



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME
A U S T R A L I A
B R O O M E C A M P U S

**Professional
Development Course:
Introduction to
Aboriginal Research
Methods for Aboriginal
People
Lecturer Course Guide**



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Article 1.

McDuffie, M. (2017), Diagram - *Kalara Reveal Make Seen Liyan*, Kalara: Nyikina Community Engagement Framework. Unpublished PhD Draft, p. 287.

Article 2.

Poelina, A. *A Lucky Country and a Fair Go* p.18, in Tardos, I. 2016, *This Is My Country*, Foto Evidence Press, New York.

Lecturer Guide:

- Lecturers are encouraged to use this guide as a companion document to the Course Guide Introduction to Aboriginal Research for Aboriginal People.
- At the time of seeking admission to the course participants are informed and provided with a copy of the Three (3) Day Program. This information contains a copy of the Participant Evaluation and the Supplementary Reading Material identified in this guide.
- Participants are advised prior to the commencement of the Three (3) Day Program that it is a compulsory requirement to bring an object which has meaning and connection to them. Participants are advised they will be asked to share their relationship to the object with other participants.
- Lecturers are encouraged to use quotes from the Literature Review as the overheads for delivery of the Three (3) Day Program.

**ABORIGINAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES: FOR ABORIGINAL PEOPLE
A LITERATURE REVIEW**

Aboriginal research means research that touches the life and well-being of Aboriginal Peoples. It may involve Aboriginal Peoples and their communities directly. It may assemble data that describes or claims to describe Aboriginal Peoples and their heritage. Or, it may affect the human and natural environment in which Aboriginal Peoples live.

Brant Castellano, 2004

Research about Aboriginal people in their communities has been carried out ever since colonisation began. Explorers, missionaries, anthropologists, linguists, doctors, scientists, academics and visual artists came to 'study' Indigenous people. They stayed for short and long periods of time, eventually going back to their lives in the cities, advancing their own careers, working on research that was often irrelevant and inaccurate (Brant Castellano B, 2004), and of little use to Aboriginal people themselves. The results of their research were rarely communicated back to communities. Aboriginal people became the most 'researched people in the world' (Brands & Gooda, 2006). Having endured similar experiences across Australia, and over a long period of time, it is not surprising that most Aboriginal people are weary of researchers, and of the discipline of research itself. As Brant Castellano points out, research has been used in the past to rationalise colonial strategies of power and control over Indigenous communities, and has contributed to the continued paternalistic perceptions of Aboriginal people as being in need of outside assistance (Brant Castellano B, 2004).

From a Western academic perspective, progress has been made. From an international standpoint, the United Nations has recognised the importance of Indigenous people having control of the research carried out on their communities. Paragraph 8 of The Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of the Heritage of Indigenous People¹ states *To protect their heritage, indigenous peoples must also exercise control over all research conducted within their territories, or which uses their people as subjects of study..* In Australia, over the past twenty years, ethical guidelines, such as the ones developed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)² and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)³, have been put in

¹ Available at: <http://ankn.uaf.edu/iks/protect.html>

² Available at <http://aiatsis.gov.au/sites/default/files/docs/research-and-guides/ethics/GERAIS.pdf>

place, providing guiding principles for research with and for Indigenous communities – not just solely about ‘them’. These guidelines can frame the research and provide some direction, but, as Lavallée argues, the way these principles are addressed, understood, and put in place, really depends on the researchers and the communities they are working with - one should always be aware of the cultural differences between communities and apply these principles within a local context (Lavallée), in close consultation with the community.

A discussion of ethics and what people see as being ethical, for themselves, in their own context, is also necessary – the ethics of an ethics body may not quite match the ethics of an Aboriginal community:

In the world of Aboriginal knowledge, a discussion of ethics cannot be limited to devising a set of rules to guide researcher behaviour in a defined task.

Ethics, the rules of right behaviour, are intimately related to who you are, the deep values you subscribe to, and your understanding of your place in the spiritual order of reality. Ethics are integral to the way of life of a people.

Aboriginal world views assume that human action, to achieve social good, must be located in an ethical, spiritual context as well as its physical and social situation. Scientific research is dominated by positivist thinking that assumes only observable phenomena matter (Brant Castellano, 2004).

Indigenous Research Reform Agenda listed the key components required to undertake successful research with Indigenous communities:

- *involvement of Aboriginal communities in the design, execution and evaluation of research;*
- *defining a coordinating role for Aboriginal community controlled organizations associated with the research;*
- *consultation and negotiation with Indigenous organizations as ongoing throughout the life of a research project;*

- *mechanisms for ongoing surveillance of research projects by Indigenous partner organisations;*
- *ownership and control of research findings by participating Aboriginal community controlled organizations;*
- *processes to determine research priorities and benefit to the Indigenous communities involved;*
- *transformation of research practices from ‘investigator-driven’ to an adoption of a needs- based approach to research;*
- *determination of ethical processes for the conduct of research;*
- *linkage between research and community development and social change;*
- *the training of Indigenous researchers; and*

³ Available at

https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/e72_national_statement_may_2015_150514_a.pdf

- *the adoption of effective mechanisms for the dissemination and transfer of research findings* (Henry et al., 2002, p. 1).

These principles remain in place within the AIATSIS and NHMRC guidelines.

Some Western methodological approaches have been deemed to be useful in Indigenous research contexts, such as Collaborative, Emancipatory and Participatory Action Research Methodologies. These participatory methods privilege a community-led research agenda, a strong participatory data gathering and analysis process, improved feedback practices back to the community, and the community's shared ownership of the research. Outcomes in the shape of social, cultural, political, or educational actions aimed at improving the lives of the research participants are also an important feature of Participatory Action Research methods.

Participatory Action Research enables:

- *A shared ownership of research projects;*
- *A community-based analysis of social problems; and*
- *An orientation towards community action* (Henry et al., 2002, p.8)⁴.

Participatory or Collaborative Action Research methods encourage the commitment of researchers, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous, to the research and the people they are working with. With an emphasis on long-term relationships between researchers and communities based on trust, participatory methods foster activism both at a community and an academic level, and therefore have the potential to empower communities in a wider socio-political context. Participatory Action Research, in its initial state, as conceived of by Fals-Borda (1969), aims to engage with the community in a collaborative research process to create positive, transformational change (Weber-Pillwax, in Kapoor and Jordan (Eds), 2009, p. 57) for the entire community. Fals-Borda envisaged that the researcher's role was not only in examining and describing certain aspects of society, but that he or she had the responsibility to become involved in political action if the research uncovered injustices which needed to be remediated (Gotte, 2008, in Weber-Pillwax, 2009, p. 48; Fals-Borda, in McTaggart (Ed), 1997, p.107)

Continuous field experience naturally conditioned my subsequent intellectual production and marked my style and personality to the present day (...) Politics had not been my goal in life. Yet collective problematic circumstances led me to assume a commitment that combined a sociological discipline with a political role, with new meanings and increased responsibilities (Fals-Borda, in McTaggart, 1997, pp. 110-111).

