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Technical Report

Indigenous peoples and biodiversity protection in wet tropics country: from co-management to collaborative governance

Volume 2 Participatory evaluation results



Rosemary Hill, Petina L. Pert, Kirsten Maclean, Toni Bauman, Ellie Bock,
Allan P. Dale, M'Lis Flynn, Alf Joyce, Steve McDermott, Vince Mundraby,
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Australian Government
Department of the Environment

 Reef &
Rainforest
RESEARCH CENTRE

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Acronyms Used In This Report

AC	Aboriginal Corporation
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
GBR	Great Barrier Reef
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
JYAC	Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation
KES	Keeping Engagement Strong
NRS	National Reserve System
NERP	National Environmental Research Program
NRM	natural resource management
MY	Mandingalbay Yidinji
MYAC	Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation
PBC	Prescribed Body Corporate
RAP	Rainforest Aboriginal People
RAPKS	Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong
RRRC	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Limited
RTNBC	Registered Native Title Body Corporate
TO	Traditional Owner
WOC	Working on Country
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority
WTRA	Wet Tropics Regional Agreement
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

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Introduction

This report is an accompanying volume to *Indigenous peoples and biodiversity protection in wet tropics country: from co-management to collaborative governance. Volume 1 interim policy-relevant findings* (Hill et al. 2014). For ease of access we include the results from the four participatory evaluation workshops together here rather than as Appendices to Volume 1.

The background and methods for these participatory evaluations are presented in Volume 1. This report should be read alongside Volume 1, and also with reference to the previous report in the series *Participatory evaluation of co-management in wet tropics country. Interim Report* (Hill et al. 2013).

Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' regional and Girringun's sub-regional participatory evaluation of co-management in wet tropics country

Data Analysis July 2014

R. Hill conducted the qualitative data analysis. P.L. Pert conducted the spatial data analysis. L. Tawake conducted the quantitative data analysis.

Overview

The participatory evaluation at the Girringun sub-regional scale was conducted at a workshop held at Cardwell Community Hall on 23 November 2013. The participatory regional scale evaluation was conducted with Rainforest Aboriginal peoples (RAP) during the *Warrama* workshop on 30 November 2013 at the Genzanno Centre on the AthertonTableland. At the both regional and Girringun sub-regional, scale, RAP rated the health for structures, processes and results for *Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong* (RAPKS) higher than those for *Keeping Engagement Strong* (KES) (Figures 1-12). While the overall pattern was similar between the regional and sub-regional evaluations, gap between RAPKS and KES was larger for structures and results at the regional scale, while that for processes was smaller.

Structures for co-management of wet tropics country

Both RAP regional and Girringun sub-regional evaluation rated the structures for the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPKS) as overall healthier than those for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figures 1 and 2). The gap between the two is notably larger at the regional scale.

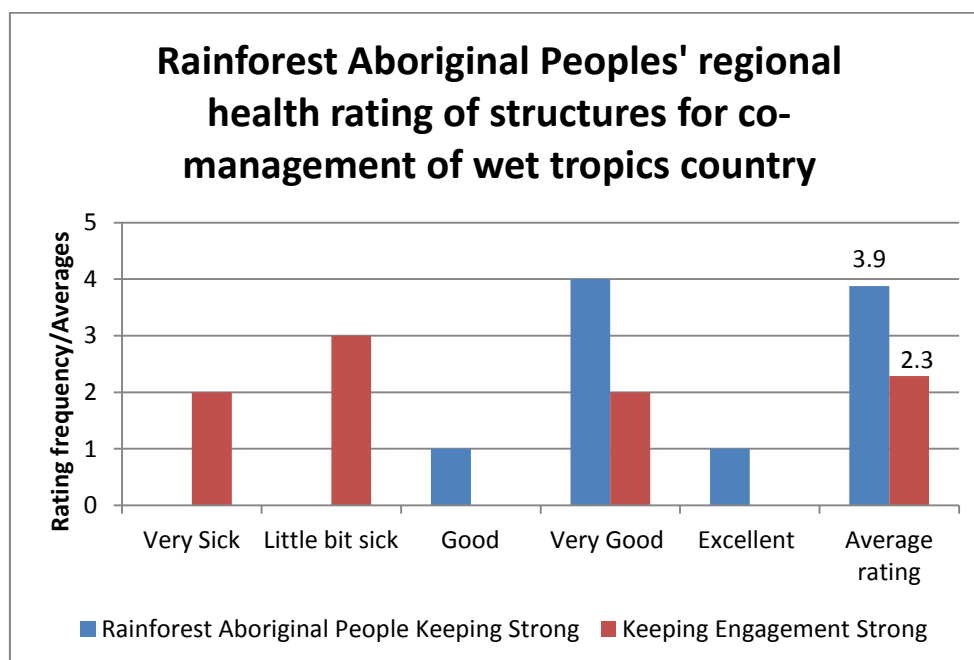


Figure 1: Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' regional health rating of structures for co-management of wet tropics country

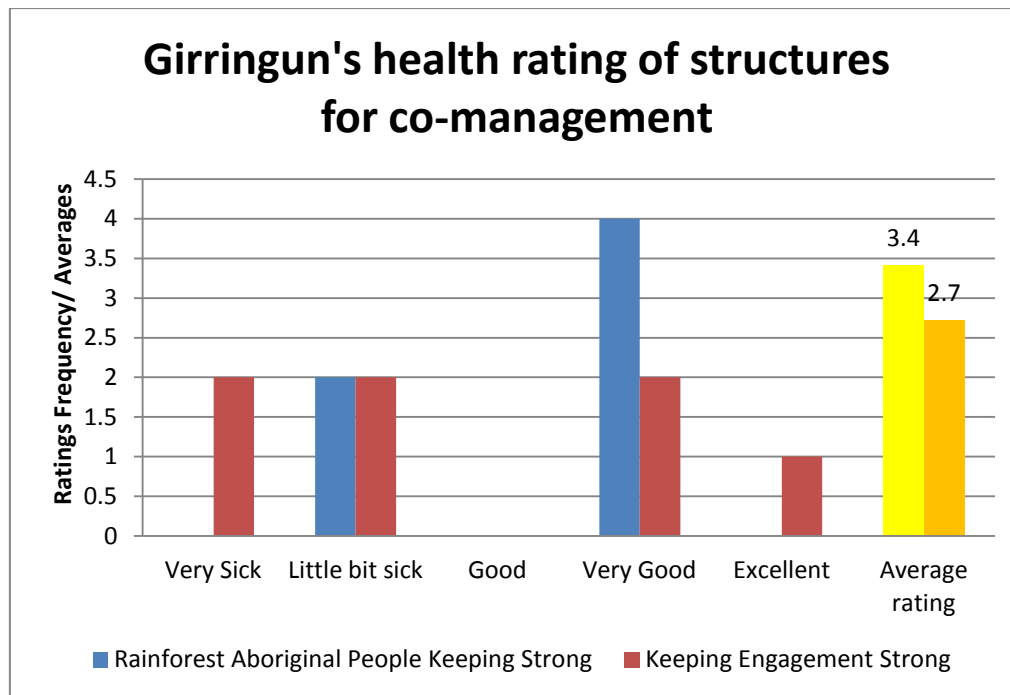


Figure 2: Girringun's health rating of structures for co-management in their part of wet tropics country

Structures for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong

The RAP regional evaluation rated structures for RAPKS as 3.9, which rounds to "very good" overall whereas as the Girringun sub-regional evaluation viewed them as 3.4 "good".

In both cases, strengths in the RAPKS feature were identified primarily in relation to the closely linked topics of *Indigenous Leadership and governance*, and the closely related topics *Kin and Culture*, with strengths also identified in country and capacity at the regional scale (

Figure 1). *RAP Strategic vision and intent* was viewed as stronger in the Girringun sub-regional evaluation than in the regional evaluation. In contrast, culture and country were viewed as stronger in the regional evaluation than in the Girringun sub-regional evaluation.

The cultural and spiritual foundation was identified as the primary source of structural strength in the Girringun sub-regional evaluation:

People ask, how does Girringun go from strength to strength? There's no policy, no procedures. We have that cultural foundation. There's always room for improvement, but the cultural and spiritual foundation is better than what government says, we have to write down this in a strategic plan. Culture and spirituality is our way (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The customary law basis, and connections to other Aboriginal peoples and country across the continent, was highlighted at the regional scale:

Our mob manage through our ancestors by being linked into, by law, on the spiritual level... The principles of the law. While each area might practice it a little different, the principles are the same. It connects the storyline, connects us to the desert, connects all of us... when you look at the holistic thing, we've got these stories, there's all different connections, ceremonies and laws travelling (RAP regional workshop).

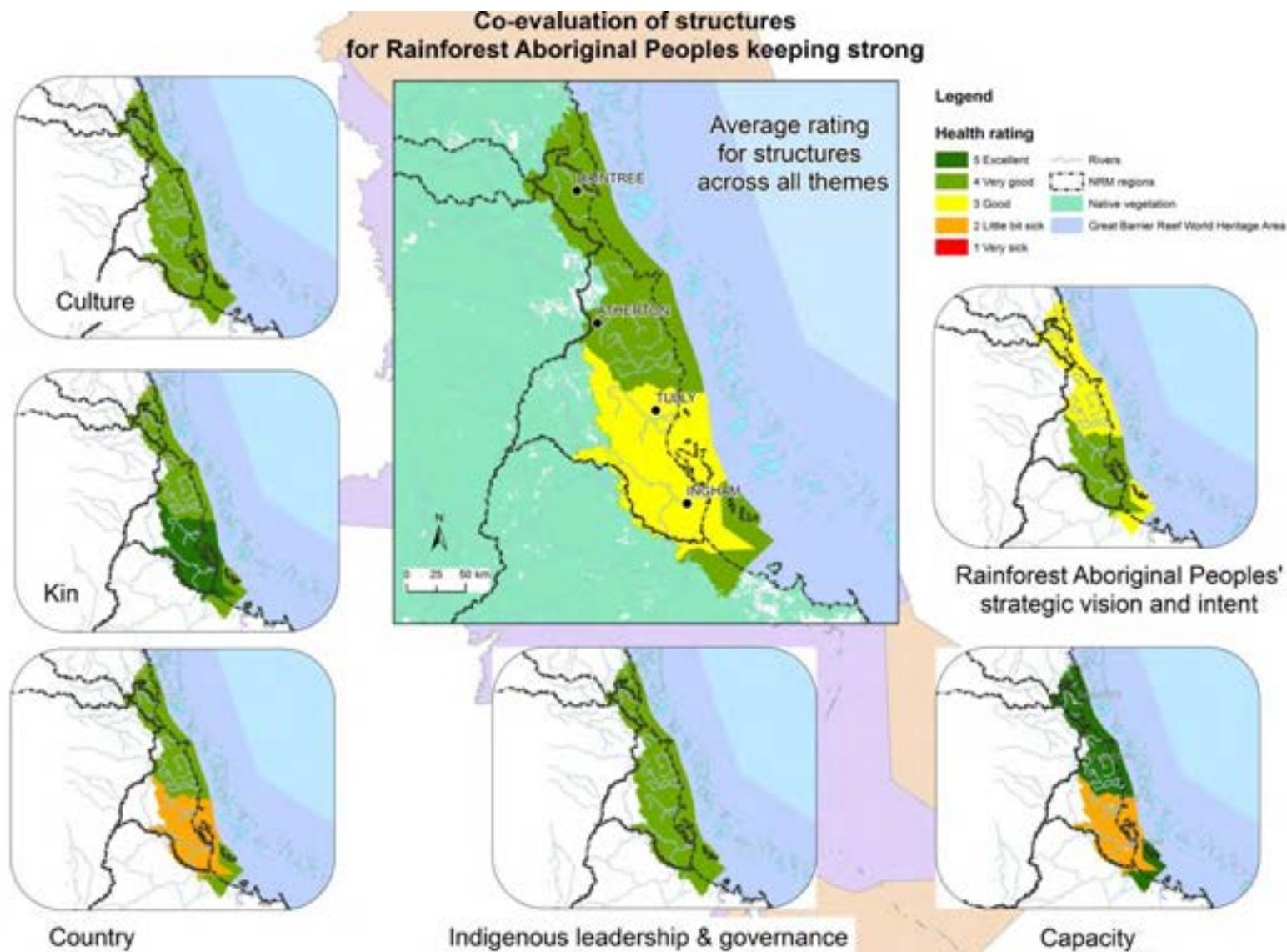


Figure 3: RAP regional evaluation of health of structures for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* in wet tropics country (with Giringun sub-regional evaluation shown in their part)

The strength of structures for *strategic vision* is associated with Indigenous Protected Areas, which are regarded as more adaptive and effective than those associated with negotiating ILUAs in the context of native title:

IPA is what gives us the structure for strategic vision, IPA is the what, comes together in putting our vision, Rangers is the how ... ILUAs put us in a competition with the State, negotiating to reach an agreement. ... In an IPA we have something that can be adapted, it evolves. With an ILUA, it depends on the strength of the negotiation (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The inequitable basis of the negotiation for ILUAs was noted in the regional evaluation:

Once you get native title, even then it's just a right to negotiate. Under the threat of compulsory acquisition. If industry wants the land for something, if you can't come out with some sort of agreement, ILUA, whatever, their legal people threaten if you don't agree we'll ask the State for a compulsory acquisition. So it puts us on the back foot, right is given and taken away at the same time. Any industry can actually do that, it goes back to the institutionalised racism in the system (RAP regional workshop).

The RAP regional evaluation rated "strategic vision and intent" as less healthy than the evaluation conducted at the Girringun scale, reflecting frustration with native title processes:

Native title means that we're being like turtles, going into our shell (RAP regional workshop).

While people recognised the native title support for tribal-level self-determination and speaking for your own country, there were concerns that this interfered with people coming together around a common purpose, a strategic vision and intent:

PBCs see they own everything... nobody's going to tell him what to do... That's very selfish and very arrogant. It really goes against the will of our dreaming... There's got to be some sort of thing, like a common sense thing where we all pull together (RAP regional workshop).

The health of structures for Indigenous governance was rated as "very good" at both the regional and Girringun sub-regional scales. While Indigenous governance and leadership is based in customary law, Indigenous organisations were recognised as very important way of carrying that leadership, with some a little patchy in their structures:

Girringun is a strong organisation and strong leadership. It provides strong leadership. Round about the other organisations within the area that form part of Girringun, some of the organisations don't have the - may not be structured very strongly, they're not as strong. But they do have strong leaders in members and I think that's probably what helps some of these organisations build this success. So it's boiled down to sometimes the real leadership.

Strengthening culture was promoted as the way to strengthen organisations above:

Strengthen cultural ways first... put energy into the common interests, the will of our Dreaming, our story lines all connect up. PBCs need to build cultural knowledge, cultural practice, cultural ways (RAP regional workshop).

Nevertheless, some substantial discussion at the regional workshop highlighted concerns about a misfit between the PBC requirements and how Indigenous governance has operated in the colonial context:

You know, these new corporate laws. It's not a tribal law. It's a Western... whether you're from there or not, the old people got the balance right. They believe in common ground. They get the balance right. But today because there's a lot of displaced people... before the corporate came in, no matter where you were, if you were Aboriginal we'd look after you anyway. We'd take you in... Now, it's sort of our own people are

segregating out, it's happening everywhere, every mob. It divides family and kin and people (RAP regional workshop).

High health ratings for *Kin* and *Culture* at both regional and Girringun sub-regional scale reflects aspects such as the strengths of wet tropics clan groups working together, and the focus on establishing structures to support cultural transmission:

Cultural art and craft and language programs in place at Girringun to support TOs to move forward (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

We are strong, we still have a lot of our culture, cultural values, our traditional way. For example, kinship, we are always looking after our families. That's a thing that's been passed through many tribal groups that we look after each other (RAP regional workshop).

Opportunities to strengthen kin and culture through the adoption of "Bama core commandments" and "protocols for people coming back" were identified at the regional evaluation:

Bama core commandments;

- 1. Sharing and caring for everyone*
- 2. Respecting (country and kin)*
- 3. Including (everyone)*
- 4. Uniting (people)*
- 5. Practicing (culture)*
- 6. Ensuring next generation*
- 7. "Lest we forget" – we need a logo like this*
- 8. Being sacred (ancestors)*
- 9. Remembering*
- 10. Taking it up to the Western and World (strategically)*

And a protocol for people coming back;

- 1. To knowing country*
- 2. To life-long learning – culture*
- 3. To getting involved in business (RAP regional workshop).*

Concerns were also expressed about the impact of recent cut-backs in government investment in cultural activities:

We used to get a lot of artwork from the prison... now there's nothing... (Elsewhere) they used to have indigenous officers or interpreters. About a year ago budget cuts came with the new government... I mean our whole entire department went (RAP regional workshop).

The good health rating for structures for country at the regional scale reflects the many activities that enable people to get out on country, including: Ranger programs; museum activities that involve getting out on country to collect materials for spear-making, wooden artifacts, baskets etc; and health and rehabilitation programs that support men's and women's groups to get out on country. People also noted how their own customary practices within families are also structures for getting out on country:

When I was there as a little girl - aunty took us all over and sat down with our uncle and them and they used to give us this grass to chew. Here chew this, chew the end of the grass and use it as a paintbrush (RAP regional workshop).

Despite the health rating for structures for country as "very good" at the regional scale, concerns were expressed about how the structures for returning land precluded rather than enabled economic benefit to be derived from their land:

Even with the land that was supposed to be given back to us, soon as we get the land, it's put in a place where we can't touch it. We've got our native title but we can't use it for what we want... No leverage, does that make sense, we got nothing... We got some blocks that were non-exclusive, that meant everybody used them, and we got some that are exclusive possession to us, but they have turned them back into national parks before we got the exclusive possession of them. They get you both sides. They went through and done all the tenures on them, turned them back into national parks, and then they give them over as exclusive possession, so that takes our rights away from us anyway, once you sign an ILUA(RAP regional workshop).

