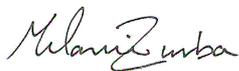


Dear Rigby Trustees,

I have been working in Cardwell, Australia with the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation now for 2 months. This is a couple of weeks beyond the half way point for my time with this component of my research however would be the half way point in consideration of the entirety of the research which will be bringing in Canadian comparisons and connections upon my return to Canada this Fall (continuing into early Winter).

This report includes a breakdown of achievements in the field thus far, a description of the nature of the collaboration with the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, interesting outcomes, and challenges. This is followed by a brief discussion on the project budget and expenditures thus far. Overall this has proven to be a very positive research and personal experience and I would like to thank the Rigby Trust for making it possible. I look forward to giving you further reports upon the completion of my field work and thesis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melanie Zurba".

Melanie Zurba

MNRM Candidate, Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

Midterm Field Work Report for:
**How well is co-management working? Perspectives, Partnerships and Power Sharing
Along the Way to an Indigenous Protected Area in Australia.**

Melanie Zurba, MNRM Candidate

1 - Project objectives met at this point

I have achieved a large portion of field objectives for while in Australia at this point. I will be staying in Cardwell (Girringun country) for a slightly longer time and either shortening or omitting my time spent in Lismore. That arrangement is no longer suitable in regards to timing for Dr. Lloyd and we will be doing some coordinating and debriefing through other means of communication instead. Most of my debriefing will be done through Dr. Ross, my committee member at the University of Queensland. Dr. Ross has been in continual contact with me during my time in the field.

Field work objectives which have been completed at this point:

- Completion of all interviews with Traditional Owners, government, and other key informants (i.e. saltwater rangers, regional consultants).
- Focus group with Traditional Owners which explores what caring for country means to them through participatory painting. Girringun has a strong artistic tradition and this was an ideal method for exploring these topics
- Extensive participant observation through involvement in meetings with government agencies and outings with Traditional Owners.
- Completion of a plain English document and power point presentations for the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation to use as a tool for communicating with government (part of the reciprocal research arrangement – explained further below).
- Document review (i.e. historical records, agreements, regional literature, etc).
- Conceptual mapping of the regional arrangements - used for verification in the field and to be part of the final thesis products.
- Photo-journaling of special field work events

Field work objectives to complete late August through Fall/Winter in Canada:

- Participant observation of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) meetings with Traditional Owner groups - scheduled late August through early September.
- Further verification of items through key informants and the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation
- Dissemination to and receiving of feedback from First Nations communities facing similar situations in Canada – Fall/Winter.

2 - The research collaboration

The relationship with key people in the organization has been well established at this point and is strong with open channels for communication. The working arrangement with the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation has been ideal in many ways and has permitted me to be useful to them as well as being an interested researcher. The positivity of the research/working relationship has allowed for me to have access to unique opportunities to participate in various kinds of outings which have enabled me to gain access to Traditional Owners and people in government alike. It has also created a situation where I am able to meet frequently with key people in the organization for coordinating field activities and verifying findings.

As part of the reciprocal nature of the research I have created a document and power point presentations for the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation to use in meetings with government agencies and other groups. This will mean that work here will leave useful tools for the organization to use in their future communications with government. It was important to create something like this for the sake of the working relationship with Girringun and to prove that the spirit of the research is aimed at being reciprocally beneficial. The strong level of communication with key people in the organization allowed for these products to be developed in a fashion that would benefit both the research and the organization. The document and presentation also allowed for important concepts to be explored and verified before leaving the field and thus were useful for accurately answering the research question and fulfilling the objectives of the research. The use of the contents of these materials has been negotiated in advance. All items/portions of items may be reproduced and/or used in the thesis. The

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation also has the right to reproduce the document but must consult with me before reproducing items into further publications.

3 - Other interesting outcomes of research

The opportunities for participant observation were vastly underestimated. The timing here has been ideal for research because the Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) is at its 5-year renewal phase and the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) has just received full funding and has been in the early phases of negotiation during my time with Girringun. This has means that there have been ongoing meetings which have brought together government agencies, the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and Traditional Owners to discuss these issues. This has made of ideal opportunities to collect data on the main components of my research (perspectives, partnerships and power sharing) as well as giving me a context to which my interview data may be triangulated. In this regard participant observation is a much larger part of my data than I had originally anticipated.

The visual methods for my research have taken an interesting direction and have greatly enriched the process of talking about caring for country with Traditional Owners. Girringun has a strong artistic tradition with Traditional Owner involvement in the arts being an integral component to cultural preservation, which is not seen as being separate to land and sea preservation and stewardship. This has made participatory art an ideal method for exploring these themes. A focus groups was first held with Traditional Owners from several tribes to conceptually outline these ideas. The ideas were then transcribed and redistributed to the participants who then painted their visions involved in caring for country. These visions were painted onto one canvas making a story of the visions of all of the participants. This work has been especially relevant given the importance of culture in natural resources management with Traditional Owners.

4 - Challenges

The main challenge with the research was finding the best way to approach interviews with Traditional Owners. Because the Traditional Owner groups are not centrally located around Cardwell it was challenging sometimes to meet with participants and make arrangements for interview times. In this sense it was necessary to develop a different approach to interviews. Photo-elicitation interviews were not possible within the research time-frame therefore semi-structured interviews were used instead. It

was especially important in this regard to demonstrate rapport with the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation. Access to Traditional Owner interviews often required me to be a participant in other events where they could simply get to know me a bit better and 'get a sense for what kind of person I am'. This was a challenge in the sense that it required patience and an adaptable approach to seeking interviews. It however was incredibly beneficial in that it contributed to the sequential building of my relationship with the community of Traditional Owners, provided for more open dialogue in interviews, and was an absolute joy to spend time getting to know people individually.

5 - Field work budget report

The project budget at this point looks as though it was accurately estimated at the outset. The cost of the flight was approximately **\$1300**. Basic living costs (food and necessary items) are approximately \$40/day bringing that current total to **\$3200**. Domestic travel costs at this point have been fairly low and with flights, taxis and fuel is at about **\$400**. There will be additional costs for my return down the coast, eventually flying out of Sydney. There have been costs for project materials including supplies and refreshments for a day long workshop, maps, and other small items. This total is also approximately **\$300**. There have been very few costs for accommodation. This funds spent in this regard has been on hostel nights in places other than Cardwell where I participated in meetings or spent a few days on interviews. This total is at about **\$200**. The running total therefore at this point is at about **\$5500**, which is right on target and leaves sufficient funds for the completion of the work here and in Canada. I have received small grants from the Canada Research Chair and Australian Geographic to supplement additional costs in the field and some equipment costs not listed here.