Participatory Action Research has the capacity to involve participants in a practical way, in

⁴ Available at: <https://www.lowitja.org.au/sites/default/files/docs/IRRA2LinksMonograph.pdf>

order for them to identify and solve the issues they themselves regard as important, with a view to not only empower them but also to further the research aims of social sciences disciplines (Park, 1993, in Lavallée).

Participatory Action Research methods has the potential to reveal conflicts in power relations between community participants and institution-based researchers, which need to be resolved in order for the research to progress. But these methods, if applied well, *ensure that participants can resist the imposition of a research agenda by an institution, are able to put forward their perspectives, and negotiate the research process and outcomes with academics (Henry et al., 2002: p.10).*

Although Participatory Action Research has been at times been co-opted by the neo-liberalist discourse, and institutionalised in mainstream social research (Jordan, in Kapoor and Jordan (Eds), 2009, p. 18), Participatory (and Emancipatory) Action Research offers useful principles such as direct participation, democratic discussion, debate, feedback, inclusiveness and concern with social justice, which have demonstrated successful outcomes in communities all over the world (Kapoor and Jordan (Eds), 2009, p.10; McTaggart (Ed), 1997), and is often well-suited to Indigenous aspirations. However, Participatory, Emancipatory, and Collaborative research methods are often only one component of a broader, Indigenist research design.

As Brant Castellano points out, Indigenous researchers, community members and academics have fought back not only to ensure that ethical guidelines and participatory methods were put in place in research projects with and for Aboriginal communities, but they have also argued for the recognition and acceptance of traditional and innovative research methods accommodating and nurturing Indigenous world views, within Western academia. Brant Castellano recalls a significant moment in this process, which occurred at the beginning of a workshop she was conducting for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada:

'We've been researched to death!' they protested. The workshop was not off to a promising start, until an Elder who had opened the meeting spoke quietly from a corner of the room. 'If we have been researched to death,' he said, 'maybe it's time we started researching ourselves back to life' (Brant Castellano, 2004).

Rigney conceives Western research as a continuation of the colonisation project and domination of the West. He urges Indigenous people to:

look to new anticolonial epistemologies and methodologies to construct, rediscover, and/or reaffirm their knowledges and cultures. Such epistemologies must... carry with them the potential to strengthen the struggle for emancipation and the liberation from oppression...If we understand this, we understand the need to seek other examples of liberatory epistemologies (Rigney, 1999, p. 114).

Indigenous academics' have called for the recognition of Indigenist research designs to decolonize Western methodologies (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999; Rigney, 1999). There has been a gradual shift away

from the restrictive positivist, quantitative scientific methods applied previously in most research with Indigenous communities. Tuhiwai-Smith, contends that in order to decolonise research methods, a *re-writing*, and *re-righting* of the Indigenous position in history and society, is first and foremost necessary (Smith, 1999; Lavallée).

In this process of deconstruction, or genealogy, in Foucault's (2003) terms, the notion of 'historiography', as suggested by Spivak, is highly significant. Her concern is not with the analysis of history per se - it simply consists in narrating the events of the past but with historiography – a *narrative of the construction of the past* (Spivak, in Childs & Williams, 1997, p. 165); She views imperial history as *epistemic violence – an interested construction rather than the production of facts* (Spivak, in Childs & Williams, 1997, p. 165). Chakrabarty argues that history is intrinsically Western, and Indigenous histories mere variations of a master European narrative, questioning the position of the researcher in analysing the historical discourse, something all researchers must be mindful of:

Insofar as the academic discourse of history – that is, 'history as a discourse produced at the institutional site of the university – is concerned, 'Europe' remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call 'Indian', 'Chinese', 'Kenyan' and so on. There is a peculiar way in which all those other histories tend to become variations on a master narrative that could be called 'the history of Europe' (Chakrabarty, in Childs & Williams, 1997, p. 9).

Indigenist methodologies (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999) play a paramount role in reclaiming Eurocentric discourses, and reveal the often invisible counter-discourse, which the researcher's role is to *make seen*, and *make heard*, thereby giving a space to the *subaltern* where he or she can be listened to (Spivak, in Landry and MacLean 1996: 292), resulting in empowering resistance to neo-colonial assimilation and oppression.

This reflects the three principles at the core of Indigenist Research, from Rigney's perspective:

- *Resistance as the emancipatory imperative in Indigenist Research;*
- *Political integrity in Indigenist Research;*
- *Privileging Indigenous voices in Indigenous research (Rigney, 1999, p. 116).*

But what are, exactly, Indigenist methodologies, and how have they been used by researchers to promote Indigenous world views and ways of knowing and doing research within their own communities?

Broadly speaking, Indigenist methodologies (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), or what some authors have called Indigenous Research Methodologies (Weber-Pillwax, in Kapoor and Jordan (Eds), 2009, p. 45) reinforce Indigenous ways of seeing the world, validate Indigenous philosophies and principles, legitimate the existence of Indigenous cultures, and support Indigenous peoples in their struggles and aspirations for autonomy (Smith 1999, p. 185; de Ishtar, in Liamputtong (Ed), 2008, p. 168).

They reflect, and incorporate into the research *the core values, beliefs, and healing practices of the Indigenous community* (Lavallée, 2009). They also promote the recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems across the world, stressing the fact that these vary from country to country, and often within the same country – hence the importance of using the word ‘knowledges’ in the plural form (Lavallée).

These localised Indigenous knowledges need to be taken into account by researchers working in communities:

The word ‘Indigenous’ means from a place. It could mean populations of a certain species organisms, such as plants, living in a certain place or ecosystem. It could be a population of fish or birds living in the desert. To people from earth cultures, Indigenous means people living in a place where our ancestors have lived since time immemorial. Indigenous peoples....from a place....from the land (Weber-Pillwax, 2004).

The heart of any Indigenous research begins with ‘Place’...and within that ‘Place’ lies oneself. Indigenous Research Methodologies differ from the western approach because they flow from a place, an Indigenous place, a tribe, a community. They flow from tribal knowledge. They are central and specific for each place (Lambert)⁵.

Indigenous knowledges value the relationships of all beings within the cosmos, and are not solely the pursuit of individual knowledge (Wilson, 2001, p. 176; Lavallée, 2009), as is often the case in Western Science.

As Lavallée explains:

The relational nature of Indigenous epistemology acknowledges the interconnectedness of the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the earth, the star world, and the universe. Indigenous epistemology is fluid, nonlinear, and relational (Kovach, 2005).

Many Indigenous ways of knowing accept both the physical and the non-physical realms as reality. In accepting the nonphysical, one must accept that reality cannot always be quantified (Lavallée, 2009).

In this way, Indigenous research is primarily relational, and can only occur in relation with the world: human beings, plants, animals, and also the non-physical universe, the spiritual realm. This is illustrated well by Lavallée using the Algonquin, Creek and Ojibway concept of the medicine wheel as the theoretical basis for her research: balance comes with the understanding that one story is part of a whole, and that everything is inter-related. Good health, for instance, occurs when a balance between the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual realms, the four quadrants of the medicine wheel, is achieved. But health also depends on the balance of relationships with others, family and

⁵ Lambert, L. Available at:

https://www.healthpromotion.org.au/images/eberhard_oration_by_iori_lambert.doc

community, and the environment (Lavallée).