The poor health rating for the Country and Capacity topics in the sub-regional evaluation similarly reflects the critical need for uplifting the socio-economic status of Rainforest Aboriginal people, and lack of structures to support access to the use of country for economic development:

People don't have a fridge, don't have a proper home, but they own a \$3 million cattle station. How do we capitalise on that asset, and bridge the gap, to get equitable social-economic benefits? We own this cattle station but our kids can't read (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The capacity of people in the Girringun sub-regional evaluation was identified as highly variable across the family, clan, and sub-regional scales, with different skill development needs at each scale:

- *Family groups need to develop knowledge of story and culture for co-management*
- *Prescribed Body Corporates need to develop the capacity to ensure delivery of the Indigenous Land Use Agreements, and to work with the Aboriginal Corporations and Land Trusts according to cultural protocols*
- *The sub-regional "umbrella" group (Girringun) needs ongoing ability to follow the directions of on-ground groups, to bring partners to the table and gain and deliver resources back to the family and clan group levels (Girringun sub-regional workshop).*

The RAP regional evaluation rated capacity as very good, which reflected how RAP are able to bring capacity-development across a number of domains, for example health, art, rangers, medical centres etc. The most commonly identified issue for improvement in the structures at the Girringun sub-regional level was in the relationships across the family/ tribal/sub-regional/regional scales:

Issue is that there is no protocol in place for the relationship between the Prescribed Body Corporates (PBCs) and Girringun ... around communication – e.g. do we talk to the chair of the PBC? ... We need a protocol for regional to sub-regional level as well (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

While room for improvements in structures for RAPKS overall were clearly identified in the Girringun workshop, people also felt they had the systems in place to identify and fix structures over time:

We're not 100% there. But we do now have ways of knowing what is important to do right now. For example, we got a wake-up call at the AGM, we're not just sitting back, we're doing something about that, responding to that criticism (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

People are also very aware of the need to use 'policy windows' to improve structures:

A lot of stuff hinges on the will of the government of the day and we need to seize opportunity of the day....at the same time develop capacity....so when the opportunity arises we are ready (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Structures for Keeping Engagement Strong

The RAP regional evaluation rated structures for KES as 2.3 which rounds to “little bit sick” overall whereas as the Giringun sub-regional evaluation rated them as 2.7, which rounds to “good” overall. In both cases, strengths in the Keeping Engagement Strong feature (KES) were identified in relation to the themes *Protocols* and *Issues Resolution* (Figure 2). The Giringun sub-regional evaluation also saw strengths in *Relationships*, which they rated as “very good”.

The strength perceived in structures for protocols, in both regional and Giringun sub-regional assessments, is associated with cultural protocols, and also with those established in the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement (WTRA) after many years work.

The health rating of *Issues Resolution* as “very good” reflects the ongoing agreement-making structures that RAP have with government staff in the region:

At the end of the day the agreement will come when both parties sit down and say, righty-o, the goal is set there. If we move to meet halfway, agree on that one, we've achieved something. We hardly get into strife with any government departments. (RAP regional workshop).

Some gaps in structures for *Issues Resolution* were also identified contexts:

But on dispute resolution eg businesses in a national park, there's no structures ... government hide behind government policy (Giringun sub-regional workshop).

Giringun contributors evaluated that they have excellent relationships with a diverse set of partners, particularly facilitated through the IPA:

Through GAC we have a good relationship with federal government, state government and land owners. Good governance. IPA is a true benefit-sharing collaboration between parties (Giringun sub-regional workshop).

In contrast, the regional evaluation rating of these relationships as a “little bit sick”, reflects diversity across and within sectors:

People are going onto country without permission. Tour operators show a lack of respect for our country. Governments don't support bama to stay on country (RAP regional workshop).

Both RAP regional and Giringun sub-regional workshops rated power as “little bit sick”. People are very frustrated with the limitations and containment of their power to exercise their cultural and other rights on country:

What would we really, truly like to do, we would like to—oh, it probably seems a bit silly or what—but what we needs to get hold of is land where we can do what we want to do in our own country without being harassed by government... Just our way of doing things. We're not in control. But we have the motivation to be (RAP regional workshop).

Giringun's approach is to continue to exercise their rights as much as possible through a co-existence approach with incremental improvements over time:

We act as though Giringun has power, we do it in conjunction with others like Parks, or we might go through local government, even business ... I feel with this power business, it's incremental assertion of rights, while being respectful of their roles, making them comfortable (Giringun sub-regional workshop).

Regimes for joint management and *Mechanisms*, closely related themes, were both rated as “very sick” in the Giringun sub-regional evaluation, and as “very sick” and “little bit sick” by the RAP regional evaluation. Lack of delivery by governments of mechanisms promised through agreements, including native title and the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement, is of concern:

The agencies they have signed up with us in the Regional Agreement, they haven't picked up their side of the mechanisms. In WTMA and QPWS now they only got one officer each ... Government didn't keep up their end. They wanted "working groups" but nothing came up (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Native title is limited, it's sick, it's very sick. Government say a lot of things. Say they'll do this and that. But come down the track where they get in writing, it doesn't go to the implementation, doesn't go there. It's a hard thing. I don't know what, they acknowledge it, seem to like "ok we'll do it" and then they brush it aside. It's got me baffled. People go and say something, yes we'll do that. And then don't (RAP regional workshop).

The RAP regional workshop recognised that IPAs and Rangers can offer an alternative "regime" for co-management, while the Girringun workshop saw that tenure arrangements could strengthen these:

Currently our regimes include IPAs. Land Trusts, tenure. We'd like to look at things in the Cape, re-evaluate those arrangements. Maybe some tenure changes would be good. We're looking at new structures, if Parks starting to look at de-gazetting some parks, they could come over to us.

A lot of the forestry reserves, the government have withdrawn from the settlement we reached, we had agreed on five different types of tenure. But now e.g. Temoulin they are looking at the timber there. But mahogany gliders live there.

Concerns were raised about the highly constrained tenure outcomes (from the native title negotiations) that limit the Regimes for joint management:

We're getting nothing out of native title. They started discussing with 500 blocks with us. Now we've got 185 with exclusive possession, only 19 freehold, but they turned around and put national parks with ILUA over it. And that ILUA stops us doing our traditional burning, burning only for weeds (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The lack of a mandated structure on the government side to enable a focal point for holistic negotiation and collaboration across all parts of co-management is a major contributor to poor health ratings for Keeping Engagement Strong:

We have moved heaven and earth to get our own act together here in Girringun, but on the government side it hasn't been reciprocated. They have no mechanisms, no structures in place. When we were working on the State Government Negotiating Tables, they were always demanding a mandate. Wanting us to demonstrate that we had a mandate from the 9 tribal groups. But when it came to their mandate, they had none. They even had two blokes from the same department, education, one from Townsville and one from Cairns, and they were not singing the same song. They are hypocrites. They have no structures, no mandate (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Structures for co-managing key actions like fire are viewed as preventing rather than facilitating application of Indigenous knowledge and practices:

For fire management, we went through and did all the certificates under their mainstream law. Elders would say to us "burn now". But government say "we have a plan" "we are going to burn on these dates" ... We say things like, we haven't had a good season of fruit, so we should burn now. If we want our regular food source we have to burn at the season.

There's a clash between scientist and TO burning ... we are not yet at the point of running fire management according to our customary law. It's not at that point yet, it's more a "watered-down version" because we are doing it in partnership ... And that ILUA

stops us doing our traditional burning, says burning only for weeds (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The very poor rating for the theme *Principles* at both workshops reflects a view that the structures lack flexibility to support self-determined trajectories of engagement. The structures threaten a shut down on Traditional Owner groups who engage at their own pace in keeping with their current capacity:

If PBC aren't operating or have the resources to manage their affairs, they effectively can get taken back by the government through Indigenous Business Australia. It doesn't give the TOs the confidence, says you're going to lose everything anyway – looks like they are setting you up to fail, it doesn't allow for that flexibility, that fluid movement of moving forward. The system says yes, the mob is going to fail anyway, we'll give them half a chance, but the system has already made that decision (RAP regional workshop).

Structures for engagement with business were identified as a key gap in both the regional and Girringun sub-regional evaluations. Options for improving structures for engagement focused on a number of potential actions including:

- Changes to land tenure to provide more Aboriginal tenures;
- Offering to take over management of parks that are under consideration by the Queensland Government for de-gazettal because they cost too much to manage;
- Building partnerships with business, such as the one developing with a private forestry company;
- Preparing the case for policy changes in order to be ready for the opportunity when it arises;
- Investigating potential for compensation claims for loss of native title rights, and using the compensation as the foundation of economic development
- Establishing an independent advisory service for business and marketing development (separate to Indigenous Business Australia); and
- Reinforcing with government the capability of Rainforest Aboriginal people to manage country.

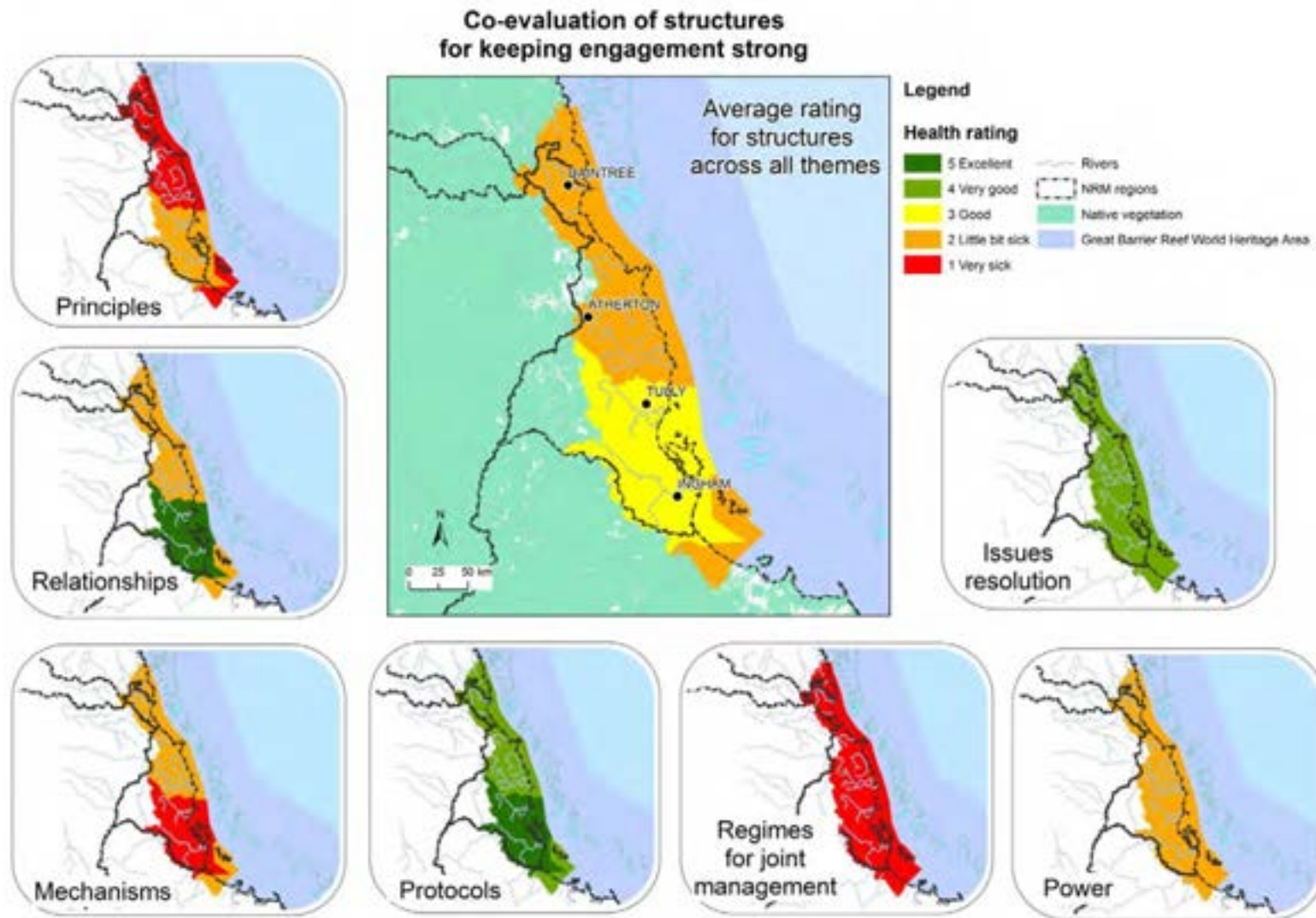


Figure 4: RAP regional evaluation of health of *structures* for *Keeping Engagement Strong* in wet tropics country (with Girringun sub-regional evaluation shown in their part)

Processes for co-management of wet tropics country

Both RAP regional and Girringun sub-regional evaluation rated the processes for the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPKS) as overall healthier than those for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figures 3 and 4). The gap between the two is notably smaller at the regional scale.

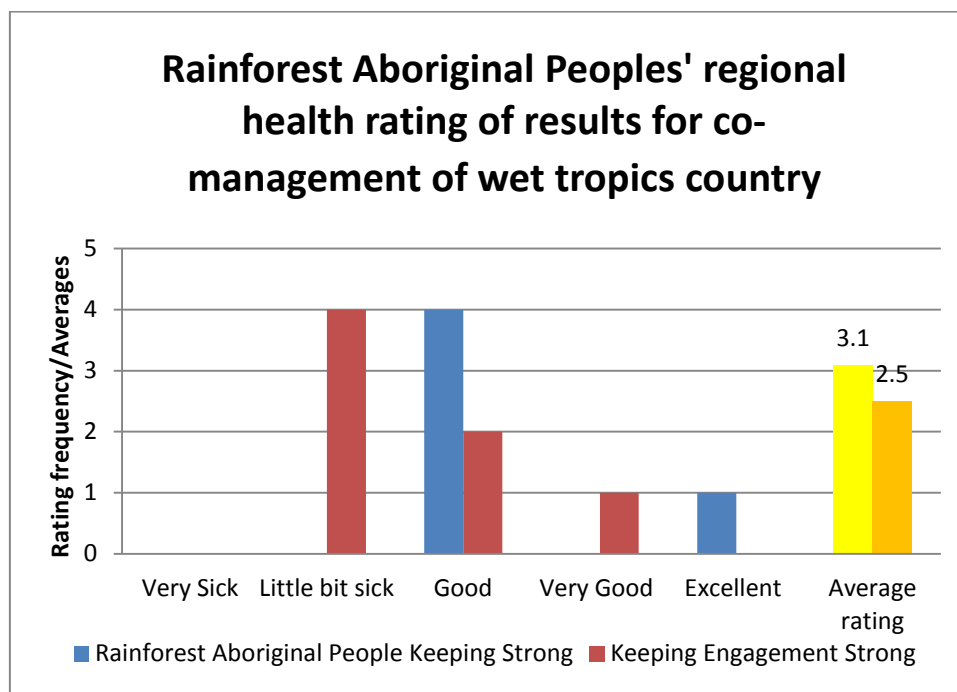


Figure 5: Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' regional health rating of results for co-management of wet tropics country

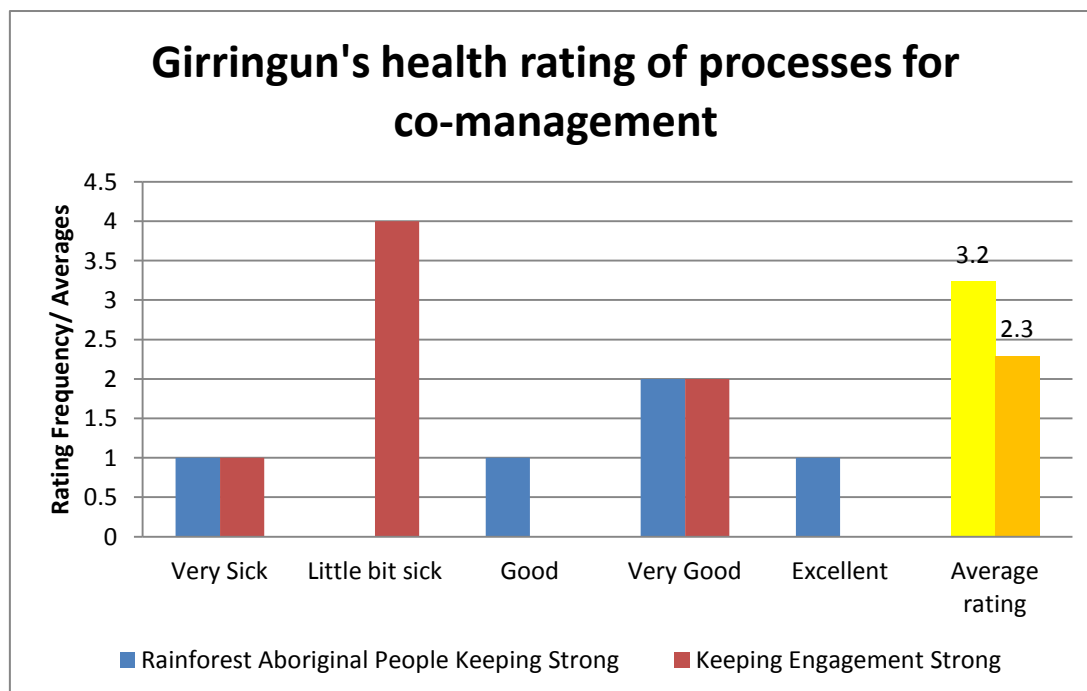


Figure 6: Girringun's health rating of processes for co-management in their part of wet tropics country

Processes for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong

Both the RAP regional evaluation and the Girringun sub-regional evaluation rated the processes for RAPKS as overall “good”.

Processes for *Indigenous governance and leadership* were identified as a key strength at both regional and Girringun sub-regional scales, with health ratings of “very good” and “excellent” respectively (Figure 7). Indigenous leadership focuses on the management of people as the key process:

Blackfella leadership business is about going and meeting with people. So many ingredients in it. You have to be able to manage people, and you have to be able to do that well ... Our leadership is very much underpinned by our cultural values. Everything has our cultural values, we're always having it out there, that we are doing it according to those cultural values (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

In addition, the exercise of customary law provides a source of ongoing strength:

It's the leadership that can get it right. What we are talking about, we have in place a contemporary sovereignty. All the world acts as if we do. If you act as if it's there, you achieve it. If you go and ask for it, people will say no (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

At the regional scale, opportunities for younger people to step up into leadership roles were identified as a key strength:

There is a turnover of new leadership and as long as they have that same vision as what the leadership have established for a long time, to come in and carry on that vision (RAP regional workshop).

