aboriginal-involvement/20120278\\_guide\\_to\\_aboriginal\\_customary\\_activities\\_21\\_12-.pdf](http://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/images/documents/parks/aboriginal-involvement/20120278_guide_to_aboriginal_customary_activities_21_12-.pdf)
- **Private sector partnerships in the Western Desert:** Partnerships with the private sector have been leveraged by the Martu and Ngurrara traditional owners in the Western Desert to facilitate land management and achieve broader cultural aspirations. For example the Ngurrara rangers managing the Warlu Jilajaa Jumu IPA have partnerships with multiple stakeholders (including Shell) that have created an opportunity to engage youth in traditional learning and scientific research on country which have created positive incentives to remain engaged in school (see: <http://www.yanunijarra.com/shell-2-way-learning> and <http://www.klc.org.au/land-sea/ranger-ipa-map>). Similarly the Martu people in Birrilburru and Wiluna through the momentum, relationships and skills built in managing protected areas have engaged private partners to develop economic activities in natural/cultural resource management and strengthen the recognition of Martu aspirations for country in areas that have not been viewed as conventional employment ‘spaces’ (see: <http://aiatsis.gov.au/files/ntru/HamishMorgan.pdf>). The experience of Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa, a Martu organisation working on adjacent country, also shows that private sector partnerships require ongoing commitment and resourcing to promote shared values and outcomes (whether they are cultural, economic or conservation values).

*Original presentations and report are available in the event's folder (see link in annexed "Repository of original Powerpoint presentations and Rapporteur reports").*

## **Key topics/emerging lessons:**

### **1. Resourcing and funding**

- Invest in a process to enable the development of a national network that is community led and will be the national network representing Indigenous Land and Sea Managers.
- Indigenous communities and organisations should commit to and be supported to develop capacity to diversify revenue generating activities and build corporate and philanthropic partnerships on an ongoing basis.

### **2. Models and structures of collaborative management**

- Invest in opportunities to share experiences on a national/state level about collaborative and sole Indigenous land and sea management and stimulate discussion on innovative tenure arrangements (ie legislative and policy change) to adequately reflect Indigenous governance. This review needs to be driven by Indigenous leadership and tied to land and sea ownership priorities.

### **3. Youth engagement and learning on country**

- Enable opportunities to develop benefits, particularly youth employment and community engagement that is driven by Indigenous leadership and tied to land and sea ownership.
- Connect the Working on Country Program and IPA program with the education system and engage the next generation of youth in learning about contemporary Indigenous land and sea management practices.

### **4. Sustainable partnerships and management arrangements**

- IPA funding supports this process and should be committed in long term contracts beyond 2018.
- Other funding and processes may support this and should be supported.
- Develop capacity to build corporate and philanthropic partnerships.
- Share stories about monitoring and evaluating co-benefits associated with protected area management.

### **5. Leadership, coordination and information sharing**

- Enable a co-ordinated representative network to lobby and advocate on behalf of Indigenous land and sea managers and concomitant evaluation and monitoring of the program by Indigenous people.
- Participate in national and international exchanges to ensure best practice learning and information sharing.

- Note: the Australian Government Minister for Environment committed to the establishment of the Indigenous Land and Sea Managers network during the closing ceremony of the World Parks Congress.

*This session had a very specific focus on the Australian context; consequently, most recommendations provided are Country specific. Nevertheless, many of them can be directly/indirectly connected to the Stream recommendations #1, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 20.*

<b>Rec#</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Enhancing governance
10	Implementing policies and agreements
15	Governance capacity
16	Innovative legal guidance
17	Justice and redress
18	Governance data and analyses
20	Governance for the conservation of nature and human well being