



*The Australian Institute of  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Studies*

**Canberra Evaluation Forum:**

**Emerging Trends in Indigenous Evaluations**

*Evaluating joint management of conservation areas:  
decision-making, partnerships and relationships*

*Toni Bauman, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009*

# **Successful Aboriginal Organisations Project**

## **The Australian Collaboration**

### **Poola Foundation (Tom Kantor Fund)**

#### **Case studies:**

- **Dhimurru, Gove, NT (IPA) (Smyth)**
- **Booderee, Wreck Bay, NSW (joint management) (Smyth)**
- **Nitmiluk, Katherine, NT (joint management) (Bauman)**

**Bauman, T. and D. Smyth. 2007.**

**[http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research\\_program/publications/australian\\_collaboration](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research_program/publications/australian_collaboration)**

# Problematising joint management and successful ecological approaches

## Ecology of chaos, change, interconnectivity and indeterminacy

- but not just inter-subjectivities and interdependence between people and ecosystems
- inter-subjectivities and relationships between people themselves
- webs of social, cultural, political and economic multidirectional relationships nested in systems and structures

# **Problematising joint management and successful ecological approaches (cont'd)**

## **Hyper-real narrative of joint management**

- **performing selves as not in dispute rather than dissensus**
- **parties are heterogeneous not homogeneous groups**
- **coercive harmony?: terms of engagement and recognition**

# Problematising joint management and successful ecological approaches (cont'd)

## Stereotyping 'culture' and the 'intercultural'

- not hyper-binaries eg nature/culture and indigenous/non-indigenous
- between and amongst individuals and groups – intersubjectivities
- fostering 'culture'
- many 'cultures' in jm

# Evaluating management or joint management?

## 1. Management indicators:

- *quantitative substantive indicators*
  - ecological/conservation outcomes egs
    - » no of feral animals eradicated
    - » biodiversity maintained
    - » fire management

## 2. Joint management indicators:

- *qualitative process indicators*
  - how things are done egs
    - » evolving relationships and partnerships
    - » involvement of indigenous partners in activities on the Park
    - » capacity of TOs
    - » decision-making processes of all parties

# The interdependence of structural frameworks and the business of process (which directly impacts sustainable outcomes)

## **Framework, for example:**

- Decision-making powers (eg Majority on Board)
- Commercial arrangements
- Resources to implement
- Tenure (eg lease-back arrangements)

## **The Business of Process, for example:**

- How information is conveyed
- How decisions are made
- Relationships on the ground
- Trust, respect
- How partnerships were established

# **Inequities and unevenness across and within States and Territories**

- **apparently exemplary framework arrangements are not necessarily successful on the ground**
- **apparently poor framework arrangements are not necessarily failures on the ground**
- **conditions of possibility**

# Joint management success

- case studies moulded by local histories, legal frameworks, environments, locations, resources, relationships, personalities and capacities
- different kinds of successes, greater or lesser effectiveness across the many aspects of managing protected areas
- shared ethical approaches through dialogue and specialised communication

# Structural success factors

- bipartisan political approach in which political parties, relevant Government Departments and Indigenous communities work together for the benefit of all
- secure, annual core funding which permits robust work programmes and minimum standards of management with which to leverage additional funding and support

# Effective governance processes of all parties

- flexibility;
- consistently high level leadership skills;
- traditional owners playing a central role in activities which are matched against the emotional, procedural and substantive interests of all parties including;
  - identifying strategic directions,
  - joint operational planning; and
  - evaluation procedures
- allocating sufficient resources and planning to participatory community development approaches, including:
  - inclusive and transparent decision-making and dispute management processes and ‘on-country’ visits
- constant clarification of issues and understanding of range of needs of participants;
- accessing and obtaining appropriate technical advice;
- clearly identifying and developing the capacity of all parties involved;
- integrating training activities across all the joint management partner organisations; and
- placing an emphasis on Indigenous youth.

# **Evaluating jm partnerships qualitative base line process data**

- **Consent of partners to partnership**
- **Conflicts of interest whether real or perceived**
- **Attitudes to joint management and degree of commitment of all parties**
- **Attitudes of partners to indigenous and non-indigenous people**
- **Degree of mutual respect, trust and recognition between and across all parties**
- **Ability to work as teams**
- **Degree of participation of all relevant people**
- **Clearly defined and agreed roles and responsibilities**
- **Genuine sharing of risks and benefits**
- **Clearly understood limits of the partnership including limits to resources**
- **Clearly understood lines of decision-making**
- **State of relationships between and amongst partners**
- **State of preparation of partners**
- **Mutual and non-stereotypical understandings of cultural issues**
- **Appropriateness of staff in all organisations involved**

# **Sample indicators of jm partnership**

- 1. Free, prior and informed consent in decision-making processes**
- 2. Realisation of native title rights and interests**
- 3. Relationships between the partners are positive and productive**
- 4. Experience and perception of the value of the partnership – is it fair, transparent and inclusive?**
- 5. The partnership builds capacity to take responsibility**
- 6. Enhanced relationships between and amongst partner groups**
- 7. Understanding of ‘culture’ in partnership**
- 8. Sustainability**
- 9. Benefits and losses**

## **Free, prior and informed consent (sample indicators)**

- **Did parties participate voluntarily? How was this established?**
- **The right to say ‘no’ was respected.**
- **How were all parties prepared to make a decision?**
  - How did they understand information and issues?
  - What didn’t they understand?
- **How did the process help parties understand:**
  - What participatory techniques were used?
- **How did the process incorporate expertise beyond the community?**
  - eg, anthropologists, lawyers, environmental experts etc?
- **What kinds of community education processes were put in place?**
- **Did the process incorporate feedback loops?**

- **Were the right people involved?**
  - Who was missing?
  - Who did/didn't get a chance to speak?
- **How did parties feel about the decision/outcome?**
  - Benefits?
  - Disadvantages?
- **If representatives were used, was there enough time to allow them to consult with those they represent?**
- **How were power imbalances accounted for and negotiated?**
- **How would you prefer things to have been done?**
  - Would someone else have been better to manage the process?
  - If so, who and why?

# Partnership Brokering

- **Urgent need for arms length procedural experts with specialised communication skills to assist government, Indigenous communities and other stakeholders to build their capacity in:**
  - ensuring parties are able to negotiate effectively and that agreements contribute to strategic pathways for Indigenous community cohesion;
  - ensuring agreements are fair, and represent the interests of all parties;
  - planning and implementing workable community strategies and solutions;
  - identifying and exploring the causes and potential solutions to problems; and
  - evaluating, monitoring, renegotiating, modifying or adapting strategies and solutions as required.

# National Indigenous Dispute Resolution Service

- Using ADR approaches in partnership brokering, community engagement and decision-making processes.
  - Eg:
    - Options generating
    - Reality checking
    - Exploration of issues
    - Negotiating

# Contact Details



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