

Rigby Trust Final Report

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Dear Rigby Family and Trustees,

Thank you sincerely for awarding me with the funds, which enabled me to conduct my Masters fieldwork in Australia. My field season in Australia ended in September 2009 and has proved to be a valuable and rewarding experience both personally and professionally. While the overseas component of my work is mostly¹ finished I continue to work towards creating linkages with Canadian coastal communities. This in large is why I have held off in my report following my return from the field. I wanted to share with you the exciting community connections, which are currently in progress. I am making arrangements with two different First Nations organizations for presentation workshops in March 2010. They are the Pimachiowin Aki World Heritage Project and the Northwest Coast First Nations in British Colombia. I will be presenting lessons learned to community members and key people in the organization involved respectively in World Heritage, and marine and coastal management. There is also potential for small community workshops for the First Nations peoples to express their values and aspirations for land and sea management. The receiving of feedback from the presentation and workshop is built in and results from this experience will be written as a final chapter in my thesis, which will be presented to all of the participating communities.

The following section is a breakdown my research objectives and their respective outcomes from the fieldwork in Cardwell, Australia.

¹ I say mostly because I have received the Endeavour Research Fellowship from the Australian Government to return to Australia to do some verification and dissemination, and to write my thesis as well as a coauthored.

1) Meeting of thesis objectives

1. *Identify and conceptually map the key partners and involved in the protected area management process.*
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I have achieved my first goal by working with key people at the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (GAC). They directed me towards other key people in government organizations who provided me with insights on the relationships at play on Girringun country. I mapped the relationships for the three respective natural resources management scenarios (Figure 1) by interviewing key informants and observing meetings in which senior members came together to assess current programs (Girringun Indigenous Rangers and Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement) and discuss plans for new ones (Indigenous Protected Area). The institutional maps provide a framework for further evaluation of the relationships involved in the arrangements. The levels of engagement, communication, and power sharing were analysed by looking at the partners who controlled decisions related to the governance and management of species and places.

Government agency perspectives in regards to management arrangements were diverse; however, they shared a common desire to continue working with the GAC towards regional arrangements that were perceived to not only benefit Traditional Owners but to fulfill the mandates of the protected areas arrangements. Governments recognized that by supporting the GAC vision to be a regional management body (Figure 1) they would be receiving increased on-the-ground management directed by an organization that has proven to be effective through past arrangements.