We're always on the lookout for young people. You can see a person may be there coming on, but sometimes they're not ready (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The role of these elders in identifying young people to step up into leadership roles is also very important:

We started under a mango tree at the back of the office there. Four persons had the idea in their heads. “We want you young people to do this. Buy this block of land, start Girringun, get our land back. Resign from Canberra, get home to get your land back.” I was working as an advisor to Minister for Education, had a high-flying job. More than 20 years ago now. The spirits brought us all back here (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The high rating for Indigenous leadership also reflects that processes are in place to manage potential conflicts of interest:

One thing I do is that no-one from my family ever gets a job in Girringun ... We use skills based appointment, looking for specific skills. Not having family appointed is part of being a role model ... If we did have someone applying for a job that was related to family, we'd manage the conflict of interest, through not voting on that job (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The regional leadership training conducted by the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance in early 2013 was viewed as very useful and needing follow-up:

Now we need some sub-regional workshops to build the leadership at the local level (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Nevertheless, both evaluations noted the ongoing struggle to maintain the resources for the key organisations through which the processes of Indigenous governance are delivered:

We get called on a lot for input to decisions and we work with the land and sea - but it's always that battle with funding because we have to fight for that. We've got our

programs which only last for a year or maybe four years and then we have to fight again to get the funding to keep it going. A little bit here, a little bit there, and some of our funding is only 12 months. So at the end of each 12 months we're sort of panicking whether we've still got our jobs (RAP regional workshop).

Processes to support Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' strategic vision and intent were regarded as in "excellent health" in the Girringun sub-regional evaluation (Figure 7). Again, the key factor here was having the right people that enabled the cultural and spiritual processes as the foundation:

We were so blessed with the wisdom of our elders in setting up Girringun. Once you get your cultural and spiritual processes right everything flows from that. We had strong elders who were absolutely critical. We are a very spiritual people. In the main we have got those spiritual processes right. Consistent leadership that took us from those spiritual visions to where we are now ... We have excellent processes for maintaining our vision. We know our strengths, we know what we want (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The lower health rating of "good" at the regional scale reflects some of the difficulties of getting people to come together:

Depends again on the unity of the whole group. There is internal stuff that needs to be sorted amongst our own mob for them to set a footprint forward. Unless we start sorting those stuff out ourselves, that it hinders our progress forward. Unless we start looking at that ourselves, realistically, what are the issues so we can move forward, so that we can fix them, so we can set a course. Still a long way to go (RAP regional workshop).

While processes for supporting *Kin* are rated as "good" and "very good" at the regional and Girringun sub-regional scales, there is also recognition of problem areas:

Keep harmony between all clan groups. Rather than collaborate, people put arguments, pushing their egos forward. Some people don't have that collective vision and a lot of the young ones are going off on their own way, challenging people's connections for example not respecting (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Processes for addressing issues around the "stolen generation", where connection, knowledge and identity have been impacted, are an important gap:

Our mob got taken away, a lot of our mob got wiped out and got taken away. We got taken away from our country. Now we want to come back to our country. We want to be part of what's going... with stolen generation comes loss of connection, you lose your knowledge, you don't have an identity... A lot of young people don't know their identity, their tribe.

I think there needs to be a more collaborative approach in there within groups. You know, helping one another to find families and make sure that people connect.

We need a youth leadership camp where we're given some of them direction, one to cultural education, because they've got to learn both-ways, and using today's technology. Their cultural knowledge tradition, it has to go hand in hand... Have cultural camps and retrain these young ones (RAP regional workshop).

With the stolen generation... if it's a traditional adoption they still get all the knowledge, they get passed on the knowledge from the mob, but it doesn't necessarily mean it's their mob (RAP regional workshop).

People being able to develop their own genealogies, if handled sensitively, was identified in the regional evaluation as a potentially powerful tool for showing connections:

At the same time everybody is related to everybody. You can always make that connection. We always make the connection. We share the same grandchildren (RAP regional workshop).

The importance of mediation was highlighted in the regional evaluation:

Families are fragmented, they're fractured... We need to get an agreement happening, yeah. So yeah I think that mediation needs to happen... Positive mediation between fragmented groups. That's where mediators in family groups are very important (RAP regional workshop).

Processes for the theme *Culture* were only rated as "good" in both the regional and sub-regional evaluations, compared to the structures for *Culture* which are rated as "very good" for both. This slippage reflects the impacts of colonisation, the fact that some groups are ahead in taking up opportunities, and the need for more activities focused on cultural transmission:

Well I know my way. I might not know it really well but I do know it. I know where I come from, who my group is, who my family is, how my connection is... but it's not excellent in the language, law and dreaming, well that's something I need to learn because I've never had it from a small child. They are being kept strong but I think there's more work that needs to be done in terms of passing that knowledge down... Even put that as a gap, loss of cultural knowledge, because a lot have lost that through being stolen. I think the biggest thing is the language (RAP regional workshop).

Other clan are doing catch up, compared to Girramay with cultural art and craft dance stories, language, law, lore ... More programs ie camps (cultural) at clan level encourage youth to come back on country (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

This bloke went and took (recorded) our grandparents years and years and years ago. Went to the Institute of Aboriginal Studies. So we managed to get some of that back, those tapes and all of that. We've digitised those tapes into DVDs and we're in the process of getting our language done. So we're going to utilise those services there and that's how we're going to get our language back. We think education of our young kids is one of the main things, and one of the main things is language. Once we've got that our kids can speak that language (RAP regional workshop).

We need mentors to lead the young people, all the native fruit and food that's around the land, learn the land. Learn to survive when they go to the bush, on their knowledge of food. What they can eat, what they cannot eat. We need mentors to show them all the food... So their roles, and responsibilities, obligations to themselves, obligations to family, community, and country. One of the biggest cries in our community today that a lot of our kids don't have any respect for elders. We have to re-teach, re-educate our mob with our cultural values and what it is to participate. (RAP regional workshop).

One issue is about people working together. Like there should be more transparency. Like what I was saying before some knowledge doesn't get passed down...it's because of colonisation, people have different ideas and go outside their boundaries (RAP regional workshop).

Some of the digital media projects were highlighted as an effective way to link youth with culture:

Old fellow take them out bush, get them a documentary for the land, doing their own video recording, it's something constructive for them, people taking them out to hunt, with some of the elders (RAP regional workshop).

Ranger groups were identified as enabling critically important processes for the *Country* theme at both the regional and Girringun sub-regional evaluations. Rangers work on management of problems like invasive species; on cultural programs such as taking youth groups and Elders on country together; on mapping and protecting cultural and natural values and sites; on fire management; on teaching youth cultural protocols on country; and also on emergency response such as to the cyclone. However, many Ranger groups are currently being cut back due to changes in government policies.

However, processes to support “country” were identified as limited, primarily because of gaps in relation to generating and equitably sharing socio-economic opportunities and benefits from country:

Intent is there, but the simple how to isn't. Biggest challenge is the equitable distribution of wealth between all the Girringun mob ... But in the group, there will be people who want to keep it to themselves, not to share benefits (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The limitations on how land can be used also affect the ratings of processes for the theme Country:

Our young people go into the mainstream. They can't get jobs. Given us the land, but we can't use it. If we can turn it around, and say, we can get this land and we can work on the land. If they've got Indigenous land to work for, well it's our country. We can get the young people working. We need the land to work well. Need businesses (RAP regional workshop).

Ready solutions to fill this gap are not at hand, but need to build through strategic thinking:

We still need more at the local level. I remember when we used to have 600 people at meetings. Risk of going to the local level is the erosions of one united voice. Also risk erosion of sharing of benefits ... I think the answer to those questions comes from strategic thinking, really strategic thinking (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The “sick” rating for capacity building processes is closely tied to the high level of competition for resources, and the short-term insecure basis of a lot of funding programs and projects. It also reflects lack of clarity about how to build capacity in ways that accounts for diversity across family, clan, tribal, sub-regional and regional levels:

Need a clear sense of how business gets done, clear understanding of processes, about whose country, how to relate with multi-party picture (elders, corporations, other structures) (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Limitations perceived in capacity-building were also related to the lack of availability of training courses in communities—people who are sent away to study often get homesick and pull out of courses.

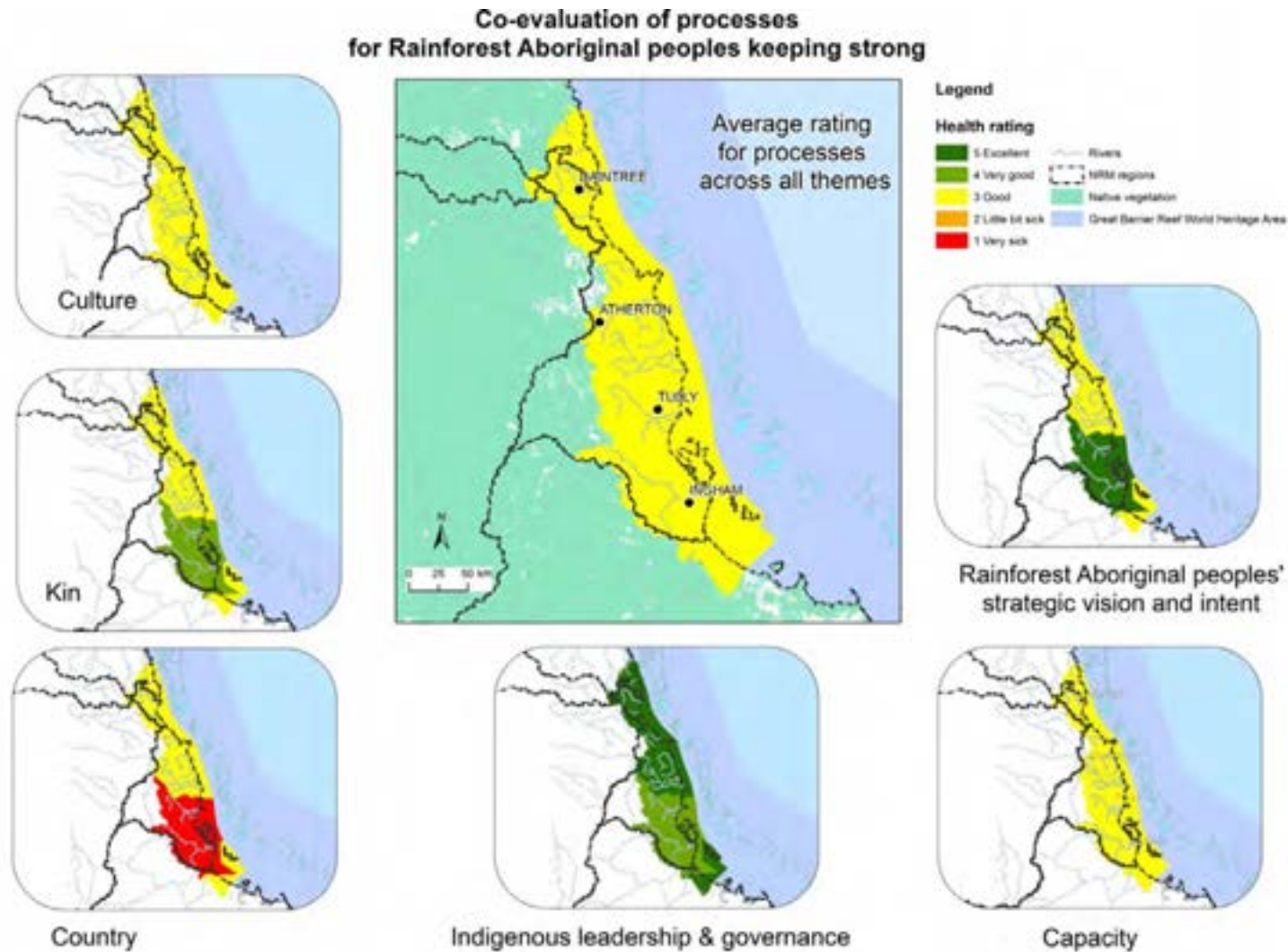


Figure 7: RAP regional evaluation of health of *processes* for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* in wet tropics country (with Girringun sub-regional evaluation shown in their part)

Processes for Keeping Engagement Strong

The RAP regional evaluation rated processes for KES as 2.5 which rounds to “good” overall whereas as the Girringun sub-regional evaluation rate them as 2.3, which rounds to “little bit sick” overall.

Strengths in the processes to support the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) were identified as primarily within the *Protocols* and *Relationships* themes for Girringun, and with the *Issues Resolution* theme in the regional evaluation (Figure 8). Processes to support *Protocols* were seen as healthy because of the substantial number of tools for engagement including Memoranda of Understanding, ILUA, Partnerships, native title, PBCs, strategic plans, board meetings and others. Gaps are particularly evident at the local level:

Financial gaps—funding to implement protocol processes for nine clans (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Despite this availability of tools, processes to implement Protocols are not always in place:

Some of the agencies are not adhering to protocols (RAP regional workshop).

Yes, we are getting it right at the top with the government, but it doesn't flow down to the bottom, like local staff have never heard of the Regional Agreement... When you talk to the (local) QPWS OIC, they have no idea about things we've done, no idea about the Regional Agreement, or the Indigenous Land Use Agreements, or the bama plan... (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Relationships are central plank of Girringun overall strategy:

For Girringun “our reputation creates the relationship” (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The “sick” rating for processes that support the Power of Traditional Owners reflects limitations identified in native title processes:

Native title is disempowering. When the court came here to give our determination, the court says, no photos, no singing out with happiness. The Judge walks in, sits up there, going through papers, reading out all the conditions on our native title. Who the hell is this bloke. It upset me. That's not his to give. That's ours, it's always been ours. It made me sick. Yet all the old people were crying and hugging as if he gave them something. What we are doing here at Girringun is our own structure, our own sovereignty. Not some bloke that comes from Brisbane to tell us what our country is (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

We're not in control. It's part of a long, long, long haul about reconciliation. We have to educate the rest of the white community (RAP regional workshop).

The Native Title bodies have not taken up their roles in educating government or community:

When it comes to native title, what government here know and do can be laid at the feet of GAC. They have come kicking and screaming to the table. No roles were played by the National Native Title Tribunal or the Land Council in educating the broader community. GAC has played that broker, education role ... The partners who can work with us know about native title rights and power, but the community is not educated (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Nevertheless, there is recognition that things have improved compared to the past:

The (engagement) processes used to be very very sick but we have managed to break down their stereotypes. In early days we did a lot of communication work with people about having native title co-exist. We're not taking anything off you we just want to be able to check our sites (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

In addition, the RAP regional workshop identified empowerment through the training and education of young people to reach their aspirations, and through financial independence allowing people to get freehold land where they can do stuff on country without intervention from government.

Girringun identified strategic communication strategies as key to their processes:

Lead them into ... think it was their idea. Using a third party, talking to someone else, getting others to bring up the idea. Sometime we get someone to be tough, and then we offer to work with them (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The “sick” and “very sick” ratings for *Regimes* and *Mechanisms* reflects frustration at the constant government churn:

Government processes are up the creek. People are moving all the time, changing jobs, departments are always changing. We just develop a dialogue, and then the people change, the department changes. The only constant in all this is us. Departments and staff are all over the place. How can you work with that? (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

There is also a perception of loss of mechanisms:

The Regional Agreement gave us some processes, we had our Co-Chairs going to the Principal Agency Forum, but that's not happening now. We don't have Indigenous units at WTMA and Parks anymore, so that's a big loss of structures for our joint management regimes. Management plans are poor, don't include Indigenous knowledge (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Processes that could potentially underpin holistic *Issue Resolution* are viewed as having lacked an equitable basis for implementation:

When we come to the Negotiating Roundtable, it's based more on what government thinks they need at the table. For example when we had discussions on mining, they bring in the mines department and the land department. We asked where is employment, training, education, economic development ... They don't ask beforehand who is needed at the negotiating table ... Their Roundtable did not meet our needs ... Lots of agencies and no coordination between them (Girringun sub-regional workshop)..

However, the core of the problem with *Issue Resolution* was identified as first the lack of knowledge and second the lack of role clarity between the government staff and Girringun staff working on the same country. A potential solution was suggested in appointing a contact person, and working on key relationships:

TOs have a contact person, they meet with us for discussion, then we go out together. Knowing the other party personally, not just in their role (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The regional workshop identified some effective government processes that helped *Issue Resolution* processes:

We have an amicable relationship with all of the government departments... Those government parties, they have project officers or people who are there for longstanding, they don't just send out a new person to just come up on the train and go through the project. They know us (RAP regional workshop).

The RAP regional evaluation identified a requirement for more effective organisations to broker support for business development to groups according to their own needs and trajectories as important to improve the health of processes for the theme *Principles* (enabling self-determined trajectories).