In Australia, numerous research projects conducted in Aboriginal communities focus on health matters, a key component of the *Closing the Gap* strategy⁶, particularly around reducing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in terms of life expectancy and child mortality. However, even after many published reports and various strategies have been enacted by successive governments, the gap is still far from closing, and this could be attributed to fundamental issues in the way in which the research is being conducted. Indeed, as Houston and Legge reported in 1992, the wealth of knowledges already existing in Aboriginal communities is rarely taken into account:

The main barriers to improving the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not deficiencies in the understanding of biomedical mechanisms and therapeutics. The main barriers are in the application of existing biomedical and public health knowledge in contexts which also recognise Aboriginal aspirations and the wealth of existing Aboriginal community knowledge (Houston and Legge, 1992, p. 115).

It is vital for researchers to take into account and understand this complex, multi-layered, and holistic relationship between health and country, in order to carry out research with positive outcomes for Aboriginal people. For example, *Caring for Country* national initiatives have demonstrated the physical and mental health benefits Aboriginal people derive from participating in innovative natural and cultural resource management activities, as well as the proven positive impacts these programs have had on the on-going conservation of sensitive ecological landscapes of high biodiversity (Altman and Kerins, 2012). The *Healthy Country, Healthy People* report, based in Arnhem Land in Northern Australia, found that participating in projects on country resulted in positive physical health outcomes across a range of measurable, chronic health issues, such as cholesterol levels, diabetes, obesity, blood pressure and psychological distress (Burgess et al., 2005). The benefits are not solely physical: communities as a whole get a sense of agency in the protection of their own country (Altman and Kerins, 2012: vi). As Morrison argues, such initiatives can also strengthen relationships within the community itself, as well as local governance and leadership, and promote increased engagement with employment and education services (Morrison, 2007: 13). Through intergenerational transmission of knowledge and practices on country (McDuffie, 2014, *Caring for the Cotter Report*: 54), and respectful teaching, learning, and recreational activities, the Yiriman Project in the Kimberley, which was initiated in the Nyikina-Mangala Community of Jarlmadangah Buru (Madjulla Inc. & McDuffie, 2007), has enabled young people to re-affirm their identity, build their resilience and spend valuable time with family and community (Coles, in Taylor, 2010: 88, in Palmer,

⁶ Available at: <http://www.healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/closing-the-gap/key-facts/what-is-closing-the-gap>

2013: 13). This statement by a Kimberley Elder participating in the Yiriman Project indicates the importance of the spatio-temporal relationship between people and country, and young and old, for Aboriginal communities:

The signs that countrymen are getting healthier is that old people are on country. We know young people healthy because they on country with the old people. We know us old people are healthy because we with young people. We know country is healthy because together we on country. That is the sign. We always tell when country is healthy... The old people is there, country been fired, plenty of food on country and jila (waterhole) were clean. Then we get taken away from country... It get sick... we get sick... we come back and country come alive... and we come alive... young people come alive (Senior Elder, in Palmer, 2013, p. 3).

Wilson, in crafting the definition of an Indigenous methodology, emphasizes the concept of relational accountability, in which a researcher must take into account all of his or her relations whilst doing research, and must fulfil their responsibilities to the world around them (Wilson, 2001, p. 177).

Lambert also argues that Indigenous methodologies are steeped in the relationship between the researcher, the community members, and the data being gathered, making the researcher accountable to both the community, and the data, which they must do justice to and be respectful of in sharing and analysing, since they have been entrusted with it (Lambert). As Lavallée points out, research involving Indigenous communities is a long-term commitment, which goes well beyond the scope of a research project, a report, a PhD dissertation, a paper, or a conference presentation: it is a life-time, holistic commitment (Lavallée, 2009) which:

encapsulates the Aboriginal ethic that all aspects of the world we know have life and spirit and that humans have an obligation to learn the rules of relating to the world with respect. We enter into mutual dialogue with the many people and other beings with whom we share the world...Research that seeks objectivity by maintaining distance between the investigator and informants violates Aboriginal ethics of reciprocal relationship and collective validation. (Brant Castellano, 2004).

From Lavallée's point of view, quoting Brant Castellano (2000), Indigenous knowledges encompass three processes: empirical observation, traditional teachings, and revelation. Empirical knowledge is based on perspectives and scientific observations over time for instance the use of medicinal plants. Indeed, as Lambert argues, Indigenous people have been involved in doing research from time immemorial, in many domains, such as environmental and biological sciences, engineering, psychology, medicine, astronomy etc (Lambert) Traditional knowledge is transmitted in stages, inter-generationally, by Elders to younger people who are deemed ready to receive this knowledge. As for revelation, it is grounded in intuition, ancestors, and dreams – spiritual processes which Western Science often fails to acknowledge as a valid way of explaining the world (Lavallée, 2009).

So what are the methods used in an Indigenist Research Design? Story telling of lived experiences,

sharing circles (Lavallée, 2009), talking circles, conversations (Kovach, 2010; McDuffie, 2017), discussions, ethno-biographies and narrative interviewing (Casey, 1996, in Lavallée, 2009), are all methods which form part of an approach grounded in dialogue, and through which qualitative Indigenous research methodologies can be better understood and applied (Lavallée, 2009). For this, the importance of Elders taking part in the research process is paramount (Lavallée, 2009; Brant Brant Castellano, 2004): they hold the traditional knowledge, traditional teachings, the ceremonies, and the stories of all relations within communities (Brant Castellano 2004).

Kovach (2010) argues that the conversational method fits in with Indigenous world views and involves a dialogic participation in which people share their stories with the purpose of helping others – a deeply relational process. Oral stories, used as a means to transmit knowledge, enable people to observe and maintain community traditions whilst contributing to innovative research (Kovach, 2010, pp. 40-42).

In Canada and the United States, talking circles have been used for a long time. Paulette Running Wolf and Julie Rickard explain the importance of talking circles, and the way they are used by Indigenous peoples:

Traditionally, many Native American communities have used the talking circle as a way of bringing people of all ages together for the purposes of teaching, listening, and learning (Anishinabeg Nation, 1999). Thus, talking circles were a traditional form of early childhood through adult education and provided a way to pass on knowledge, values and culture. This method of education instilled respect for another's viewpoint and encouraged members to be open to other viewpoints by listening with their heart while another individual speaks (Sams, 1990). Today, talking circles are used as a pan traditional healing intervention throughout the country in tribal inpatient and outpatient drug and alcohol centers, group homes, adolescent prevention and intervention programs, prayer circles, tribal and public schools, and college-based English as Second Language programs. It is seen as an effective tool that fosters respect, models good listening skills, settles disputes, resolves conflicts, and builds self-esteem (Shegonee, 1999) (Running Wolf & Rickard, 2003, pp. 39-40)

From the researcher's perspective, this pre-supposes a deep learning-to-listen, and learning-to-see (McDuffie, 2017), a long-term approach that Aboriginal writer Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann refers to as *Dadirri*, or deep listening. Using *Dadirri* as a research methodology in her PhD thesis, and in her later book, *Trauma Trails* (2002), Judy Atkinson views *Dadirri* as a method providing guidance to relate and act in a considerate way within community. She also argues that the art of deep listening and non-intrusive observation pave the way for purposeful, useful actions informed by learning, wisdom, and shared knowledge (Atkinson, 2002, pp. 16-17).