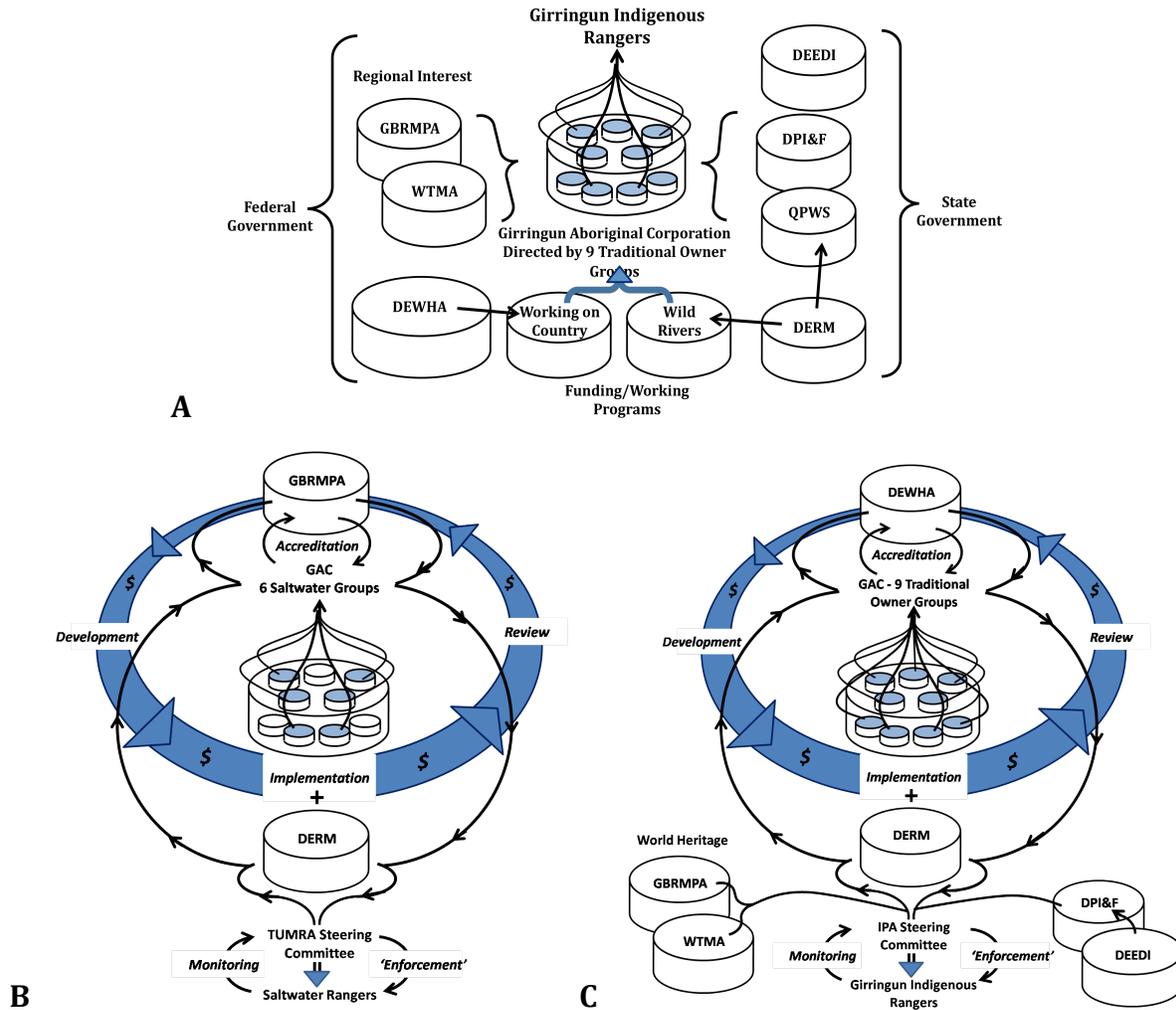


Figure 1: The Giringun Indigenous Rangers, TUMRA (B), and IPA (C) conceptual maps showing the partners, directionality of relationships, and levels of support involved in the arrangements. Acronyms for organizations/agencies: Giringun Aboriginal Corporation (GAC), Department of Employment, Economic Development, and Innovation (DEEDI), Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM), Department of Environment, Water and Heritage (DEWHA), Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F), Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA).

2. *Identify what the Indigenous peoples in the case study community perceive to be important natural resources and features of their country (general term for the land and sea).*
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Traditional Owner perspectives for caring for country were unified towards strategies inclusive of social and cultural wellbeing. In this sense the Girringun cultural land/seascapes was described as something, which includes the cultural elements of everyday life such as access to traditional foods and material culture, as well as access and protection of story places and sacred places. This was represented in both interviews and the focus group and participatory painting workshop, in which Traditional Owners expressed their values and aspirations through a collaborative work of art (Figure 2).

Caring for country is a term used by Traditional Owners to describe their relationship with the land and sea. To meet my second objective I explored the question “What does *caring for country* mean to you” with Traditional Owners. I did this through semi-structured interviews, outings with Traditional Owners on country (participant observation), and facilitating a focus groups and participatory painting workshop. The processes were particularly valuable because they suited the case study community. The Girringun Aboriginal Corporation supports the Girringun Aboriginal Arts Centre, which acts as a hub for artists from the nine Traditional Owner groups. This made the artistic work appropriate and an accessible platform for discussing issues, which are close to the hearts of Traditional Owners but often too shrouded in politics and bureaucratic jargon. Working through an emergent process was also very beneficial. As the Traditional Owner artists painted their individual expression of *caring for country* they would reach points where as a group they would realize that certain important features were missing and needed to be included. The extended timeline of the creative process allowed the concepts to be explored as a group with an ongoing dialectic feedback cycle.

The process facilitated dialogue throughout each phase of the project: initiation (discussions within focus group), interim (discussions during collaborative work), completion (discussions about the finished work).

Many different perspectives were expressed by Traditional Owners. However, there were certain perspectives that were unanimous:

1. Culture and places are inseparable
2. To heal country (both land and sea) people need to be on country
3. It is important to educate the broader community on what *caring for country* means
4. Caring for country can be achieved through Indigenous ranger programs and by returning Traditional Owners to country – especially youth
5. Monitoring and enforcement is important for ensuring that country is being cared for, and Traditional Owners should be in a position to do this effectively
6. Others to come with further discourse analysis

Exploring Traditional Owner values and aspirations for country was especially important for understanding the bigger picture in relation to how protected areas systems affecting Girringun are developed. It made it possible to evaluate governance and management frameworks comparatively so as to determine whether Traditional Owner's perspectives were being incorporated into policy. While it does appear that this indeed is happening, it is very much about being in a process rather than looking for the "results" of collaboration. Relationships between governments and Girringun had vary levels of reciprocity and participation in collaborations. There was however a commonality within the relationships between Girringun and government agencies, in that they were worthwhile and ongoing.

present lessons learned to two different Canadian First Nations organizations (as mentioned above). This experience is to be formatted as a two-way forum for sharing perspectives and lessons learned. I will be sharing the Girringun lessons and will be asking for feedback and lessons learned in exchange. This will open channel for communities to continue sharing into the future.

The following is a list of some of the lessons learned from the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, Traditional Owners, and government officials working on Girringun country. This list is not exhaustive but is a sampling of some of those that were more frequent.