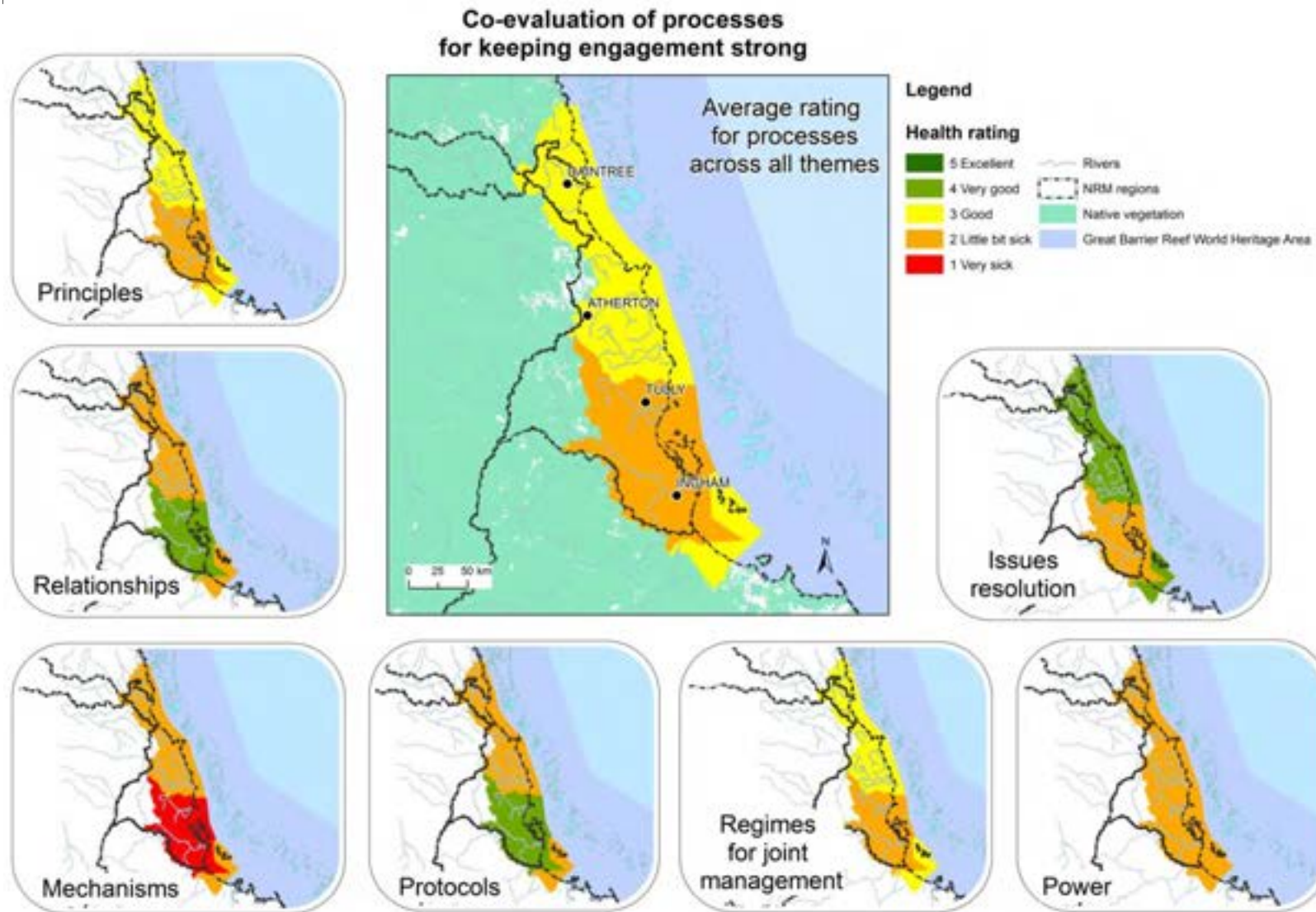


Figure 8: RAP regional evaluation of health of *processes for Keeping Engagement Strong* in wet tropics country (with Girringun sub-regional evaluation shown in their part)

Results for co-management of wet tropics country

Both RAP regional and Girringun sub-regional evaluation rated the results for the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPKS) as overall healthier than those for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figures 9 and 10). The gap between the two is very similar.

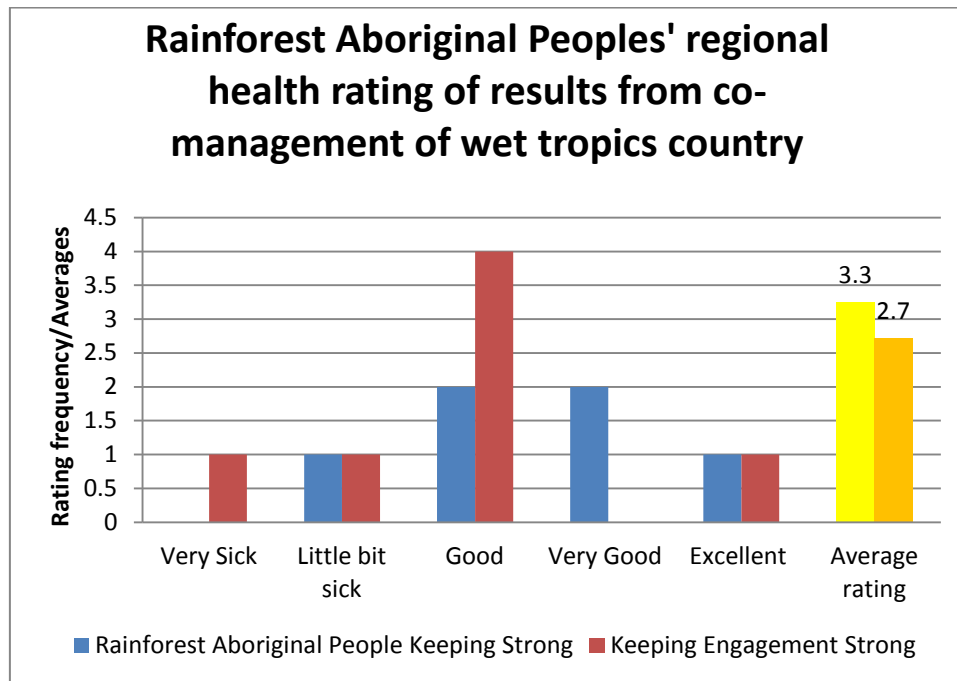


Figure 9: Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' regional health rating of results from co-management of wet tropics country

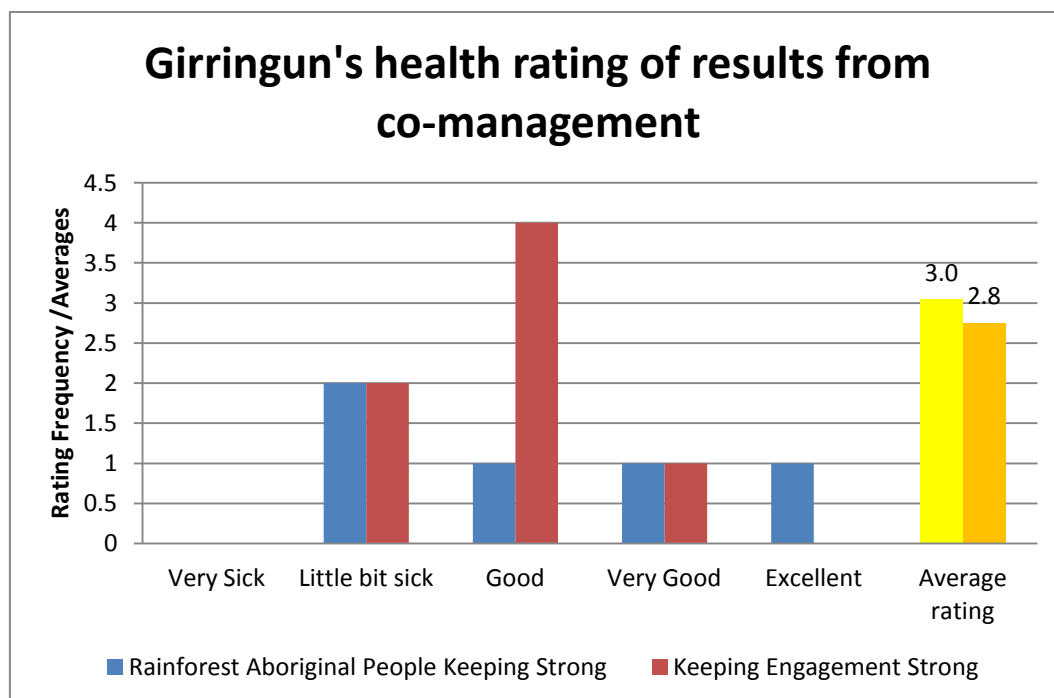


Figure 10: Girringun's health rating of results from co-management in their part of wet tropics country

Results for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong

The RAP regional evaluation rated results for RAPKS as “good” overall while identifying different themes as the source of strengths (Figure 11). The qualitative analysis of the data associated with results matched better with the categories of biocultural interlinkages (Hill et al. 2011; Persic and Martin 2008). (Table 1)

Category of biocultural interlinkages	Related themes in our diagnostic
Language and linguistic diversity	Culture
Material culture	Culture
Knowledge and technology	Capacity
Modes of subsistence	Country
Economic relations	Mechanisms
Social relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political relations • Legal-institutional 	Kin, relationships Indigenous leadership & governance Principles, regimes, protocols
Belief systems	Culture

The results in this section are presented in accordance with those categories.

Social relations

Results were seen to have been strongly delivered in the context of recovery after Cyclone Yasi:

When we had the response to Cyclone Yasi, the murri grapevine passed the word to other Ranger groups, people from the Cape said let's get people, Rangers on the ground to help. So Rangers would come and help people, bring chainsaws, tools. There were notices everywhere saying thanks to Girringun Rangers. We have found our place, and excelled to where we are looked on as leaders for the whole community (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

The “good” health of results from Indigenous leadership and governance:

Indigenous governance, we think we have results ... the ultimate in dispute resolution. If you do it right, get the correct governance, there is very little need for dispute resolution. You get the stuff at the front end right. Energy needs to be put into the governance up front. Put out the spot fires before they become a raging inferno.

We have a result from working together, we've sorted out our tribal boundaries, maps all agreed and signed off (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Inter-groups cooperation that enables Indigenous people to take up leadership roles is also a key result:

People express amazement. “You got nine tribes and your CEO is a fellow from one of those tribes? We're flat out getting families in one tribe to agree, we have to get an outsider to come in as CEO (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Even very intractable social problems such as youth drug use are starting to be addressed:

Well the rehab centre's working really well... The men's group and women's group is working really well... We can work on this, and can build up where young people... They're smoking drugs, throwing away their lives.. talking or texting on their phones.

People are viewed as having a responsibility and obligation to pass on knowledge, are able to access different levels of knowledge:

People have their own community knowledge and people who have been through ceremony has a different separate set, all sets of knowledge... knowledge of the dreaming (RAP regional workshop).

Culture – language, material culture, belief systems

Many results for cultural renewal, site protection, celebration, and promotion were recognised:

They've gone and done exhibitions in Paris, New York. They're the only two across there that I know of where they did - they go to Perth for the Western Australian Art Festival every year. They go to Darwin for the Darwin Art Festival every year and heavily involved with the Cairns arts... Our life sized bagus won first prize at the Extravaganza Festival down at Townsville...A bagus is a stick man, a fire man (RAP regional workshop).

Any major works they're sometimes called upon to be monitors and so they just go and stand around when the excavators if they come across any bones or anything.

Yarrabah's renowned for the pottery and the Cardwell area renowned for the weaving (RAP regional workshop).

Economic relations

Results for economic upliftment from country:

Some activities are making a living from country, there's the workshops and the cattle stations and the artwork that's selling (RAP regional workshop). .

Increases in Indigenous employment:

Mulumgu is staffed by all indigenous staff who have got their primary health, mental health (RAP regional workshop).

Modes of subsistence

The RAP regional workshop discussed many environmental improvements including in water quality, habitat restoration, cyclone recovery and removal of exotic invaders. Results include habitat restoration:

Well last year our rangers were put into the re-vegetation program, they went to Hull Heads and did over 2000 plants. They've been out to Murray Upper and the Murray River and out past Tully and they've been re-vegetating 2000/3000 plants in a few weeks (RAP regional workshop).

Improved sustainability:

It's not all about economic development. It's sustainability, you know? What - it's the key thing, is sustainability (RAP regional workshop).

Accessibility to country has been improved:

Walking tracks...are all culture, it's part of our culture... really old highway just followed our Aboriginal walking tracks... south of Cardwell, used to be a goat's track but our

rangers have widened it, gone through and cleaned it, we can walk our country again... walking the trails (RAP regional workshop).

Yeah they do, do work there, mustering and all that and fencing. They look after the land. They live at the station at Mount Mulligan (RAP regional workshop).

Demonstrate connection to land by doing, showing access and support to work on country gives incentive to engage with country vs mainstream culture/technology (RAP regional workshop).

Sea grass is recovering following cyclone Yasi:

I walked around the front and there was about 16 dugongs, just off probably from here to that building - playing, they were just dancing in the water. Sea grass has come back (RAP regional workshop).

The excellent rating for health of country in the RAP regional evaluation reflects peoples' ongoing ability to enjoy the plants, animals, and to see their totems and culturally species such as crocodiles, turtles and cassowaries on country.

Multiple benefits frameworks

The Indigenous organisations who lead in co-management of country are recognised as pivotal to the delivery of these multiple benefits:

Everything's worked out of Girringun really. We've got the arts in one section, the rangers and we've got all the different programs. We've got a biodiversity project, a great big nursery. They've gone on country and got seeds, come back, germinate... We sent out flyers last week actually all around Cardwell and we've had people just flocking in buying trays and trays of plants (RAP regional workshop).

Opportunities to strengthen results – social relations

Nevertheless, these positive results depend on continued work, and are not yet fully normalised:

Precariously balanced. One wrong thing said and they could come back into dispute again e.g. if significant leaders pass on. Precarious environment to begin with. You need strategic mandated consistent leadership that manages to travel through a minefield. Need a leadership group (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

One generation ago all our fellas walked together. Now this generation we're all divided (RAP regional workshop).

We need a kinship model that can help families to connect... how you identify to connect... like the holistic education framework (RAP regional workshop).

Opportunities to strengthen results – culture

The lack of ongoing commitment to cultural mapping, which is linked to lack of results from the Aboriginal Rainforest Council's cultural mapping project that was conducted in partnership with Terrain NRM and WTMA:

Other things like with cultural mapping, oh no that's not a priority, so they said, once the cultural listing was nominated... With the cultural mapping, we don't know what happened to Jirrbal, last we heard it went to the uni. Mamu's cultural mapping data-base is in a house near the canopy walkway. Not really being used (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Opportunities to strengthen results – knowledge and technology

Gaps are identified in the patchy distribution of capacity across different groups:

Some TO groups are further ahead than others, getting more results. We don't want to slow them down, make them wait for the others to catch up, those groups should keep going ahead, while the others get going themselves (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

On the other hand, the poor rating of results from other topics reflects the ongoing loss of knowledge, and associated declining condition of country:

Country is getting worse, we're losing the old knowledge, while Aboriginal management is getting better recognized, no good enough, not quick enough, not enough to make a big difference (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

Opportunities to strengthen results – legal-institutional

Gaps also exist in obtaining native title recognition and access to lands for economic development:

More acquisition of traditional land with native title claims would be good (Girringun sub-regional workshop).

We've got the nursery but we needed the land to build it up, need to purchase land (RAP regional workshop).

Opportunities to strengthen results – economic

While progress is being made in employment, there is still a long way to go:

Too many people and not enough jobs.

It's pretty hard, like with the job networks. The longer you're unemployed the better your chance for training is. We used to stream it one to six and if you were four and over then there were lots of training goals attached to you because the networks get paid when you complete training.

At the moment we've got people from Cardwell going to Mungala to be trained in hospitality and stuff, but we've got nothing in Cardwell and nobody will employ people - they're employing all the backpackers. All the cafes employ the backpackers (RAP regional workshop).

A number of potential opportunities and activities to strengthen results were identified including:

- For tribal groups to take over management of national parks.
- For more feedback from completed projects to demonstrate success.
- Elder cultural camps to rekindle memories of their past and tell stories of culture lores/dance/language/arts to teach younger generations.
- Cultural camps to teach cultural awareness.
- To hold a workshop on how to apply for funding.
- To provide information on possible different organisational arrangements for businesses (Girringun sub-regional workshop)..

Co-evaluation of results for Rainforest Aboriginal peoples keeping strong

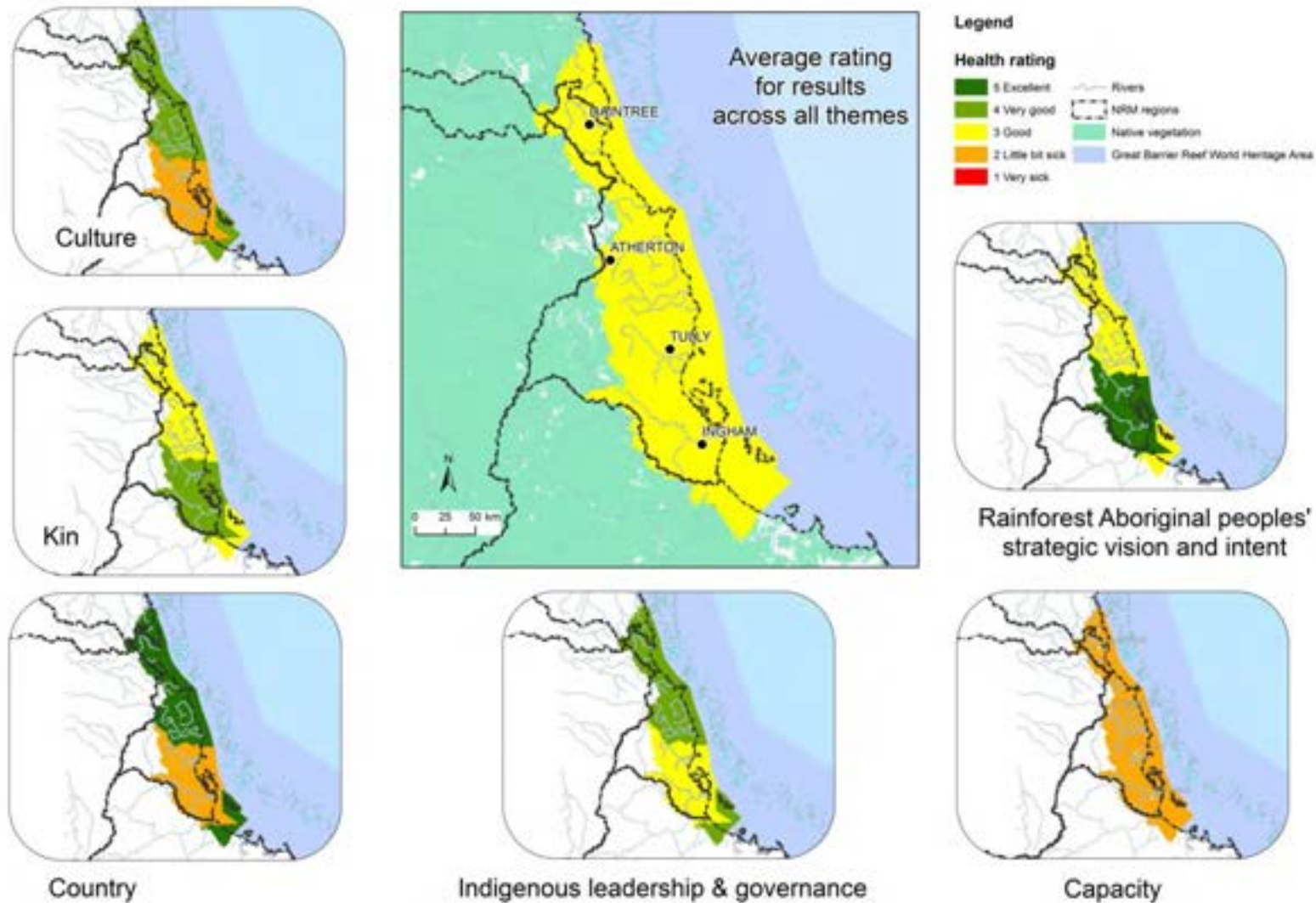


Figure 11: RAP regional evaluation of health of *processes* for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples keeping strong* in wet tropics country (with Girringun sub-regional evaluation shown in their part)

Results for Keeping Engagement Strong

The RAP regional and Girringun sub-regional evaluations rated results for KES as “good” overall while again identifying different themes as the source of strengths (Figure 12).