Dadirri is inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness. Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. This is the gift that Australia is thirsting for. It is something like what you call 'contemplation.'

When I experience dadirri, I am made whole again. I can sit on the riverbank or walk through the trees; even if someone close to me has passed away, I can find my peace in this silent awareness. There is no need of words. A big part of dadirri is listening.

*In our Aboriginal way, we learnt to listen from our earliest days. We could not live good and useful lives unless we listened. This was the normal way for us to learn - not by asking questions. We learnt by watching and listening, waiting and then acting (Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann, *Dadirri: Inner Deep Listening and Quiet Still Awareness*, 2002, Available at <http://nextwave.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Dadirri-Inner-Deep-Listening-M-R-Ungunmerr-Bauman-Refl.pdf>).*

This approach contains similarities to the methodology of *living on the ground* that Zohl de Ishtar describes in her work with the Balgo Elders at the Kapululangu Women's Law and Culture Centre: researchers, she argues, should partner with Indigenous communities and live with them *on the ground*, in order to support and encourage them in the expression of their cultural philosophies and life choices - pursuing and nurturing their 'living culture' to create change, and bolster confidence and hope in the future (de Ishtar, in Liamputtong (Ed), 2008, pp.161-162). Through this process, tangible community outcomes can be achieved in terms of self-determination, with the researcher becoming a facilitator, while depending on the knowledge and skills of the people he or she is working with to carry out collaborative projects (de Ishtar, in Liamputtong (Ed), 2008, p. 167). This also embeds the researcher in the Aboriginal network of 'interactions between self, kin, land and cosmology' (de Ishtar, in Liamputtong (Ed), 2008, p. 168), enabling him or her to live in a continual learning relationship (de Ishtar, in Liamputtong (Ed), 2008, p. 169).

Similarly, Magali McDuffie, in her PhD thesis (2017), refers to *Booroo* (Country, in Nyikina language) as being at the heart of all interactions. In her research collaboration with Nyikina women of the West Kimberley region of Western Australia, she demonstrates how Nyikina identity is intricately bound with the river, the Mardoowarra, and Nyikina country: Nyikina people's *liyan* (intuition) and emotional well-being emanates from their multi-layered connection with *Booroo*; creation stories of the Mardoowarra River anchor Nyikina identity to Country physically, intellectually and spiritually. In the *Bookarrakarra*, their ancestor Woonyoomboo, a man, and the Yoongkoorookoo, a serpent, created the Mardoowarra, from which Nyikina people gained sustenance through well-understood seasonal cycles: a dialogic relationship between humans and non-humans which is still strong today, and whose spiritual significance is celebrated through the *Warloongarriy* Ceremony. When the country is threatened, damaged, or needs help, and when its people need support, the ceremony becomes a public one, to wake the snake up, and to teach other humans, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to see the Nyikina world underneath the thin colonised surface - to see *Booroo* in all its inter-

connectedness, rather than empty land, *Terra Nullius*, dis-connected from humans, and used only for the purposes of resource-extraction and maximum short-term financial gain. In this, *Booroo* becomes the decolonising ground, opposing the utilitarian discourse, and global neo-liberal trends.

As Brant Castellano argues:

Traditional teachings are conveyed through example, through stories and songs, in ceremonies and, most importantly, through engagement with the natural world, which is governed by laws of life just as human beings are (Brant Castellano, 2004).