- If Traditional Owners are to provide effective on-the-ground management including enforcement they need to be endowed with the legal authority to do so (i.e. be able to ticket offenders of regional laws).
- Regional management bodies like the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation provide many services and are beneficial to government departments.
 - These services are often more effective than those which government provides because they are based on strategies which are regionally effective.
 - The services save costs to government departments at various levels (i.e. through efficient management, remediation of social problems such as unemployment, reduction of Native Title disputes, etc.).
- Educating the broader population on Indigenous involvement in management is necessary for the success of programs. There is a need for understanding and the building of tolerance. This is a perspective offered individually by both Traditional Owners and government employees.
- New and innovative governance and management programs including those which incorporate Traditional Owner organizations need to build in

adequate support for the organization to initiate community engagement, policy development, and action plans. Funding needs to be established right at the beginning and maintained for the lifespan of the program. Organization should not have to commit to up-front investment, especially when there is no certainty in the benefits of the outcomes of the negotiations.

- More lessons will be extracted with further analysis.

Benefits to community from research

During my fieldwork, I took the approach of working with the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation as a volunteer assistant. I was an official minute taker during natural resources and protected area management meetings, prepared a plain-English document for the GAC to distribute to government for purposes of seeking core funding, created a series of Power Point presentations for use in conferences, worked with the arts centre during exhibitions, and lent a helping hand wherever I could. I have also been working towards publications (one already available – see below) to increase the reach of the lessons within the Giringun case. The Giringun Aboriginal Corporation seeks to share its experiences with the broader regional, national, and international community. Through the dissemination of products and creation of connections with Canadian First Nations organizations I will be aiding in working towards this goal. Through the experience with the Giringun arts community, I am also assisting in their efforts to show their work overseas. Through my work with the *Common Grounds Research Forum* (SSHRC-CURA project exploring a shared space around Kenora, Ontario) I am building upon the participatory art methodologies and am facilitating the experience in such a fashion that the sharing of an experience between the respective arts communities is made possible.

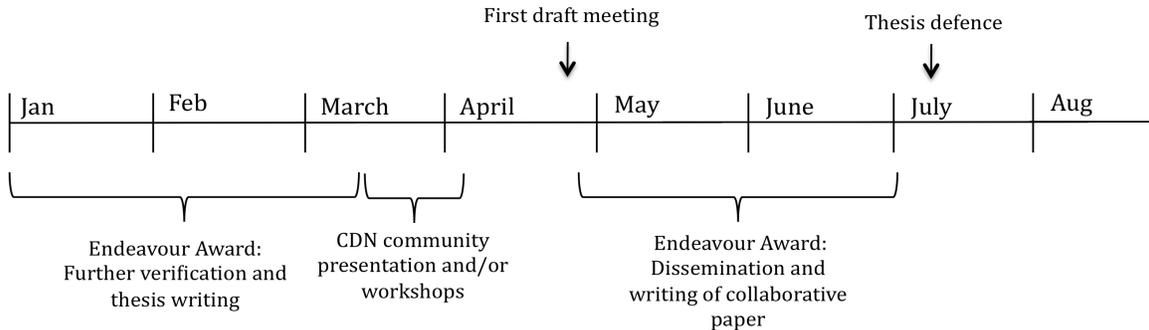
Researcher’s professional development outcomes

I have benefitted tremendously from being able to pursue a Masters project tailored to my specific interests and ambitions. It has enabled me to be innovative in my approach and have an active role in shaping the direction of the research. Having the primary support of the Rigby Trust has enabled me to extend my work further through a fellowship provided by the Australian government. The 2010 Endeavour Research Fellowship will support my return to Australia where I will be revisiting Girringun, and continuing my thesis work as well as a coauthored publication with my Australian counterparts. This is an incredibly valuable professional experience and the Rigby Trust provided me with the platform for this professional development. I have also begun to extend the work within academic forums. The following are the products from thesis work thus far:

Publication: Zurba M 2009. Bringing local synthesis into governance and management systems: The Girringun TUMRA case in Northern Queensland, Australia. Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand 39 (4): 179-182.

Conference paper/poster: Working towards governance and co-management systems that integrate Traditional Owner aspirations for caring for land and sea country – a case study from Australia (*won honourable mention at the Ocean Management Research Network National Conference, 2009.)

Timeline to completion



Financial report

The Rigby Trust funds provided me with the greater component of my available research support. Bellow is the detailed budget of how the funds were used. Other funds that were received went towards the purchase of small equipment (e.g. recorder), insurance, additional short haul flights, and the return flight to Australia.

Rigby Trust Detailed Budget

Food	per diem @ \$40/day x 114 days =		\$4,560.00				
Travel in Australia	463.96						
Flights	109.61	43.46	*(portion of short haul flight)				
Buses	4.4	41	2.9	2.4			
Ferries	85						
Taxis	58.83	66.49	17.3	21.31	54.72		
Supplies	931.52						
Food for workshops	92.75	98.78	11				
Gifts	50	14.56	3.64				
Event tickets	63	50					
Art supplies	8	97.25	58.3	26			
Maps & guides	14.95	13.65	20				
Mobile phone	30						
Camping supplies	22.65	4.99					
Fuel for car	34.14	24.92	28.75	14.31	50.4		
Misc supplies	1.5	14.28	5.8	14.9	38.1	2.45	2.45
Internet	10	10					

Accommodation	196.85		
Hostel nights	118.04	38.81	40
Total Claim			
Australian	\$6,195.79		
Canadian	\$6,000.00		

*Claim was filed through the University of Manitoba financial department