Nevertheless, both regional and Girringun sub-regional identified multiple outcomes for several of the biocultural (social and political relations, knowledge, modes of subsistence) CES while expressing frustration at lack of progress in economic, and political relations.

Social and political relations

Girringun hosting of the Land and Sea Conference in 2007 was seen as a strong result from their exercising of power:

A big result (from our exercise of power) ... That single event completely changed the community views about blackfella business in this town ... Leading up to it we had to continually settle down the community. Chamber of Commerce wanted a guarantee. Nothing happened. Only one trouble happened it was a drug offence, though not a blackfella. We involved the police in the leadup, weekly meetings. They (organisations in town) were all frightened. The pub even hired security guards. But it was all peaceful, everyone from the community came and had a look. Even before putting in the submission, we met with the Chamber of Commerce, the Cardwell Shire Council, they made the biggest contribution ever. We had regular meetings with them the whole time, meetings where they could come along. (Girringun workshop).

The relationship-building approach of Girringun is also viewed as having delivered results:

Results come through mutual understanding. Build a sort of trust, not really proper trust, I wouldn't go that far, but trust within certain bounds. Relationships that we have with different government departments, it's not a written thing. It's a culture, environment, feeling that you build. People say, how can you work without an agreement? Lots of time it's a handshake, a gentleman's agreement. An understanding between you and me, as good as an agreement. I look at those staff, at their path, they want to get a career, a future, even genuine Aboriginal staff, they got a job, a career. For me, I got to approach is so they can get where they want. Sometimes you might get someone in there who really wants to do things, or the opposite. (Girringun workshop).

Knowledge

The regional workshop recognised that two-way knowledge is now being promoted in universities, and suggested the term “cross-cultural confidence” as a way of expressing the improvements. Social media has a positive impact on connecting people and knowledge, but can also be negative in spreading incorrect information. Knowledge co-generation is a clear benefit from Keeping Engagement Strong:

We've got our people, archaeologists, they've worked with us for nearly 20 years (RAP regional workshop).

Modes of subsistence

Improvements in management and community understanding of management of country were welcomed:

Just talking about biodiversity, the public is being very supportive too. Coming in and looking at what we've got, from the nursery. So our biodiversity is getting out there, the news that we've got our nursery. So that's good (RAP regional workshop).

While the move to de-gazette parks is viewed as a potential threat to values, the Girringun workshop contributors also identified potential opportunities if governments could be persuaded to support innovation:

People have realised that... real on-ground manager is QPWS. But QPWS is pulling out of parks. We could manage them. That would be a huge game-changer. Same discussion we're having with Marine Parks who are closing their regional offices, we are talking about putting in a tender for management services. But the blockage with government trying new things is that they're worried about "precedent setting".

Economic relations

The lack of results from economic development planning was again an issue of concern:

We did the Stepping Stones planning for tourism, it was meant to be the start, but no collaborative tourism has come out of it (RAP regional workshop).

Lack of sharing of economic benefits from engagement is a major frustration:

We still have - we've never got anywhere. People keep coming and taking, taking, taking, how have we benefited? So that was one of our main points yesterday. People come in and take, take, take from us but as Bama people, what's in it for us? (RAP regional workshop).

The corrosive effect of welfare dependency:

Where they don't know. They don't know because they've grown up in a society where they have never been given opportunity to know. They've been brought up westernised, and been the receiver of handouts all their life. They don't know anything else (RAP regional workshop).

Legal-institutional

The loss of specialist Indigenous-focused units with the two main government agencies was perceived as having a very negative effect on the delivery of results:

When we had the Aboriginal Rainforest Council, and in WTMA, everyone came together. We don't have the Aboriginal Resource Management section in WTMA any more. Parks also don't have their Indigenous engagement unit any more. Management plans are poor, don't include Indigenous knowledge.

Priorities shifted. Decided we don't need Aboriginal Resource Management (ARM). From the grass roots, people prefer an ARM. When bringing up a project, now we have to talk to mapping, talk to community partnerships, talk to planning, and then Indigenous Manager is sitting out there on his own. Before we could say it to the ARM. We've slipped back. ARM was an effective way to have an association with WTMA. We had a personal relationship with those people in the unit. When we lost the CLOs that was a whole loss of mechanisms. The structures went backwards, and so have the results (Girringun Workshop).

People are also frustrated that the years of effort that put into establishing structures through agreements, plans and meetings do not appear to have delivered results:

When we look for results, look at the Interim Negotiating Forum, the Regional Agreement, the Bama plan, what's come out of it? Cultural listing nationally. Not much else. The Interim Negotiating Forum took 4 years.

In the last 10 or more years, we have been coming together, but I think it's just the frustration of - we've been on the same path for years and nothing's been done about what we're talking about (RAP regional workshop).

Yes, yes, yes, yes, because I think we've been talking and talking and talking. I think over the years when people have been talking and talking we've lost a lot of our elders. Still today we're still talking about what they're talking about, and no action (RAP regional workshop).

A lot of elders who have gone before us, like I keep saying, they've started the fight and we're still fighting. Otherwise - if it was resolved then we wouldn't be having this discussion, I think (RAP regional workshop).

However, concerns were expressed about how Aboriginal cultural information is transmitted through the media, leading to suggestions for more engagement from senior people:

We need to have more engagement in the communication, because you see everybody is getting the same message. But everybody interprets it their own way. They need to identify, engage, knowledge holders or elders (RAP regional workshop).

Notes on potential topics for tractable ways forward in relation to policy-relevant findings

- Value-added IPAs
- Extension of IPAs to other areas
- Recognising IPAs as a regime for joint management and implementing compliance measures
- Comprehensive community planning for strategic vision and integrated measures
- Support for PBC development
- Support for Indigenous governance – evaluation and improvement measures
- Internal government training and development mechanisms
- Tenure resolution
- Language

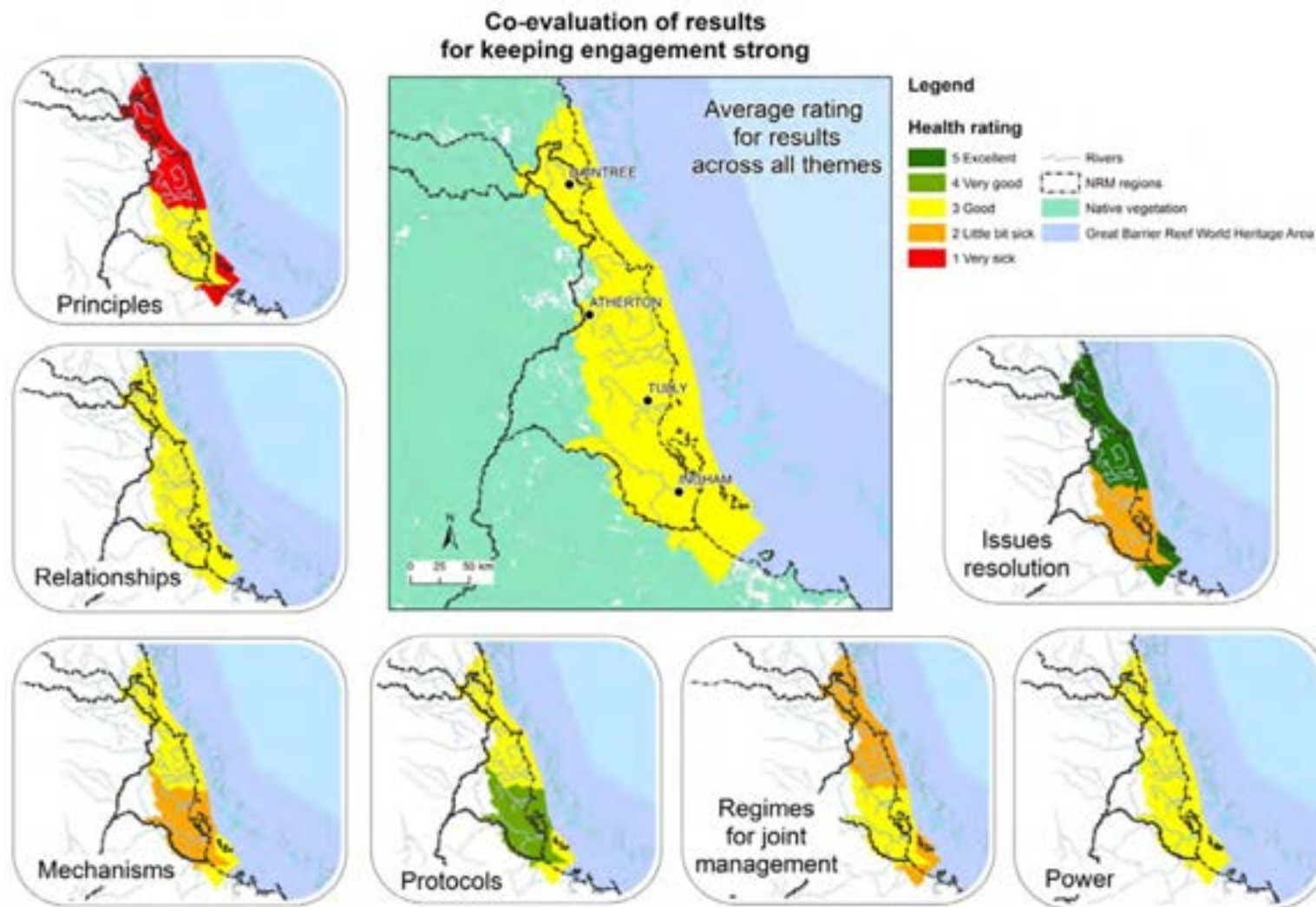


Figure 12: RAP regional evaluation of health of *results* for *Keeping Engagement Strong* in wet tropics country (with Giringun sub-regional evaluation shown in their part)

Mandingalbay Yidinji participatory evaluation of co-management in wet tropics country

Data Analysis July 2014

R. Hill conducted the qualitative and quantitative data analysis.

Overview

The participatory evaluation with Mandingalbay Yidinji (MY) was primarily conducted through a focus group discussion at the Djununji headquarters and Ranger station on 31st March 2014. A group discussion was held focusing on the parts of the evaluation framework, as well as on issues of concern to MY peoples. The MY group paid most attention to the reasons and issues rather than the numerical health ratings, and also shared a lot of their policy-relevant ideas about how to improve structures, processes and results. In addition, some material from two separate interviews with the MY leader for this area of business were held on 11th and 20th March, and these data have also been analysed—material from these interviews is marked as such.

The ratings for the components *structures* and *processes* in both *Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong* (RAPKS) and *Keeping Engagement Strong* (KES) were generally similar, reflecting both strengths and weaknesses in all the themes under consideration (Figures 1-3). The component of *results* was noticeably stronger for RAPKS than for KES.

	THEME	Mandingalbay Yidinji case study area		
		Structures	Processes	Results
Rainforest Aboriginal people (RAP) keeping strong	Culture	Very good	Very good	Good
	Kin	Very good	Very good	Very good
	Country	Good	Very good	Good
	RAP leadership & governance	Good	Good	Good
	Capacity	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	RAP shared strategic vision	Very good	Very good	Good
	Average overall rating	Good	Very good	Good
Keeping engagement strong	Principles	Very good	Very good	Good
	Relationships	Very good	Very good	Good
	Mechanisms	Very good	Very good	Good
	Protocols	Good	Good	Little bit sick
	Regimes for joint management	Good	Good	Little bit sick
	Power	Good	Good	Little bit sick
	Issues resolution	Very good	Good	Little bit sick
	Average overall rating	Very good	Good	Little bit

Table 1: Mandingalbay Yidinji health ratings of the themes in co-management

Structures for co-management of wet tropics country

Mandingalbay Yidinji people rated the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPKS) as in similar overall health to the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figures 1).

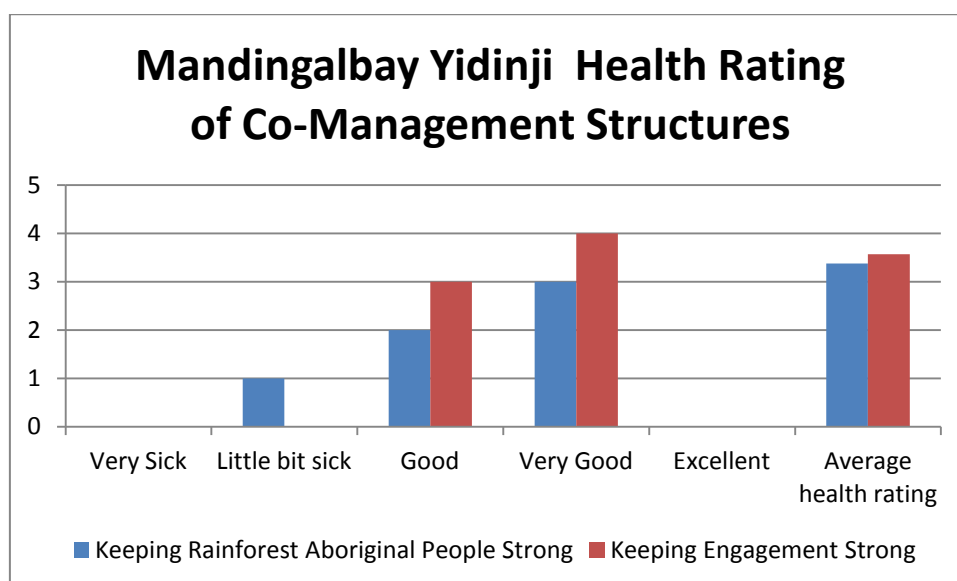


Figure 13: Mandingalbay Yidinji evaluation of health of co-management structures in wet tropics country

Structures for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong

Mandingalbay Yidinji people rated their structures for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong as good or very good across all themes except capacity (Table 1). They identified the cultural and spiritual foundation and unity of their people as primary sources of structural strength:

foundation is that spiritual, emotional, cultural connection... We are one people. We are all descendants from one apical ancestor, that's there through our genealogical description.

This cultural basis is supported by the establishment of two organizations that enable the contemporary expression of their Indigenous governance: Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation RTNBC (Registered Native Title Body Corporate) which is registered with ORIC (Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations); and Djunbunji Ltd which is registered as an Australia Public (not-for-profit) Company under the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC). These two organizations act synchronously to overcome the limitations of a RTNBC to promote economic and capacity development:

for us to own the assets and the infrastructure or purchasing in our own name and in our own right, we had to set up something like Djunbunji ... we had to set up an independent agent to get our full responsibilities back for the people in the country.

We operate as a collective, two organisations in a collaborative framework, MYAC and the Djunbunji, we have one board for both organisations.

Decision making in both organisations recognises the primacy and equitable rights of the native title holders:

the decision making with governance, obviously making sure that's from the ground up ... there's no one boss, we're all Common Law Native Title Holders, but in terms of the structure there has to be that in place ... It has to come back to the authorisation of the PBC¹... Djunbunji as the agent does not have the decision making whatsoever over country or for the people.

Mandingalbay Yidinji are also involved in a organisation that holds native title over an area together with other traditional owners, the Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples PBC Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC.

These organisations support the customary law basis of Indigenous governance and underpin the perceived good health of structures to support kin, culture, and country keeping strong

We know our cultural boundaries, we want the right people talking on country ... transmission of cultural knowledge occurs as a daily activity.

The MY Strategic Plan plays an ongoing positive role in putting MY people on the front foot with a clear direction:

Our structure for engagement is around our Strategic Plan, which is pretty good ... Roundtable (around Strategic Plan), this is still operating on a part time basis, has produced other arrangements.

whatever engagement we do, it is there in the framework ... people who are becoming home, linking in, need to actually work within the - engage within the framework. If we don't build the framework now and set up these structures, then there'll be nothing for the next generation, the inter-generational concern - which is why we're ... pouring resources back into the framework.

Indigenous Protected Areas are seen as very positive structures for supporting self-determination and Indigenous cultural and other rights very broadly:

[IPA] that's deadly, it's a good thing, it's a really good thing in that - it's not a legal right as such but what it does translate into is ... UN instrument attaches with other self-rights and self determination ... applying the DRIP (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

Native title recognition provides a critical foundation to all, the "stick" of power, with ILUAs recognised as being limited in terms of time frames and negotiating positions:

But obviously you need some type of stick, while the IPA isn't a stick, the working on country, WOC, isn't a stick.

[Indigenous Land Use] Agreement is like anything else, it determines what you agree to and what's happening but the native title determinations about what your rights and interest are over the whole... the ILUAs - some of them have already - expire. Native title rights and interests will survive.

The poorer health of structures in relation to the theme capacity reflects the Australian system where organisations established to hold native title do not usually have any resources:

What wasn't taken into account was post determination so there was no resources or structure associated with the implementation of agreements through our proposal, with

¹ PBC is a generic term used for organisations registered with ORIC, in this case the Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC

no empowerment or economy process that were developed in recognition of that process, that side of it, post determination.

In addition, the MY group noted how the agencies with whom the ILU Agreements are made also do not have any resources for their implementation:

When we all talk about having any ILUAs, the state will say have separate laws, well we don't any money for that. Local government will say yeah we have an agreement but we don't have any money to assist the implementation...