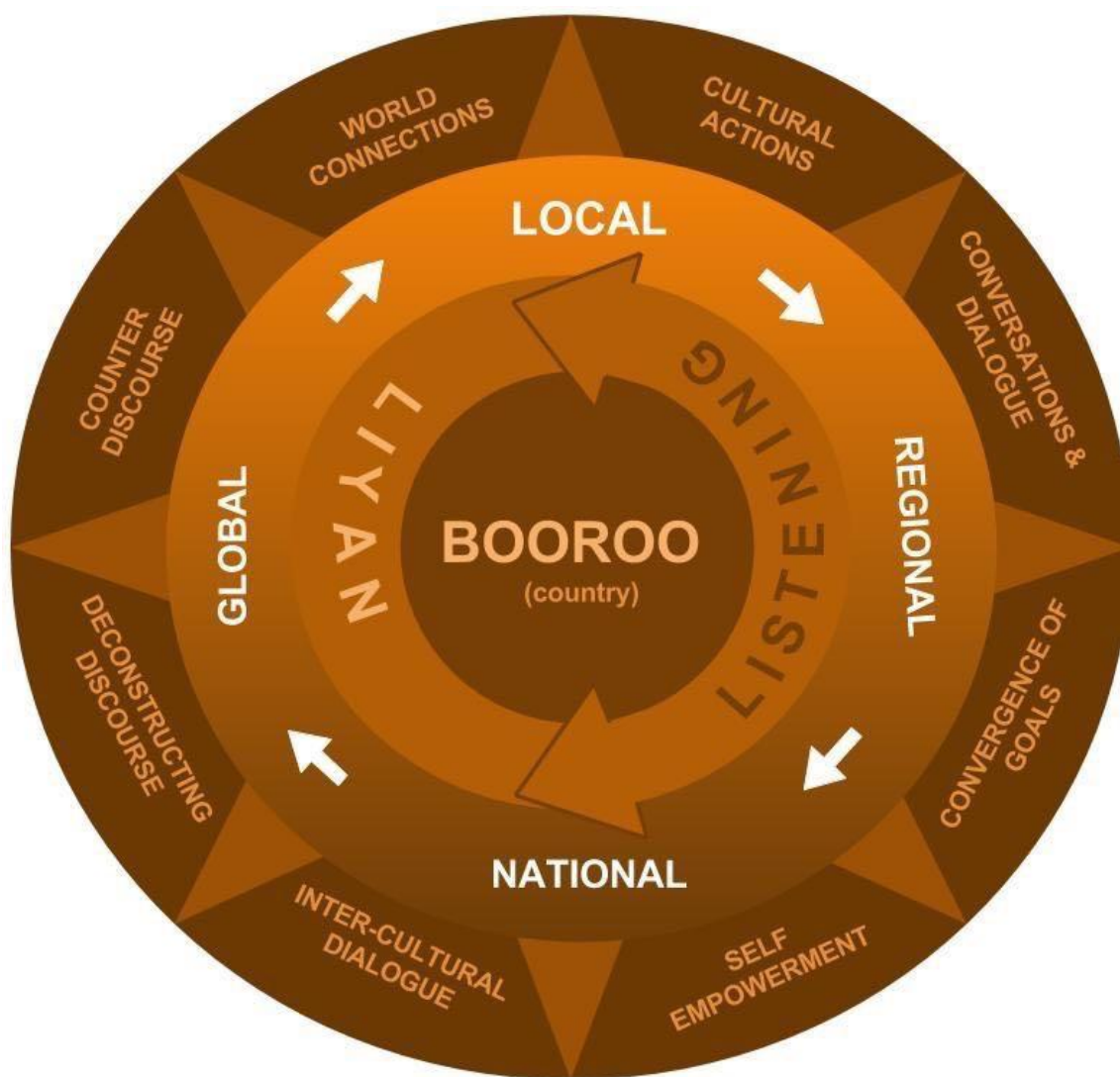


Figure 1. KALARA - Making Seen, Making Visible

The Nyikina women’s sense of place and identity begins in *Booroo*. Senior Nyikina Elders Lucy Marshall and Jeannie Warbie have consistently spoken the Nyikina world into existence, and describe all spatio-temporal interactions as being based in *Booroo*, guiding their *liyan* (instinct) and their way of ‘being-in-the-world’ (Heidegger, 1962). All their local cultural actions are underpinned by

the need to educate both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people about *Booroo* and Nyikina cosmology, in a shared, inter-cultural space (Merlan, 1998). This space could first be construed as a node within a broader network (Latour, 2013), in which global connections that have emerged from *Booroo* through dialogic approaches converge with place-based discourses and actions to create an ever-evolving, fluid, multi-disciplinary, nexus of country, people, and non-human actors, working together for a better world for humanity, and proposing an alternative to the reductionist agenda of neo-liberalism. Indeed, the key term of 'nexus', as defined by the Oxford Dictionary, refers both to 'a connection or series of connections linking two or more things' and 'a central or focal point' (Oxford Dictionary, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/nexus>). This definition is important in the context of the cyclic process through which the Nyikina world is revealed, represented, and supported: *Booroo* and *Liyan* are both at the centre of the circle, the focal point from which connections emerge and to which they converge back. This nexus is constituted in place, and the connections that underpin it and in turn emerge from it ensure that it eventually comes in contact with other nexa, forming a rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980), alternative, unbounded network, in which actors from all over the world must learn to see the Nyikina world, and in turn, understand the significance of *Booroo*, and connect with Nyikina people through Country first and foremost.

In conclusion, Indigenous, or Aboriginal Research Methodologies, need to be grounded in place within communities, on country, and be meaningful to the people the research is focusing on, addressing the issues they see as important, and taking into consideration Indigenous world views of a holistic universe. Kerry Arabena sums up the potential impact of Indigenous Research Methodologies on all people – not just Indigenous:

Based on information from international, national Indigenous philosophies and from the answers given in the research process, two models have been developed to describe the Universe and how it impacts on and defines the lives of Aboriginal peoples in New South Wales. The first model represents the holarchical relationships (holistic) that persons have within the constructs of the Universe – that is a non-hierarchical relationship with nature and other living and non-living systems. I refer to this state as the 'first citizen state'. The second model demonstrates what happens when Aboriginal peoples experience colonisation. It is in this citizenship state that the hierarchical relationships between Aboriginal persons and others in society impacted not only on their health and wellbeing, but on the health and well-being of other living beings, living systems and of ecosystems for which Aboriginal peoples saw themselves as responsible. What needs to be reinstated is the holarchical relationship between all Australians with nature as the fundamental underpinning of human health and wellbeing in this country.

It is difficult to address gaps in knowledge with theories that are developed within fragmented, reductionist disciplines. Knowledges developed within these disciplines are easily perceived by Aboriginal peoples as specific knowledges intent on isolating individuals rather than promoting inclusion. In the applications of these new sciences, world views are interconnected, interrelated systems including constellations of concepts, perceptions, values and practices that are shared by a community and direct the activities of its members (Arabena, 2008, pp. 2; 4).

As Senior Nyikina Elder Lucy Marshall says:

Together, shoulder to shoulder. We know the rules. We know what's right, and what's wrong. Sorry to say, but we still got our culture. We still got a role to play (Lucy Marshall, in Three Sisters, Women of High Degree, Poelina and McDuffie 2015).

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Types of evaluation

Many types of evaluation exist, consequently evaluation methods need to be customised according to what is being evaluated and the purpose of the evaluation.^{1,2} It is important to understand the different types of evaluation that can be conducted over a program's life-cycle and when they should be used. The main types of evaluation are process, impact, outcome and summative evaluation.¹

Before you are able to measure the effectiveness of your project, you need to determine if the project is being run as intended and if it is reaching the intended audience.³ It is futile to try and determine how effective your program is if you are not certain of the objective, structure, programming and audience of the project. This is why process evaluation should be done prior to any other type of evaluation.³

Process evaluation

Process evaluation is used to *measure the activities of the program, program quality and who it is reaching*³. Process evaluation, as outlined by Hawe and colleagues³, will help answer program questions, including:

- Has the project reached the target group?
- Are all project activities reaching all parts of the target group?
- Are participants and other key stakeholders satisfied with all aspects of the project?
- Are all activities being implemented as intended? If not why?
- Have any changes been made to intended activities?
- Are all materials, information and presentations suitable for the target audience?

Impact evaluation

Impact evaluation is used to measure the immediate effect of the program and is aligned with the programs objectives. Impact evaluation measures how well the program's objectives (and sub-objectives) have been achieved.^{1,3}

Impact evaluation will help answer questions including:

- How well has the project achieved its objectives (and sub-objectives)?
- How well have the desired short-term changes been achieved?

For example, one of the objectives of the My-Peer project is to provide a safe space and learning environment for young people, without fear of judgment, misunderstanding, harassment or abuse. Impact evaluation will assess the attitudes of young people towards the learning environment and how they perceived it. It may also assess changes in participants' self-esteem, confidence and social connectedness.

Impact evaluation measures the program effectiveness immediately after the completion of the program and up to six months after its completion.

Outcome evaluation

Outcome evaluation is concerned with the long-term effects of the program and is generally used to measure the program goal. Consequently, outcome evaluation measures how well the program goal has been achieved.^{1,3}

Outcome evaluation will help answer questions such including:

- Has the overall program goal been achieved?
- What factors outside the program have contributed or hindered the desired change?
- Has any unintended change occurred as a result of the program?

In peer-based youth programs, outcome evaluation may measure changes to: mental and physical wellbeing, education, employment and help-seeking behaviours.

Outcome evaluation measures changes at least six months after the implementation of the program (longer term). Although outcome evaluation measures the main goal of the program, it can also be used to assess program objectives over time. It should be noted that it is not always possible or appropriate to conduct outcome evaluation in peer-based programs.