MY people are also very aware of how "policy windows" open and shut, affecting the ability of agencies to respond:

I guess we would need to be conscious about the - I guess the upheaval. The state government actually went through it in terms of a totally new policy written within their portfolios and also how the portfolios were dissected amongst government.

In terms of structures more generally for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong, there is some concern that the regional structures haven't evolved yet into the appropriate arrangements to reflect a context of post-determination (of native title). Key MY leaders were heavily involved with self-organisation of the regional body Bama Wabu, but perceive changed priorities over time:

We've had 20 years of the local claims ... then we've actually had 18 years since the Bama Wabu inception time ... looking back now, how we made decisions, engaged and operated over that 18 year period changed ... we had an advocating entity [Bama Wabu] that didn't have the resources to actually go out and have a fully blown consent process... with each group, and inform them and then get their consent. Now I know that that is not happening even as we speak. RAPA is not getting consent. Prior and informed consent has to come through a group. Extinguishment by stealth [is a risk].

MY perceives that regional and sub-regional self-organisation of Rainforest Aboriginal peoples needs to be about building and exchanging knowledge and skills, rather than advocacy and representation:

What is regional governance? ... we definitely won't be delegating our rights, roles or responsibilities to a third party ... we cannot delegate any of our responsibilities ... we can't be usurped in talking for our country.

The difference is this hub could actually work and assist the people who have native title determination as opposed to an advocacy body talking up issues and aspirations of the mob ... But I just want to make it clear, we're not doing their business for them ... So that's the concept of the hub but that's post native title determinations. That's different to how Bama Wabu was operating pre native title determination.

Because all the experiences we've faced over four and a half years, you should not have to go four and half years to get that experience.

We've actually set up Djunbunji with a vision of other traditional owners fitting in and having that assistance in the coordination, similar to what MYAC is doing. However, within the individual groups, they would need to have governance and administration.

Structures for Keeping Engagement Strong

Mandingalbay Yidinji people rated their structures for Keeping Engagement Strong as good or very good across all themes (Table 1).

The reasons that the themes *principles* and *mechanisms* within *Keeping Engagement Strong* are rated as very good, are essentially the same as the reasons that MY identify their Indigenous governance and shared strategic vision as very good:

- The Strategic Plan, Roundtable and committees established subsequently.
- The principles that engagement occurs within their framework i.e. as recognized native title holders, through Djunbunji, MYAC, according to the priorities they have set in the Strategic Plan and other plans .
- The IPA underpinning to support realization of rights and activities on country.

Relationships with partners are strong across a number of different sectors, and MY have pursued a strategy of building relationships with a range of experts to address their capacity needs:

we've got a whole registry of expert panel members and so looking at what those can deliver in terms of our projects, and calling on them to save going outside and tendering all the time when that comes along.

While protocols and regimes with partners are assessed as “good” generally, a number of specific problem areas were identified. Many partners have not changed their operating procedures to recognize MY as native title holders:

We thought that would have been a given when we got the determination, federal people in Cairns that have said well it's got to do with this, let's talk to these people ... one would expect that as soon as you have got a consent determination, through the courts, all state and federal agencies would be on notice to consult or contract if the government does. Instead they all call the Yarrabah Council at times, so that's the confusion. It's on the other side of the barbed wire fence instead of our side.

In addition, tenures are not there yet, and the Town Plan for the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council area has not yet achieved what MY aspire to. Tenure transfers, that will more fully separate the Yarrabah Council's role in local government from their previous role as land-holders through the Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT), have yet to be completed. These tenure transfers will result in three different trustee organisations that hold land in the current Yarrabah DOGIT. Amendments made in 2008 to the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991 (Queensland)* now allow the RNTBCs to be these trustees (Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation RTNBC and Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples PBC Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC) with Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council remaining as trustee for the township area.

The ILUAs provide for tenure transfer of lands within the East Trinity Inlet that are important to MY aspirations for economic development, but these have not yet occurred:

The problems to the transfer is (1) the ongoing maintenance of the bund wall, and (2) we would need to demonstrate sustaining the proper management in advance so how are we going to sustain the management. ...They're saying well we'll - give us back just inside the bund wall and you can keep the bund wall... not treating us fairly.

We're still moving ahead on the areas of demonstrating that we've got a sustainable business or sustainable income to manage the area.

MY would like to see more education about and understanding of how these roles have changed, to provide a basis for future working together – both for the community of Yarrabah, and for outside agencies engaging with people and issues in Yarrabah:

Within the transition from the Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) to the Local Government Act, there was no up-skilling of the critical mass of people in Yarrabah in terms of the changing of responsibilities. Go over there now and people are still thinking that they're under the DOGIT and that's how they actually operate ... even the councillors are operating on that basis yeah, he got housing, you've got the police force, they're even calling up for the RSL. So there's a bit of confusion ... and it's not [particularly] their [Yarrabah Council's] fault in terms of where they see the community and how they do things. Yarrabah's running as ... the mission, when it was born and the selection of these people that were taken there, were relocated there

Looking from eyes outside and looking into the community, some agencies still see the council as the DOGIT there as the one stop shop. They're not aware of the evolution of the local governments.

Development of the new Town Plan for the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council area once the new tenure arrangements are in place provides an important opportunity for reconciling the various roles and responsibilities:

It's the first ever [town plan] on that type of tenure, where do our rights and interests sit as determined people and the right people.

However, MY also perceive that there could be advantages in having their lands south of the Yarrabah township area coming under the Cairns Regional Council (as do their native title areas to the north and west of Yarrabah). This advantage is partly because MY would then only have one Council to deal with, and partly because of the greater resources of the CRC to establish engagement processes:

Cairns Region [Council], they've got indigenous committees, they've got these partnership arrangements, they've got initiatives to get the black fellows at the table.

In addition, MY are quite concerned about the difficult position recent (and likely future) changes to funding arrangements have placed the Yarrabah Council in:

Under CDEP and the Premier's welcome employment program, they had a \$25 million budget, now they're down to a \$9 million budget ... once people achieve home ownership and get freehold, they'll be paying it off [to the bank] so the income of the council would go from generating \$15,000 from one house [for rent] to about...\$1 for rates ... they're trying to have a multimillion dollar ferry/ jetties there so that there's instant income to sustain the council.

The emerging solution involves a number of changes. First is to adjust policy settings to ensure that Yarrabah Council focuses strongly on its local government roles, while enabling native title-holders to take over the land ownerships roles:

Get the decision makers in light of [sic supporting] the council having their roads, rates and rubbish, and staying focussed on the three Rs of the local government. Whilst we pick up the home ownership.

Second is for native-title holders as land-owners to find investment that will enable them to pick up development opportunities:

We'd like to build a house and be the developer as well as the landlord, especially if it's on our country. So whilst we have our people wanting to be within the on country, how and what are the steps in achieving that great Australian dream. We would need to do it in a way that it's sustainable and the ongoing maintenance of that infrastructure, coordination of what services the infrastructure would be given in terms of rubbish collection, water, access to country ... having a house is good but it's the headworks that actually come along with it. Before I put that ten thousand down along the roadway there, it's probably a million and a half of headworks for sewerage and other things.

In putting in place both these changes, the whole process of taking the community along is recognised as critical, including higher-level engagement between the actual native title-holders and those with other connections and linkages to the country:

A greater engagement with the whole community ... You can get organised and have that valuable input from community, from traditional owners, from the residents for the better of moving the community forward.

I call it legal because there's linkages that we - we have linkages there where our rights and interests are to be determined - I'd like to make contact with them and discuss it, and that should be replicated if they got stories that are actually in our determined area, in which they've got a right. If they have a linkage, not a right.

Processes for co-management of wet tropics country

Mandingalbay Yidinji people rated the processes for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPKS) as in similar overall health to the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figures 2).

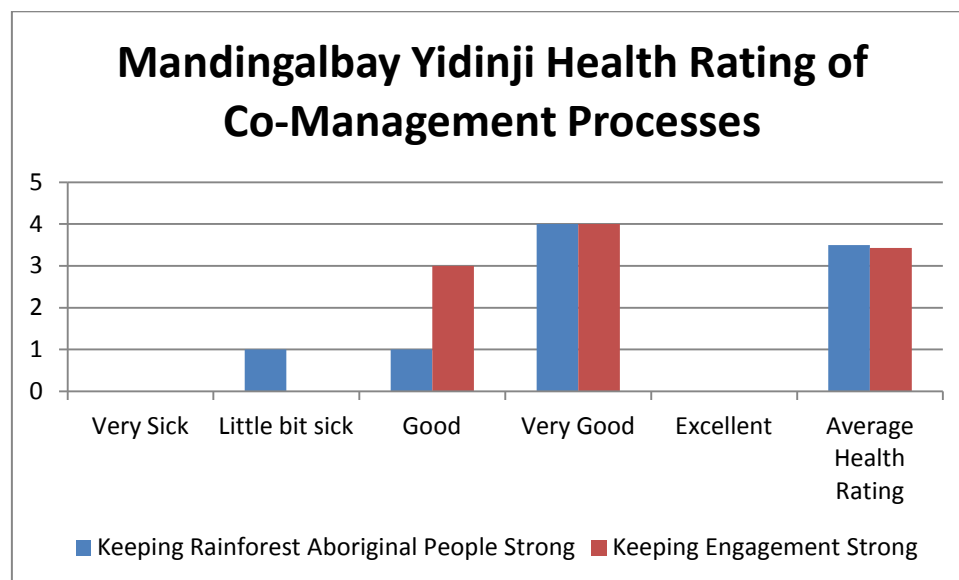


Figure 14: Mandingalbay Yidinji evaluation of health of co-management processes in wet tropics country

Processes for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong

MY's rating of the theme "strategic vision" as very good reflects the strong processes of developing the Strategic Plan over a long period of time:

the strategic plan actually came up with the accumulation of many years of talking about country within the negotiations of the consent determination. So the mob were well versed with the aspirations, what they wanted to do and it was just a matter of getting someone ... like-minded to actually pull it together.

The "good" rating of their own processes for bottom-up direction, exercising leadership and Indigenous governance reflects their wide array of engagement approaches:

So our decision making process in terms of a direction is given by the critical mass - no-one's a leader. We take it back to the critical mass, have a decision, talk it out and then go forward.

the way we assist with our own people is having the likes of CSIRO or James Cook University, we have the MY SPIC Committee - all these different mechanisms of engagement but that - so that, yeah there's no one way of communicating with our people or with the agencies and trying to achieve our objectives.

Areas for improvement in processes for leadership and Indigenous governance are mainly required in engagement with non-MY peoples, for example in leading people towards environmentally responsible behaviour:

we've got non MY people going and cutting trees down to fill a particular gully to get their car over when it didn't work and it blocks up this gully and there's only one

entrance, exit for this gully - filling up a lagoon inside, a freshwater lagoon ... if it was our own mob we'd be able to manage them, a tap on the shoulder.

The “very good” ratings across processes for country, culture and kin reflect the ongoing very strong connections and motivations that people have for keeping these aspects strong. Rangers support processes for protection of culture:

if there's a new cultural site that comes on, one of our people would tell the rangers here where it's at. The rangers would go along and site track it - i-Tracker - report it, put it on our database and then there's protection for it.

ask any of the mob, the first thing they'll say is what - if there's any one thing that you want out of everything we do? You know what they'll say? We want to go home, we want our land.

Nevertheless, the strong connection and desire of people to be out on country stretches the capacity of the MY organisations to undertake all the necessary tasks:

that's why it's getting into the economics to multiply the areas where we'll need to have a country based plan, so we know where our people want to be, where they expect to be ... Having that sort of infrastructure in place where you have the transport for mob around on country and access to it.

Capacity is seen as a “little bit sick” because of the need to improve processes to generate economic activities, although moves are underway to change this:

Capacity is limited because we have a limited amount in the kitty. We're campaigning for economic power, to allow the capacity to be delivered. Re-investment in people ... Conservation and environmental management we are doing that very well, generation of income. We are starting small scale tourism operation, first ones under way. Post native title stage. We have DGR status so we can act for the benefit of MY people.

The current processes in the wider Yarrabah community are recognised as not sufficient for the scale of the challenge:

We don't need a politician to tell you that you need to drive some type of economy within the community there and that's great, they've got arts and crafts and boardwalks and all these different varieties of things, but it's just - haven't got the right package ... future generations and kids are still going to be bored and the welfare cycle.

Processes for Keeping Engagement Strong

Many strengths were identified in the processes to support the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) with the *Principles, Relationships* and *Mechanisms* themes all rated as “very good”. Relationships with individuals enable MY to overcome some of the lack of strategic vision and coordination in various partner agencies, who lack clear direction:

Self determination and prior informed consent are the engagement framework (MY interview 11 March 2014)

there's no [policy] drive towards the self determination or the journey we've got to so far, it's just pure in-kind support from individuals within agencies that have allowed us to get here. I mean I can say that between us without the agencies here, it's not the agencies; it's those individuals that can see there's something here.

Australian government funding through the Working on Country (WOC) program for MY rangers underpins some strong processes for collaboration on environmental rehabilitation:

East Trinity Reserve and seeing that's where we've actually got our WOC rangers - federally funded WOC rangers. We develop up a joint - or they develop their work plan,

we develop ours in terms of the common activities that are happening on East Trinity. A lot of it is just the acid sulfate in terms of the rehabilitation.

Management rights, we're hand in hand - the rangers work side by side, well not even side by side, they work - we work on our own.

Nevertheless, much of the collaboration relies on MY bringing funds to work with the State agencies, and there are opportunities to strengthen the processes of State funding and the processes of effort alignment:

under the funding part of it with the working on country ... it's a win-win situation for us because we've actually done our capabilities but with other areas we - walking tracks and things like that, we're just waiting for them to come along.

State do their plans early March, Federal funds kick in later – State and WOC plans are not lined up properly (MY interview 11 March)

Limitations exist in processes such as management planning by the State:

Notwithstanding this national park that we're sitting on, haven't got a national park plan. They told us it takes them almost three years to develop a plan, they were actually putting up options of a Statement of Intent, rather than a full blown management plan.

The lack of a management plan is a key barrier to MY being able to access their rights to living areas (for up to 3 months) in the national parks.

The processes to support the principles of native title and self determination are rated overall as “very good”, and are well established in the MY community, but some agencies are slow to see the opportunities:

[principles] and a lot of that actually comes through our community engagement - at the community forum meetings.

we had a statement in the Cairns Post recently with the mayor looking at the four main reasons why Cairns is not going forward and he listed “native title”... they need to get away from looking at us as part of the problem - to being part of the solution...

We've actually had the Cairns City Council as part of our partners for over seven years, we've had very close engagements with the planning department in terms of our development applications, yet they still see us as a problem ... we need them putting on the right spectacles to see that we're there as a neighbouring factor to achieving - helping them achieve.

Similarly, while processes for adhering to protocols were assessed as “good” overall, frustration was also expressed about an overall lack of rights-based understanding:

one of the barriers in terms of the agencies want - or taking note of the indigenous people's articles, not applying the DRIP (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

There are opportunities to improve the mechanisms to devolve management from the State to the MY, for example in relation to requirements for feral pig control:

the guys here actually build pig traps to catch pigs. But see we're not allowed to take the pigs away from there and they have to be killed on the spot and they contract a bloke to come from Gordonvale – all the way from Gordonvale - with one bullet to kill the pigs, while we're standing there ... this is their unwillingness to hand over some of the contracts or have a look at holistic management .

Devolution gaps were identified in the processes to support MY's exercise of power and equitable power-sharing in management on-country:

with the pig management and things like that we - I've got a gun license, I've got my shooters license and everything but I'm not allowed to shoot. They still want to keep that ...with fire management, WTMA plan does not allow burning in the world heritage area [rainforest].

Issue resolution between MY people is developed through their community processes:

Disputes, if you've got an issue or a question with regards to this, have that as an agenda item at our next community forum meeting, they're all engaged and it's the collective.

Resolving issues with partners is more complex and the processes are less than satisfactory, as the State does not have a clear policy across the region for all issues, and lack funding in key areas:

They [State agencies] don't know how they want to manage this area so, whilst at the same time we're looking at implementing some of our determination outcomes, such as living areas in a national park and things like that ... we do need the agency people to have that within their budget— to develop a national park or have walking tracks or identification of living areas—but they haven't got, so I guess it's the disconnect between the process or development of [plan budgeting] or Parks. There are some parks without native title issues over it and there are some with ...determination. That's where there's some of the confusion I see with the other in terms of having a position, just in general, across wet tropics.

The processes with Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council could also be improved:

Thirteen ILUAs, we got consent. We are then in the position to be on an equal footing with Council... but they are going ahead gung-ho with 250 million dollar developments without due process with us (MY interview 11 March).

Results for co-management of wet tropics country

Mandingalbay Yidinji people rated the results from *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPKS) as in better overall health than the results from *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figure 3).

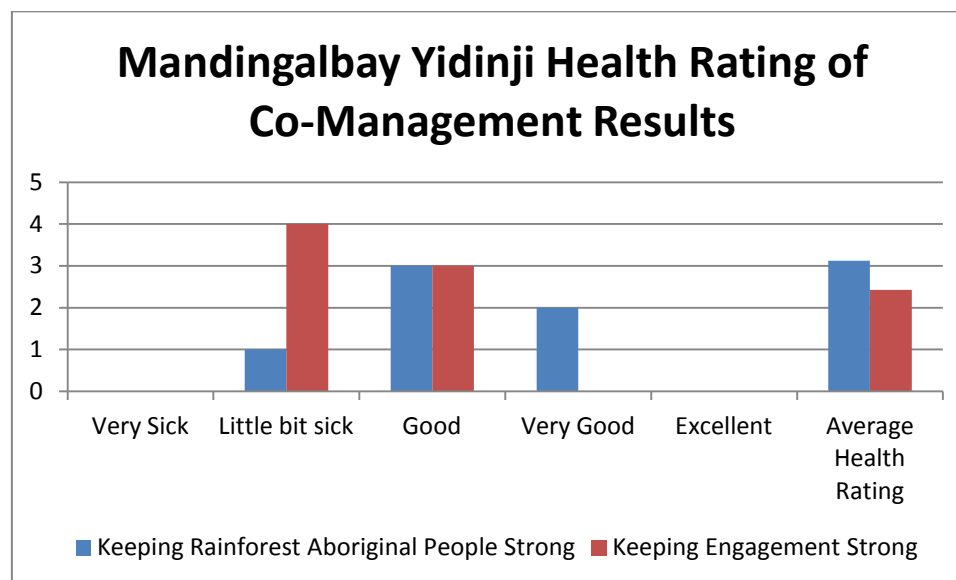


Figure 15: Mandingalbay Yidinji evaluation of health of co-management results in wet tropics country

Results for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong

The MY evaluation rated results for RAPKS as “good” overall while identifying kin as the biggest source of strength, with some capacity the weakest (Table 1). The qualitative analysis of the data associated with results matches better with the categories of biocultural interlinkages, and we use these to discuss the reasons behind the ratings (Hill *et al.* 2011; Persic and Martin 2008). (Table 2)

Category of biocultural interlinkages	Related themes in our diagnostic
Language and linguistic diversity	Culture
Material culture	Culture
Knowledge and technology	Capacity
Modes of subsistence	Country
Economic relations	Mechanisms
Social relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political relations Legal-institutional 	Kin, relationships Indigenous leadership & governance Principles, regimes, protocols
Belief systems	Culture

Table 2: Categories for analysis of the results from co-management of wet tropics country

Social relations

Lots of comments were made about the strength of social relations within the MY group and processes:

So every eight to 12 weeks we will have a community meeting, newsletters and we've also got the smaller forum groups. If there's a need ... to get a gathering of elders or critical people together, we'll discuss that and then report it back to be taken back to the group. Why I say we're a hybrid, that's the way we've been operating, even before the native title plan stage.

The key to it, we've kind of stumbled across is the young ones. So the Junior Ranger Program, get all the adults sitting around there that will not come to a meeting, our own people are the same, and talk about how we can collaboratively work together.

Instead of everyone doing their own thing, collaborative arrangements.

We come together through the claim group...the capacity and resources of that group to plan, to come together in a uniform way to adopt positions (MY Interview 20 March).

Culture – language, material culture, belief systems

Good results for cultural renewal, and for cultural leading the way to work with science, were recognised:

Our people see the IPAs and the WOC Rangers getting the good runs on the board (MY Interview 11 March 2014)

My observation is there's more importance of value put on going over to core cultural country than there is to the science. But knowing how we are funded, we've got have the balance of the two. The one obviously overrides - the culture overrides the science - but we put those two together, through working with the likes of [leading ecologist].

So here is our cultural heritage side of things [we're] taking a lot more interest in that as our foundation.

MY are proud to describe the ways they have intersected with cultural diversity through historical circumstances and innovated into new MY hybrid, including in language:

Even with the language with us, we have a certain mixture of ... Mob from up the Cape, mixing all that language up ... We've still got our language but what I'm saying is it became a hybrid as such - there was no defining of who Mandingalbay Yidinji is and this is their custom. Even when you go over and see that mob in Laura, we don't want belong to that dance and you know straight away that's with the MY, but it's good to be able to do it hey.

Knowledge and technology

MY have developed a lot of knowledge through their experiences in achieving recognition for their rights and interests over country despite negative government policies:

But for us to wait for government policies or legislation, we'll be still waiting a long time for the next boat to hit the beach ... We've - been through the ARC, the Bama Wabu, there's been everything and anything tried and that's a good thing because through those experiences we stand alone by ourselves.

MY also report a lot of interest from others in learning from them and with them:

We've got international USA students coming over and want to research. JCU, through their university students, TAFE students, through the Cultural Awareness program they've had state government - big bosses from Brisbane come up.

Economic relations

MY report some exciting and unexpected economic results from their management of country:
I used to think we're not going to break that [welfare] cycle in my generation but we're doing it here today. We've got eight fulltime indigenous, hundred per cent owned and operated white fellow corporation but run by black fellows. Djunbunji, ASIC - run under ASIC.

Increases in Indigenous employment:

The last financial year some 64 people may have been volunteers or fulltime or casuals, were employed ... At some point in time I'd like to try and beat that every single year.

MY are planning for ongoing economic development opportunities:

We're developing products, from short term, looking at variants, I guess target audience from the yahoo, reef mob.... We've also got partners that will go along with that package; we've got Big Cat Adventures

Modes of subsistence

The MY workshop discussed many environmental improvements and linkages across to culture:

We're actually doing the acid sulfate and assisting with the acid sulfate so we're eradicating all of that. The rehabilitation of the acid sulfate - what's the technical talk - they had battery acid levels of water and now they've taken them down.

All the environmental factors they cross with culture, they cross with mainstream, they cross with everything.

Multiple benefits frameworks

Individuals were also identified as having benefited in terms of their own capacities and opportunities:

We've had people work for us; we had [particular individual] and he's been great, now he's gone on to bigger and better things, I like to think we've enhanced his capacity. He's a CEO now.

MY reported past benefits in terms of capacity building across education-employment and both past and potential future generational progress:

See the generations before us were ... labourers and then we had the school leavers going to higher education and - all middle management ... so now we want to get up to into senior management and get the critical mass in senior management rather than labour.

Opportunities to strengthen results – culture

MY have plans underway to strengthen their cultural diversity through links with Chinese

Well we grew up on the farm with the Chinese - over a hundred years our families have been together. They've been here since 1860 when the establishment of Cairns was out at Smithfield. They have the very first, they've got a 170 year old lychee tree that their forefathers actually brought along. So looking at the Chinese market...

The value added to our cultural experience, we could couple that with information of the Chinese history...

Opportunities to strengthen results – knowledge and technology

MY are very interested in sharing their knowledge and skills about the stages of establishing Indigenous governance, through collaboration and cooperation with other groups:

That's the phases that I talk about. Pre- native title, then a post determination and then economic development. Between the post determination and the economic development stage, they should do the naval gazing. Construct the constitution of their PBC, have membership of their people to a PBC, and then start developing documents which settle down the track. Those are the things that Djunbunji could assist with ... not doing their business for them, it's more about enhancing the capacity for the PBC or for any corporation or family, to do their own business ... groups who decide, want to have that cooperative, collaborative approach. We're happy to talk about our experiences and from that, negative, positive, they can shape where they want to go.

Opportunities to strengthen results – legal-institutional

Key opportunities exist to strengthen legal-institutional results by addressing:

- Role of local government vis-à-vis RNTBCs
- Tenure transfers and options.

Opportunities to strengthen results – economic

MY see many opportunities to strengthen their current low level of business engagement:

We're envisaging engaging in the current economy, that's that billion dollar tourism and putting the science and the culture through some type of product or package.

A potential tourism product has been formulated:

High in its natural values and even equivalent to that of Hinchinbrook Island, so there's easy half an hour to a three hour guided walk. We want to showcase the potential product and asking partners what they can contribute ... If there's a permit required tell us how to jump through those, navigate us through those permitting hoops. The theme is an environmental, cultural sort of thing so that it'll be a motorised - electric grade or a solar powered, so there's a potential circuit rather than backtracking, coffee shop.

Expanding beyond the current success with Ranger employment is a key aspiration:

In five years time, what'll they have - well hopefully everything - yeah well the rangers, but we're diversifying the label of a ranger to be a scientist, a water person, a plant person, a tour guide, and from that we'll need hospitality, catering so great...

Results for Keeping Engagement Strong

The MY evaluation rated results for KES as “little bit sick” overall, the only area rated as less than good during the assessment (Table 1). This relatively poor ratings reflects frustration about a number of aspects

Social and political relations

The fragmentation in government agencies presents a barrier for MY in achieving results in engagement:

There's no-one coordinating that, you're a coordination council, who are they, what do they do? So then, we've - [unclear], just need a, coordinate our selves and, coordinate the government...

Modes of subsistence

Problems with the management of East Trinity Inlet resulting in environmental damage remain a significant concern:

Twice, twice this year the bund wall has been inundated with water and it's taken the topsoil so they're looking for funding to fix it up. Twice this year it's also had a collapse in the wall within the wall itself, this year and last year with holes and that so they've had to find funds to fill those areas up.

Economic relations

The new focus of State government on economic development provides an opportunity:

With DATSIMA, we could look at 99 year leases, and compliance with all the relevant legislation and agreements (MY interview 11th March).

The overall package to be taken forward includes:

Transfer of lands in East Trinity Inlet to secure tenure

Cultural tours and a cultural centre there

Walking trails and a cable car into the Mablon Thomson Ranges

Living areas in the national parks

Legal-institutional

Legal-institutional barriers remain to MY achieving their development aspirations:

the barriers are the - it's not zoned appropriately by the Cairns Regional Council for us to do our proposed activities so we'd have to look at the zoning. In terms of planning, the infrastructure needs that we're proposing there does not fit with some of the things that Cairns City Council would need us to consider, such as the water levels and whether the soils appropriate to do the building of the infrastructure on and so forth.

Collaborative development of a Town Planning Scheme for the MY lands within both the CRC and Yarrabah Shires may be a fruitful avenue to explore. MY expressed interest in pursuing the model with the Douglas Shire where planning allowed for negotiations with Traditional Owners to change proposals where impacts were likely on a cultural site (MY interview 20th March 2014).

Notes on potential topics for tractable ways forward in relation to policy-relevant findings

- Knowledge platform, network, collaboration
 - Pre-during-post native title: stages for knowledge exchange and capacity-building
 - Upskilling broader non-Indigenous community.
 - Internal government training and development mechanisms
- Aboriginal Shire Councils and RNTBC- roles, relationships and future directions.
 - Collaborative Town Plan developed between MY and CRC/Yarrabah with research support (NERP?)
- Support for economic development and partnerships
- Tenure resolution, transfer and options

Partners' regional participatory evaluation of co-management in wet tropics country

Data Analysis July 2014

R. Hill conducted the qualitative and quantitative data analysis
P.L. Pert conducted the spatial data analysis

Overview

The participatory evaluation by government and community partners who work with Rainforest Aboriginal peoples on co-management of wet tropics country was conducted at a workshop held at Cairns Colonial Club in Cairns on 29 April 2014. Partners were asked to rate the *support* provided (by community, government and industry) to Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong, rather than the health of the actual status of their structures, processes and results. This direction was decided by the co-research team, in recognition of first the principle that Indigenous peoples strongly claim the right to represent themselves in scholarly activities, rather than be represented by others (Castellano 2014); and second the concept that Australian government and community organizations that have a role in managing country also have a role in supporting Aboriginal peoples' management of that country and all that entails.

Table 3: Partners' ratings of the health of structures, processes and results for co-management of wet tropics country

	THEME	Regional case study area		
		Structures	Processes	Results
Rainforest Aboriginal people (RAP) keeping strong	Culture	Good	Good	Good
	Kin	Good	Little bit sick	Good
	Country	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	RAP leadership & governance	Very sick	Very sick	Little bit sick
	Capacity	Good	Little bit sick	Good
	RAP shared strategic vision	Good	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	Average overall rating	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
RAP keeping strong Keeping engagement strong	Principles	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	Relationships	Good	Little bit sick	Good
	Mechanisms	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	Protocols	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	Regimes for joint management	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	Power	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick
	Issues resolution	Good	Good	Little bit sick
	Average overall rating	Little bit sick	Little bit sick	Little bit sick

The overall ratings for both the support for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong, and for Keeping Engagement Strong, were notably poorer than those conducted with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples at regional, Giringun sub-regional, and Mandingalbay Yidinji tribal scales. This perception of poor health overall reflects two drivers: (1) frustration that the government and non-government organizational processes do not respond as well as they could; and (2) recognition that rating across the region is challenged by the heterogeneity – in some areas, structures, processes and results and in very good health, and in others they are very sick. Participants therefore gave generally low ratings reflecting that many groups need a lot more time and support to engage well in co-management in and running country themselves.

Structures for co-management of wet tropics country

Partners rate the support for structures for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* (RAPKS) as in slightly better health than those for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figure 1).

Structures for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong

The partners' regional evaluation rated support for structures for RAPKS as 2.5, which we have rounded to "little bit sick" overall (Figure 2). As noted above, the low rating largely reflects the poor support that was perceived to be coming from government and community, and recognized great variability across the region. Some confusion was noted about whether and how such support could be delivered—questions on the themes "whose role is it to provide support?" and "what does good support look like" came up several times in the discussions.

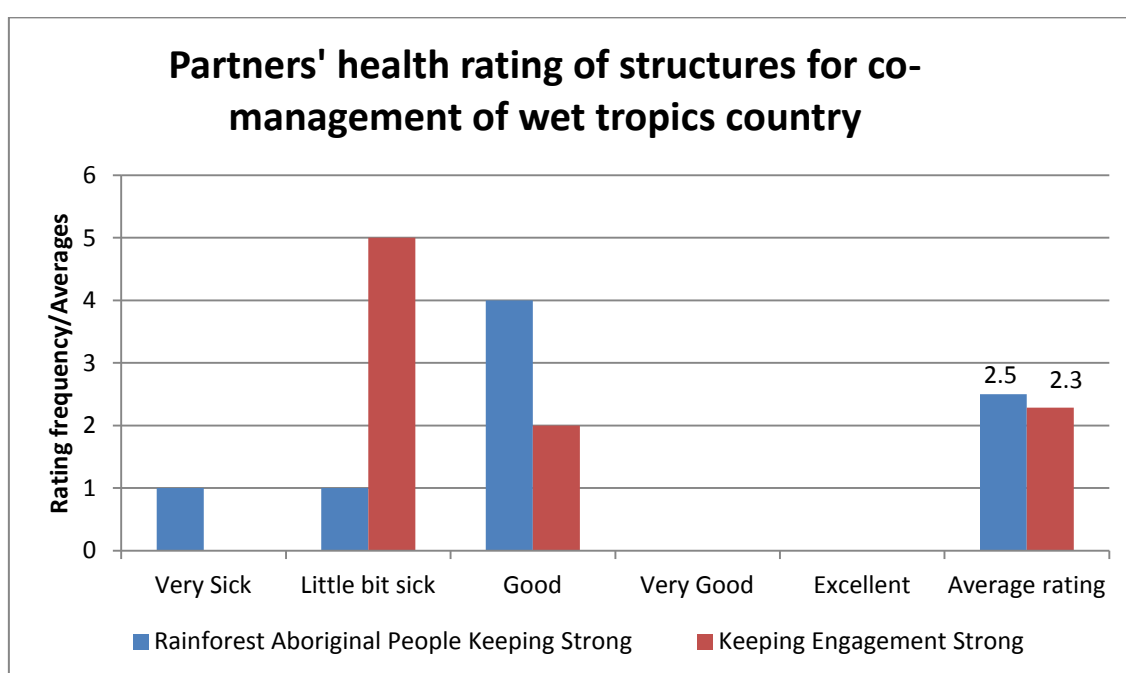


Figure 16: Partners' health rating of structures for co-management of wet tropics country

The structures for supporting Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' strategic vision and intent and for country and culture were rated as in good health overall. Support for Indigenous Protected Area planning and country-based planning have been very effective

Vision and intent is in place, [planning resources] allow the RAP to do some strategic visioning ... not drive by agencies, but by what the Traditional Owners want them to be ... about being pro-active, innovative, responding to opportunity

Local governments' supportive roles were noted:

From Local Government (LG) we support Ranger training, Ranger employment and facilitate discussions...some LG support a facilitator ... some coastal councils seem to be doing it better (CCC, CRC and Douglas).

However, not all groups have been able to access or effectively utilize this support

Inconsistency of resources and leadership within groups ... Different abilities of groups.

The rating of support for structures for culture and kin as "good" largely reflects the Aboriginal support, rather than other community and government support:

Recognise that it [culture] is Aboriginal peoples' business ... still have Elders and intergenerational knowledge transfer...strong connections to land and country remain.

Government has an enabling role [for kin] and that's where our responsibility stops ... to enable TOs to be strong in that space.

However, many constraints were noted that Aboriginal people encounter in developing structures for supporting culture and kin:

People are constrained by current circumstances...need to be able to practice culture...but no real opportunity to live it in the current setup.

What government offers comes with strings attached, government reporting-type strings.

Nevertheless, people get around these constraints:

Bama are adapting since traditional cultural structures have been disrupted, but are being rebuilt.

Support for capacity structures for RAP were also rated as good, reflecting the opportunities provided by ranger and other funding programs:

Establishing ranger programs, employment opportunities, traineeships, cadetships ... funding and resourcing PBCs and Land Trusts does enable on-ground capacity building ... gets some cultural governance happening.

"Soft" structures were also recognised as important for capacity

Some of the best opportunity to improve capacity comes through relationships and networks.

Again the patchy condition of support and structures for capacity across the region was noted, with mentoring viewed as a good way to assist:

Some entities fall through the cracks, can't access funding ... not all opportunities are accessible by everyone.

One process for addressing gaps is to get established organisations to mentor and host projects for a new group... NGOs have done this, auspiced grants for TO organisations.

Mentoring programs provide opportunities to learn from others without fear of creating competition – some groups have skills and capacity for sharing.