Summative evaluation

At the completion of the program it may also be valuable to conduct summative evaluation. This considers the entire program cycle and assists in decisions including:

- Do you continue the program?
- If so, do you continue it in its entirety?
- Is it possible to implement the program in other settings?
- How sustainable is the program?
- What elements could have helped or hindered the program?
- What recommendations have evolved out of the program?^{3,4}



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PROGRAM - Day 1. Introduction to Aboriginal Research Methods for Aboriginal People

Day	Time	Topic	Activity/Experience
1	8:30-10:30	Welcome and Introduction	Indigenous research practice developed over millennia of hypothesis, experimentation and observation, analysis and results communicated across space and time. Indigenous researchers have attempted to merge Traditional philosophies, values and principles with contemporary methods and technology.
S1		Aboriginal Methods of Research	Aboriginal Methods of Research - research approaches that centre Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Being in the World (Aboriginal epistemologies and ontologies)
	10:30-11:00	Tea Break	
S2		Researcher Position	Researcher Position Part 1.
	11:00-11:45	Sharing a special object to show connection and meaning of an object and to reflect this back to creating meaning in Aboriginal research.	Listening to each participant's introduction to self and lived experience. This activity will require each participant to bring a special object to the lecture and share their connection with the object. Participants to explain how the object reflects their values and ethics, ways of being, seeing and acting and or engaging in their communities. Reflection: Talking Circle as research method – can use it for a range of collaborative purposes including deep listening, brain storming, and solution-finding. Aims to reveal Aboriginal ways of knowing and being in the world.
S3	11:45-12:30	Knowledge Sharing	Researcher Position Part 2. Advise that this activity will have a level that will be shared – be aware of this prior to starting activity.
		Deep Listening	Discussion on Knowledge shared to be explored. Deep Listening what is it and what are the benefits from this method. Reflection: self, identity, wellbeing and community.
	12:30-	Lunch	

	1:30		
S4	1:30-3:00	Research approaches that centre Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Being in the World (Aboriginal epistemologies and ontologies)	<p>“Ontology and epistemology are both important elements of the philosophy of knowledge. If they often overlap, they have clear distinction: epistemology is about the way we know things when ontology is about what things are” (https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-ontology-and-epistemology).</p> <p>Aboriginal world views are earth centric, where morals, values and culture orient towards inclusive, collective, collaborative research structures, processes and governance.</p> <p>An earth centric approach acknowledges the spirit in the ‘country’ and see things in relation to the things around them as part of a holistic system. This holistic approach draws together various contributing elements of information in order to understand the big picture.</p> <p>All life is related and interdependent, as everything is alive in an Aboriginal world view, everything exists in relationship to everything else (http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14443051003721189).</p>
	3:00-3:15	Tea Break	
S5	3:15–4:15	Research Ethics, Values Free, Prior and Informed Consent	<p>Guided conversation where participants discuss the meaning of Research Ethics, Values and Free, Prior and Informed Consent as concepts and through practical examples of better practice and poor practice.</p> <p>Promote examples of Research Ethics from Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC). Participants share regional and state based Aboriginal community controlled ethics committees.</p>

DAY 2 - PROGRAM - Introduction to Aboriginal Research Methods for Aboriginal People

Day	Time	Topic	Activity/Experience
2 S1	8.30-9:00	Review Previous Day	Reflect on the previous day of learning and sharing note a full review of the sessions will be undertaken on the final day of the Program.
2 S2	9:00 - 10.15	Place Health & Wellbeing Leadership and Cultural Governance Leadership on research and or project committees	<p>Importance of dialogue to action in research.</p> <p>Interactive presentation discussion. Participants will write down three characteristics of what makes a good leader? Participants will share their experience and understanding of what is leadership.</p> <p>Participants will share their experience of governance at any level; community, local government, regional, national government?</p> <p>Group discussion with a series of Powerpoints to guide the conversation to discuss participant's perceptions and experiences of Leadership and Cultural Governance.</p> <p>Community leaders are often invited to participate as cultural advisors or community representatives on research project committees. Discuss the role and responsibility of research committees as well as their purpose, structure and function.</p> <p>Reflect on the role of a Community leader in relation to being able to identify needs and manage research partnerships.</p> <p>The research agenda shapes the future because it shapes the questions that create the evidence for grounding decisions regarding policy, funding and practice.</p> <p>There is also a role for strengthening cultural governance by increasing participation in and understanding and control of the local community's research interests.</p>
	10:15- 10:30	Tea Break	

2 S3	10:30- 12.30	What is data? How can you collect data?	The word 'data' comes from the word for 'things'. Data is measured, collected, reported, and analysed, and it can be visualised using graphs, images and other analysis tools. Data as a general concept refers to the fact that some existing information or knowledge is represented or coded in some form suitable for better usage or processing. Guided conversation around how Data can be stories interviews, observation, recordings and surveys, questionnaires, government statistics and the results of experiments and tests. Reflect on participant's knowledge of different types of data and discuss how they could create and use appropriate data in the community.
	12:30- 1:30	Lunch	
2 S4	1:30-2:45	Introduction to Indigenous ways of collecting and analysis data	Linda Tuwai-Smith's example of Indigenous methods involving storytelling, poems, observation and participant observation. Interactive presentation discussion. Working together, read the hand outs and write down what you will share about the meaning of the article? Handouts Article 1. Diagram - 'Kalara Reveal Make Seen Liyan' McDuffie, M. (2017). Kalara: Nyikina Community Engagement Framework. Unpublished PhD Draft, p. 287. Article 2. Poelina, A. A Lucky Country and a Fair Go p.18, in Tardos, I. 2016, This Is My Country, Foto Evidence Press, New York.
	2:45-3:00	Tea Break	
2 S5	3:00–4:15	Community Cultural Planning and Cultural Development	Interactive presentation discussion. What is culture? Talking Circle and small group work to discuss and report on: 1) What is culture? 2) Why have a Cultural Plan? 3) What are the cultural resources in your community? Note: Participants identify an idea which they believe could benefit from Community Cultural Planning and Development. This will be explored in the Process Impact and Evaluation Lesson in Day 3.
		Nb.	Guest Lecturer - Day 3.

DAY 3 - PROGRAM - Introduction to Aboriginal Research Methods for Aboriginal People

Day	Time	Topic	Activity/Experience
3	8:30-10:00	Reflections of Learning Action Research Planning and Design	Reflect on the previous day learning and sharing Hand out Literature Review
	10:00-10:30	Tea Break	
	1030 - 1130.	Choosing research tools	Discussion around using video and not interviews, group discussion, yarning, questioning lines and devises such as iPhones and packages to support analysis.
	11:45-12:30	Process, Impact and Outcome Evaluation	Guided conversation around key questions: What is Evaluation? Why Use Evaluation? How do you measure success regarding whether a Project or Program Worked? Present a framework for Process, Impact and Outcome Evaluation. Hand out: Evaluation - My Peer Toolkit
	12:30-1:30	LUNCH	
	1:30–2:45	Evaluation Continued i) Increase awareness and association around Process Impact and Outcome Evaluation, ii) Increased understanding - of how to research and design the impacts of projects this Aboriginal research project.	How would you use Process, Impact and Outcome Evaluation to implement and monitor a Community Cultural Development Plan? Group discussion Participants share their ideas for project and look at how they may engage Process, Impact and Outcome Evaluation in a range of community settings. Group Discussion Why is Participatory Action Research a useful method to engage with Aboriginal people and their communities? Using Participatory Action Research , how could an Aboriginal Research project be undertaken in the region?

	2:45-3:00	Tea Break	
	3:00-3:45	Concluding Discussion	<p>Recap the information and discussions from the course. Emphasis on key concepts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Aboriginal Methods of Research - research approaches that centre Aboriginal Ways of Knowing and Being in the World (Aboriginal epistemologies and ontologies); 2) Wellbeing - Identity & Relationships with the self, community and systems; 3) Research Ethics, Values and Free Prior and Informed Consent; 4) Leadership and Cultural Governance; 5) Talking Circles/Peer Review; 6) Choosing Research Tools; 7) Process, Impact and Outcome Evaluation. <p>Provide an opportunity for participants to clarify anything discussed in the course.</p>
	3:45-4:00	Participant Course Feedback	<p>Complete Evaluation Forms Names for Certificate of Attainment - Lecturers Contacts Where To and What Now!</p>

Participant Evaluation

**Introduction to Aboriginal Research Methodology for Aboriginal People:
Three day Professional Development Program**

Pre - Evaluation Form.

Name:

1. What made you come to do this Program?

 2. What do you hope to gain from this Program?

 3. What is your current experience in Aboriginal Research?
- Eg: Less than 1 Year? Greater than 3 Years?

Participant Evaluation

**Introduction to Aboriginal Research Methodology for Aboriginal People:
Three day Professional Development Program**

Post - Evaluation Form.

4. Did the Program meet your expectations?

5. How do you plan to use the knowledge gained in the Program?

6. Were there any gaps or ways the Program could be changed to improve learning and sharing knowledge?

7. Would you be interested in learning more about Aboriginal research methods?

8. Would you promote this Program to other Aboriginal people if so who and how?

9. Would you be interested in an ongoing Aboriginal Research Network/Support System?

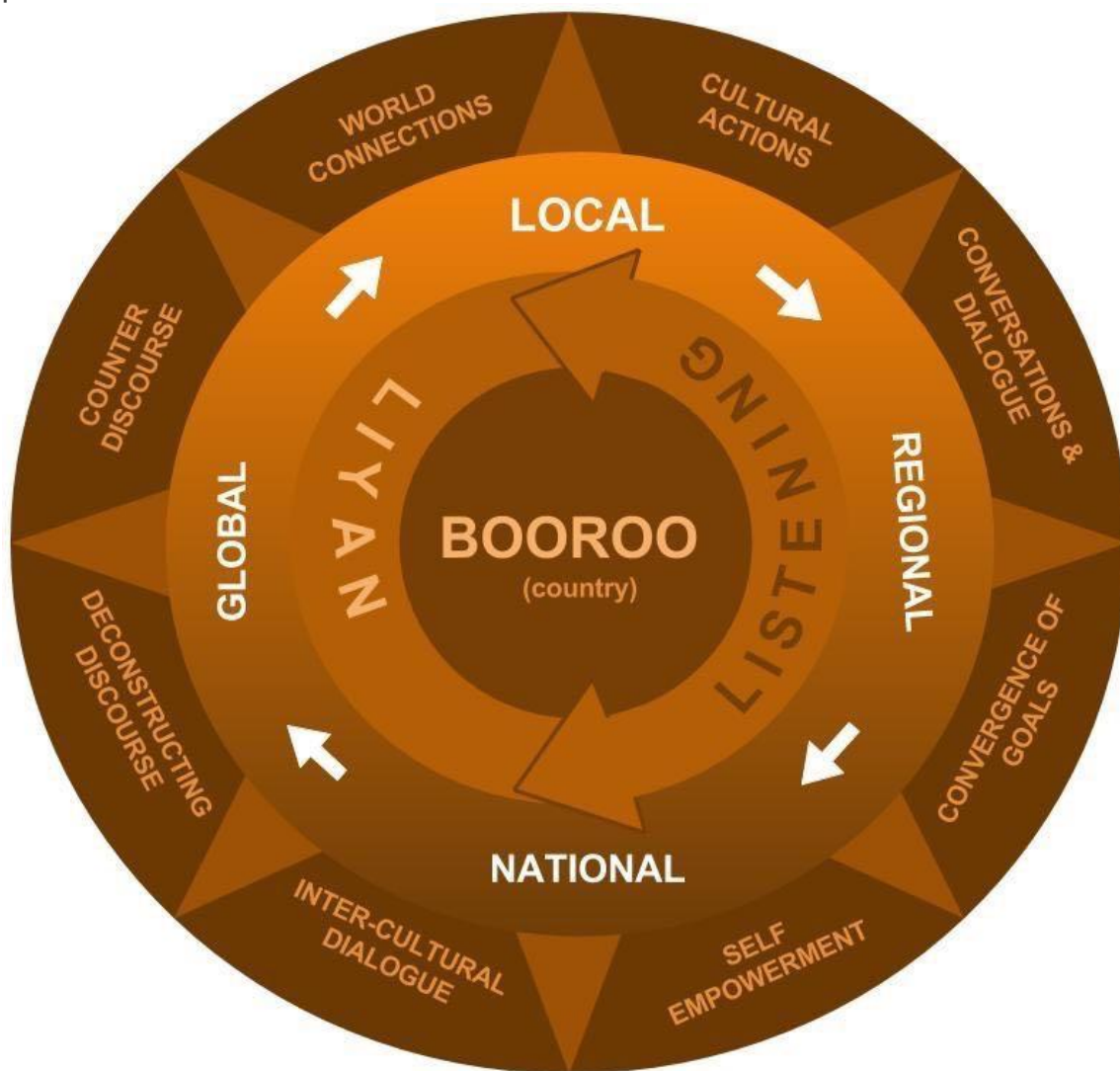
Signature.....**Date**.....

Supplementary Program Materials

Article 1.

Diagram - 'Kalara Reveal Make Seen Liyan'

McDuffie, M. (2017). Kalara: Nyikina Community Engagement Framework. Unpublished PhD Draft, p. 287.



Article 2.

Poelina, A. *A Lucky Country and a Fair Go* p.18, in Tardos, I. 2016, *This Is My Country*, Foto Evidence Press, New York.

A Lucky Country and a Fair Go

My Australian Aboriginal heritage is Nyikina, we are the traditional custodians of the lower Mardoowarra (Fitzroy River) in the remote Kimberley region of Western Australia (WA) since Bookarrakarra, the beginning of time. The colonial occupation of our country and people was violent, brutal and absolute resulting in subjugation and slavery.

As a Director of our Native Title governing board, I struggle to understand the inconceivable circumstances the Commonwealth and Western Australia continue to impose on Aboriginal people in Western Australia in 2016. The recent government policy focus on developing northern Australia has not recognised Aboriginal rights or humanity. Amongst the so-called 'modernity,' Aboriginal people in the West Kimberley and throughout the state continue to experience ongoing colonial oppression. The colonial states were established to create wealth for national and foreign interests at the expense of Aboriginal people, our lands and waters. The foreign interests have moved from cattle, sheep, pearls and gold to fracking for gas and oil, mining and intensive factory farming. None of these industries are sustainable and they all have an extremely high impact on the local people, air, land, water and biodiversity.

The true spirit of Native Title recognised the loss of life, land and liberty experienced by Australia's First Peoples. Aboriginal peoples' right to a 'Lucky Country and a Fair Go' continues to lag as governments carry on as usual with the oppression of Aboriginal Australians through policy, legislation and actions. The current Government of Western Australia moves to diminish our rights includes: watering down the Western Australia Aboriginal Heritage Act, transferring responsibility for municipal services on Aboriginal communities from the Commonwealth to the state, and the conversion of expired pastoral leases to rangeland leases and possible freehold, which would undermine Aboriginal rights and responsibilities under the Commonwealth legislated Aboriginal Native Title Law. These disingenuous acts of government reflect the inhumane treatment of Aboriginal people in Western Australia by the colonial forces over the past 187 years.

On the 17th of November 2015, the Western Australia Constitution Act of 1889 was amended to recognise Aboriginal inhabitants of Western Australia as the First People of Western Australia and the traditional owners and custodians of the land. The amendment promotes the view that the Parliament of Western Australia should seek reconciliation with Western Australia's Aboriginal people. The amendment was a gesture of support for Aboriginal people, however since that time, Western Australia has not recognised the full extent of Aboriginal rights.

The Western Australian Premier's intention to close Aboriginal communities across the state is a clear disregard for reconciliation, as closing Aboriginal communities in Western Australia would be a breach by the Parliament of Western Australia against our economic and Aboriginal rights to our ancestral lands and waters. The Hon. Robin Chapple, a Member of Parliament from a minor party, is championing a legal response to prevent the closure of Aboriginal communities through his draft private members bill in the state Parliament to Prevent the Forced Closure of Remote Aboriginal Communities 2016.

Since returning to our Nyikina traditional homelands, we have built considerable personal and community capacity. Our community Balginjirr has not received any funding from Western Australia or the Commonwealth for a considerable amount of time. Our community can best be described as "seasonal, less than ten and highly productive." We have an extensive network with visitors from all walks and disciplines of life who have come and visited our river country on the Mardoowarra, Fitzroy River. Access is often restricted due to flooding during the monsoonal wet season, throughout the hot months of October to March.

Balginjirr has been listed under the Category C. for potential closure by Western Australia. Our community has not received any information regarding the potential closure and, to this end, have no details for free prior and informed consent in regards to this act of violence being perpetrated against us by the state. The questions must be asked, "how is the closure of Aboriginal communities constitutional?", What happened to the 2001 Statement of Commitment to a New

and Just Relationship between the Western Australian Government and Aboriginal Western Australians and its guiding principles:

- Recognition of the continuing rights and responsibilities of Aboriginal people as the first peoples of Western Australia, including traditional ownership and connection to land and waters.
- Legislative protection of Aboriginal rights.
- Equity with respect to citizenship entitlements.
- Regional and local approaches to address issues that impact on Aboriginal communities, families and individuals.
- A commitment to inclusiveness and democratic processes and structures.
- The need to address issues arising from past acts of displacement.

Recent attempts by the Western Australia to close Aboriginal communities continues the systemic, legislated racist treatment that devastates and disadvantage our people and communities. It is clear that both governments, Commonwealth and Western Australia, have failed to address the issue of investing in municipal services for Aboriginal people to live in their homelands, reserves, communities and townships. This failure of governments to invest in building and maintaining adequate infrastructure in communities has been an ongoing crisis. The Western Australia Gordon Inquiry (2002) advocated building the infrastructure of Aboriginal communities as an effective strategy for supporting Aboriginal individual, family and community capacity building. The situation has become worse since the demise of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission in 2004.

A federal Aboriginal policy, Close the Gap, aimed at improving the quality of life for Aboriginal people, has urged state governments in Australia to rethink attempts to close remote Aboriginal communities. In recent times the Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda and the Co-Chair of the Close the Gap campaign, Kirstie Parker, stated, "There is a strong body of evidence in Australia that supports the link between land, culture and wellbeing. Being on country is more than a lifestyle choice. It is the essence of life itself." They both urged Western Australia and the Commonwealth to properly assess the health and wellbeing impacts of closing remote communities. They believe that, "the decisions that are being made about remote communities without consultation are premature and damaging." Many of the legislative and policy frameworks allocate the delivery of services to communities through multiple agencies, contributing to the continuing chaos and trauma.

Unfortunately there has been limited investment from both the Commonwealth and Western Australia, particularly in the areas of municipal infrastructure and essential services needed to sustain a positive, healthy and productive lifestyles. Our collective lived experiences, right up to this moment, have clearly demonstrated poor spirit and the absence of political good will from governments that have constantly sought to reduce our fundamental human rights as Aboriginal Australians. There is insufficient evaluation of the Council of Australian Governments, government services and other service providers that are failing to provide services to Aboriginal people. There is far too little funding and what there is, is only enough "to keep a lid on the dysfunction," according to former Western Australia Governor, Lt. General John Sanderson, in his previous role as Western Australia government advisor on Aboriginal people. There is no real plan, no real funding and insufficient policy to support the creation of a sustainable future for Aboriginal Australians.

There is a huge body of evidence in national, international and community reports, documentaries and lived experience regarding the utter chaos in which Aboriginal people in Western Australia are immersed. There are many positive things government could work on together with Aboriginal people in Western Australia, however governments continue to fail to engage with each other or the community. They fail to adequately plan, legislate and resource for sustainable change. Successive politicians continue the tragic history of Australians failing to come to terms with their genuine responsibility for improving the circumstances of Aboriginal people.

The application of Native Title Act, UN Declaration on the Rights of Aboriginal People and other federal and state legislation needs to be reviewed so that it meets international standards of justice rather than the parochial, mean spirited, minimalist approach experienced in Western Australia to date. In order to overcome the endemic institutionalised racism we require good will from both sides of politics. Governments need to stop trying to close Aboriginal communities and start to build collaborative partnerships to reconcile, invest in and reform Aboriginal communities; to build hope, enterprise and just outcomes.

Surely in 2016, in this 'lucky country' Australia, Aboriginal peoples have an inherent right to a fair and good life! I urge the Government of Western Australia to abandon any plans they have for closing Aboriginal communities, as this will be the final act of genocide.

We are at a turning point, where we have the opportunity to reflect on the past to shape a more constructive and fair future. It is time for Western Australia to honour our collective responsibility to act ethically towards Aboriginal Australians. Let's widen the conversation and honestly discuss how the state and indeed the nation is to be reconciled with Aboriginal people in the true spirit of a fair go mate.

If we as Australians, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, stand together, we can redefine who we are and our values for the sovereignty of our nation. We too can walk in our dreams and hold this land together for all of us to show the world that Australia is a lucky country with a fair go for all.

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