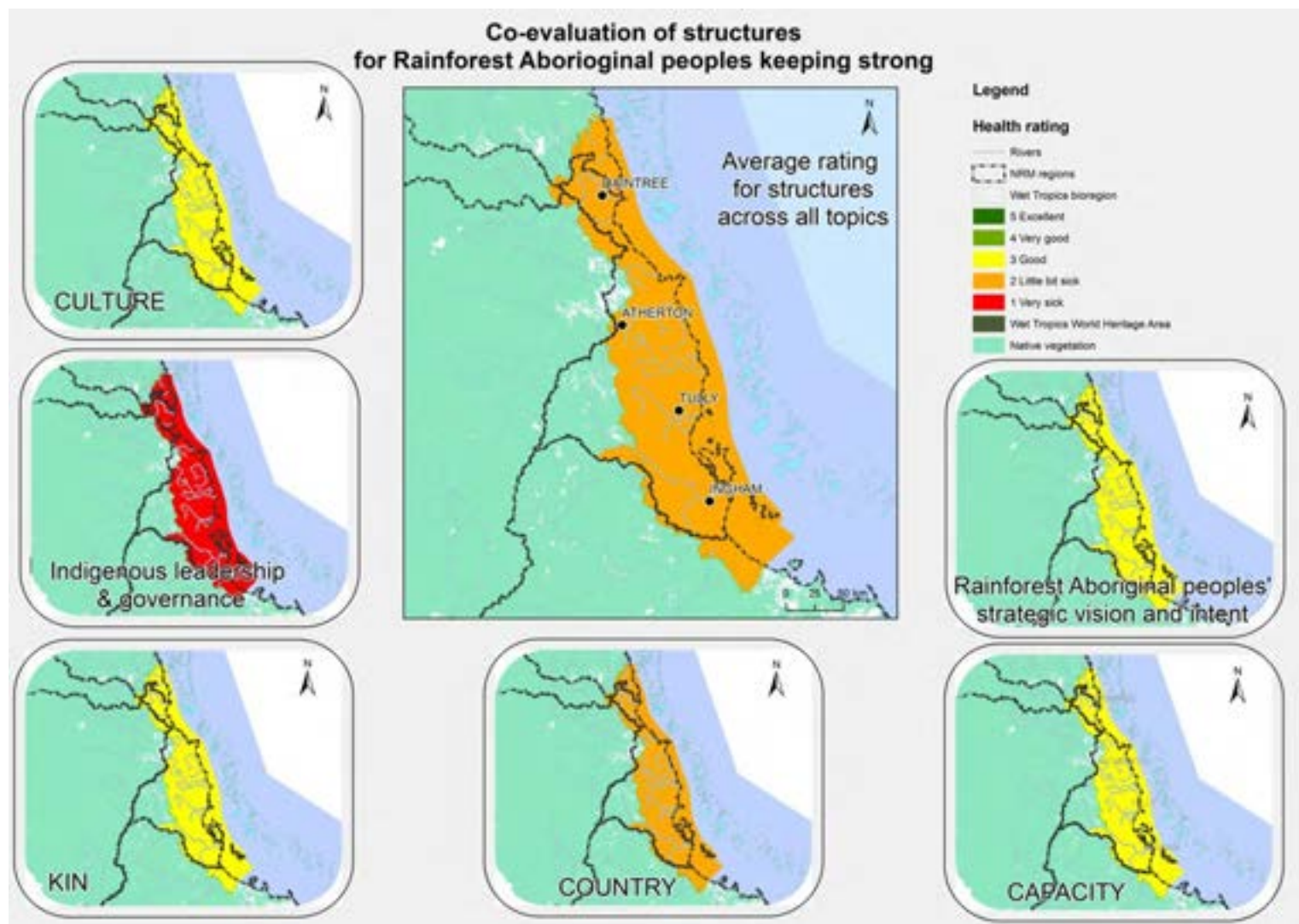


Figure 17: Partners' regional health rating of support for *structures* for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* in wet tropics country

The partners rated the support available for structures for Indigenous governance and leadership as “very sick”. Partners recognised a key gap here of central significance:

Gap ... who has the structure and resources to facilitative Indigenous peoples to build their governance ... no structures for that in general.

Governance is the number 1 issue from parties’ perspective.

If you want to close the gap, have to build governance capacity.

Indigenous governance is fundamental to all projects – need resources to enable Indigenous decision-making to occur.

Effective mechanisms by Indigenous organisations to engage their own people is recognised as a key requirement by both Aboriginal people and their partners. One of the partners at the workshop explained:

Government needs to know that the Indigenous decisions are being made well, that people who can ultimately speak with authority for country are deciding.

Indigenous governance has to go back to the people, but requires laborious interaction, it’s not convenient, doesn’t suit bureaucracy, but to have a strong protocols you must have authority, can only come from the ground up.

A key Aboriginal leader at the workshop explained:

Governance of Aboriginal organisations is in two overlapping domains ... one part is the overlap with partners....but needs a foundation that the governance and engagement on the Aboriginal side is effective.

Government partners also felt very challenged and constrained and didn’t know how to help

Intent is there to help, but understanding what “supporting Indigenous governance” looks like is not there ... it’s an internal Indigenous process, no government mandate to support Indigenous governance capacity ... perception that some agencies trying to do it for people, but only doing what they can within their capacity.

Government sees Aboriginal governance as issue specific.

[Support for governance is] very uneven across the wet tropics, mixed results from funding and churning by government agencies

The solution to this dilemma was identified as gaining proper understanding of what the different groups thought they needed:

Need to ask Indigenous groups what support they need to improve their governance—e.g. is it bottom-up processes, resources to bring people together to consider governance, Indigenous driven leadership training, partners to enable or facilitate?

Structures for Keeping Engagement Strong

The partners’ regional evaluation rated structures for RAPKS as 2.2, which we have also rounded to “little bit sick” overall (Figure 18). The only “good” ratings were applied to the themes for relationships and issues resolution, with clear connections between the two.

People perceived that relationships were in place between RAP and partners across many different organizations at different levels. Some were very good and others not so good. While rating structures for relationships as “good” overall, many key barriers were noted:

- High turnover of government staff whereas long-term can be important for relationships
- Government department timelines and deadlines cause difficulty.
- Some government structures are tokenistic and inflexible.
- Lots of different departments that keep changing their structures and names confuse Aboriginal people.
- Multiple clan groups, family groups, tribal groups, ranger groups, land trusts and cultural politics between them confuses partners and makes it difficult for governments to meet their timelines.
- Structures are very many (possibly too many), complex, vary between areas, and don't fully address co-management.
- Volunteer burnout with small groups.

Overall people viewed that the structures for engagement were not the best to support relationships for co-management, but recognized it as a work in progress that is improving. Nevertheless, the relationships that are in place provide the foundation for issue resolution:

Engagement, outreach, builds relationships, keeping in touch regularly, then it is easier to deal with issues if you have an ongoing relationships ... have [formal] monthly meetings and also just see someone now and then.

Different agencies provide different sorts of support structures—MoUs (Memorandums of Agreement), ILUAs, regular meetings around fire/weed, involving people in planning, including the annual planning and evaluation cycle of the agency. However, often these supports do not provide structures to deal with 'intractable' issues:

Some issues are addressed but there are still many issues simmering underneath that aren't address ... people lack resources to address the issues they would like to address.

Structures for principles, mechanisms, protocols, regimes and power were all rated "little bit sick" reflecting interconnections between a set of (primarily statutory) institutional arrangements that don't really provide for the co-management that people are trying to deliver.

In relation to principles, people recognized that changes had begun slowly some 20 year ago and were now gaining momentum, driven by non-statutory partnership arrangements. A key problem is the churn on both sides:

Fundamentally dynamic, government is always changing... if there is consistency on the TO side, provides for effective management ...but if there is churn on the TO side too, Aboriginal organizations frequently changing boards ... it doesn't go well.

Aboriginal groups who are able to maintain their direction in the face of the government churn do well

GAC has presented a face that government can relate to, the same face, an organic structure ... they can deal with the churn in agencies and keep their structures in place.

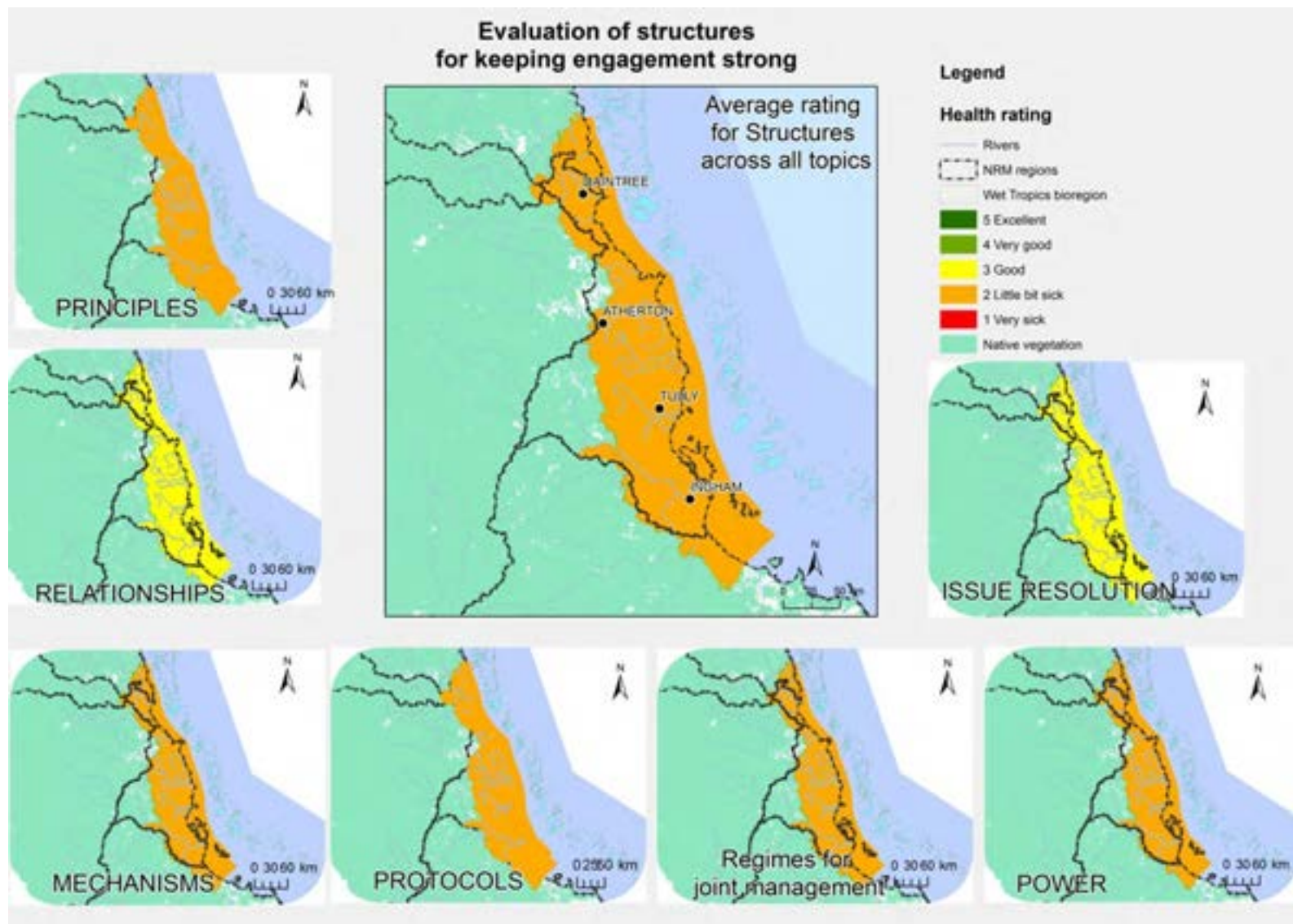


Figure 18: Partners' regional health rating of support for *structures for Keeping Engagement Strong* in wet tropics country

Effective mechanisms by Indigenous organisations to engage their own people are recognised as a key requirement by both Aboriginal people and their partners, but were rated as “little bit sick” at the workshop. One of the partners at the workshop explained:

Government needs to know that the Indigenous decisions are being made well, that people who can ultimately speak with authority for country are deciding.

A key Aboriginal leader at the partners workshop explained:

Governance of Aboriginal organisations is in two overlapping domains ... one part is the overlap with partners....but needs a foundation that the governance and engagement on the Aboriginal side is effective.

Some Aboriginal organizations had this in place, others were barely beginning, so overall mechanisms were seen as patchy across the region. Partners therefore need different mechanism, need to check and understand each organization and group they are engaging with to understand their needs individually. Most Aboriginal organizations were recognized as working in very challenging contexts, but some were able to present mechanisms of a smooth organization that partners can do business with, while others were not.

On the partners' side, mechanisms were perceived to be affected by organization culture:

On the government side, in the organizational set-up, cultural change is progressing, but we question the adequacy to move towards co-management (dominant organization culture may not be ready).

The regimes for co-management were viewed as a barrier to the type of devolution and power shifting that was required to really enable Aboriginal peoples roles. Complex tenures, multiple institutions overlaying each other on the same parcel of country, multiple agencies whose roles appeared poorly defined and overlapping when viewed from the outside. This context makes it very difficult for a single agency to devolve management of their country to Traditional Owners:

How do you get authority for fire management across tenures?

Coordination is also very challenging in this context, as no one government agency has the convening power to bring everyone together. TOs can provide effective structures in this context:

The best results [for government agencies] come when TOs drive the process, take government on a journey through collaborative land and sea country planning.

While the complex overlapping arrangements are a barrier to devolution and power-sharing, effective Aboriginal governance can overcome this:

Power is not handed over to TOs if governments don't believe they have the authority to make decisions and are organised ... groups gain power, successful groups have good leadership, stability and well resourced structures that it is easier to share power with.

Partners themselves—or the actual individuals engaging with Rainforest Aboriginal people in the region—are recognized as often having little power themselves

Government power is held in Brisbane and Canberra, so how that is shared with the regions has an impact

Processes for co-management of wet tropics country

Partners' health rating of processes for the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPKS) and those for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) were virtually identical in average, although there was a wider spread in the latter (Figure 5). Again, partners noted the variability across the region and the difficulty of giving a valid overall rating at the regional scale.

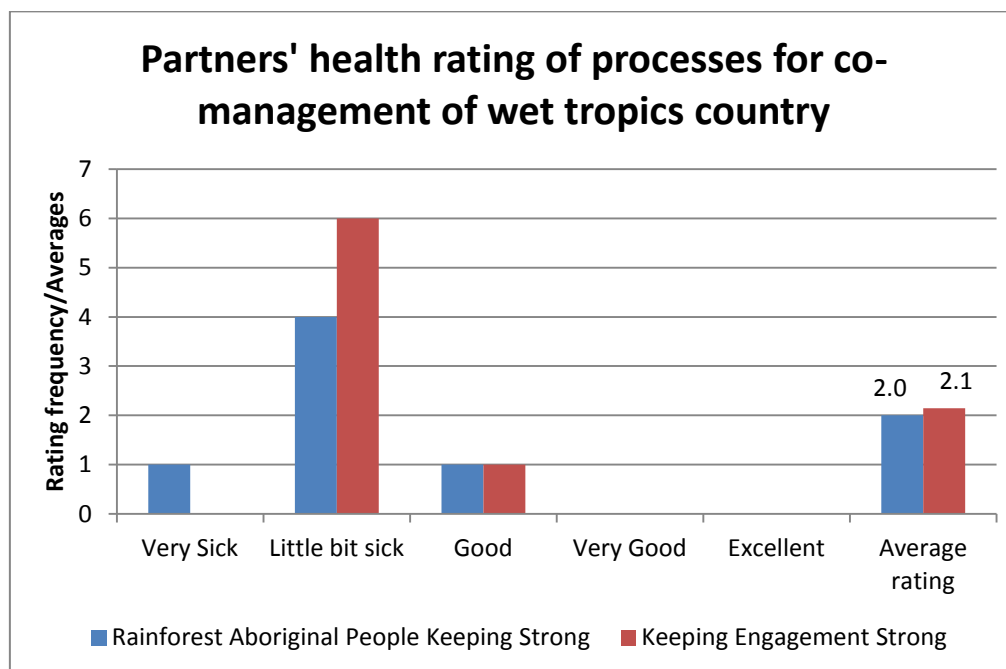


Figure 19: Partners' health rating of processes for co-management of wet tropics country

Processes for Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong

The partners' rated support for processes for RAPKS at 2.0 overall, "little bit sick", with support for culture as good, and support for Indigenous leadership and governance again "very sick" (Figure 7).

Again, the support for culture was perceived as largely emanating from support provided by Aboriginal peoples and organizations to necessary processes:

Communities are able to pass on culture and knowledge.

Some native title processes enhance culture, others are perceived as damaging culture, splitting people apart:

Native title works on an adversarial process...native title...appalled, never been able to say it, gets dumped on people and used to pull each other apart.

Partly this arises because formal processes are protracted and require ongoing adaptation over time. The support that Aboriginal people and organizations seek to give for processes encounters lots of constraints:

Challenge is to preserve culture in the face of adapting to the present world.

Constant challenge for people to be able to express their culture. Pressures are there to limit processes of fire management that are a cultural marker—opportunities to express cultural fire are constrained by QPWS fire regulations and tenure.

Aboriginal authority over culture at the level of the tribal group, the people with native title rights and interest over country (whether recognized under Australian statutory arrangements or not) is central:

Processes, systems and governance that could be regional [over nationally listed cultural heritage] may indeed threaten the cultural norms that are about individual groups engaging on country.

Organisations don't own culture, people own culture, so organizations [involved in culture] need to reflect the real ownership by the people.

Nevertheless, people noted that the constraints are less than in the past:

Constraints are lifting. Local government is engaging with TOs to have a presence on land. A lot of people were removed from country, so small actions like this lift the constraints.

Processes to support kin, country, capacity and shared strategic vision were all rated as "little bit sick". Again, the heterogeneity across the region was highlighted. A positive point was noted in that

Government sometimes enables people to come together where they otherwise didn't have that opportunity...these processes can help people come together, unite... interact, engage.

A key tension was also noted around the different process requirements that come with kinship-based connections to country:

A dichotomy between open and transparent and internal discussions. Kin may involve other responsibilities that don't coincide with open and transparent ... staff we might use merit-based selection, whereas kin may influence e.g. right people for country.

Government needs to recognise that kin is part of culture.

The rating of support for processes for country as "little bit sick" reflects the ongoing lack of access to undertake activities on country that many TO groups experience:

Current management structures don't encourage traditional use and making and living...often may clash with world heritage values ... legislation is a limiting factor which forces people onto limited activities on country e.g. tourism

Approach for government and NGOs is about how cultural values and traditional knowledge contribute to THEIR goals, rather than how country or a landscape contributes to tradition, culture and country.

The opportunity to bring traditional knowledge to [management] directly, rather than as an influencing factor, is limited and sporadic in management of wet tropics country.

In relation to support for RAP capacity, there was a perception that the right processes were hard to find, and often based around formal events that didn't work well:

Forums and workshops will always exclude some people. Need small conversations and the ongoing processes of building relationships and trust...Aboriginal people are not always confident in formal group situations, need to touch base in one-on-one or small groups afterwards on in breaks.

The institutional requirements of partners were also noted as a barrier to effect support for capacity building:

Governments and NGOs often drive to meet timeframes, because of acquittal, funding timelines, so sometimes someone just does the job instead of capacity building and sharing, paternalistic.

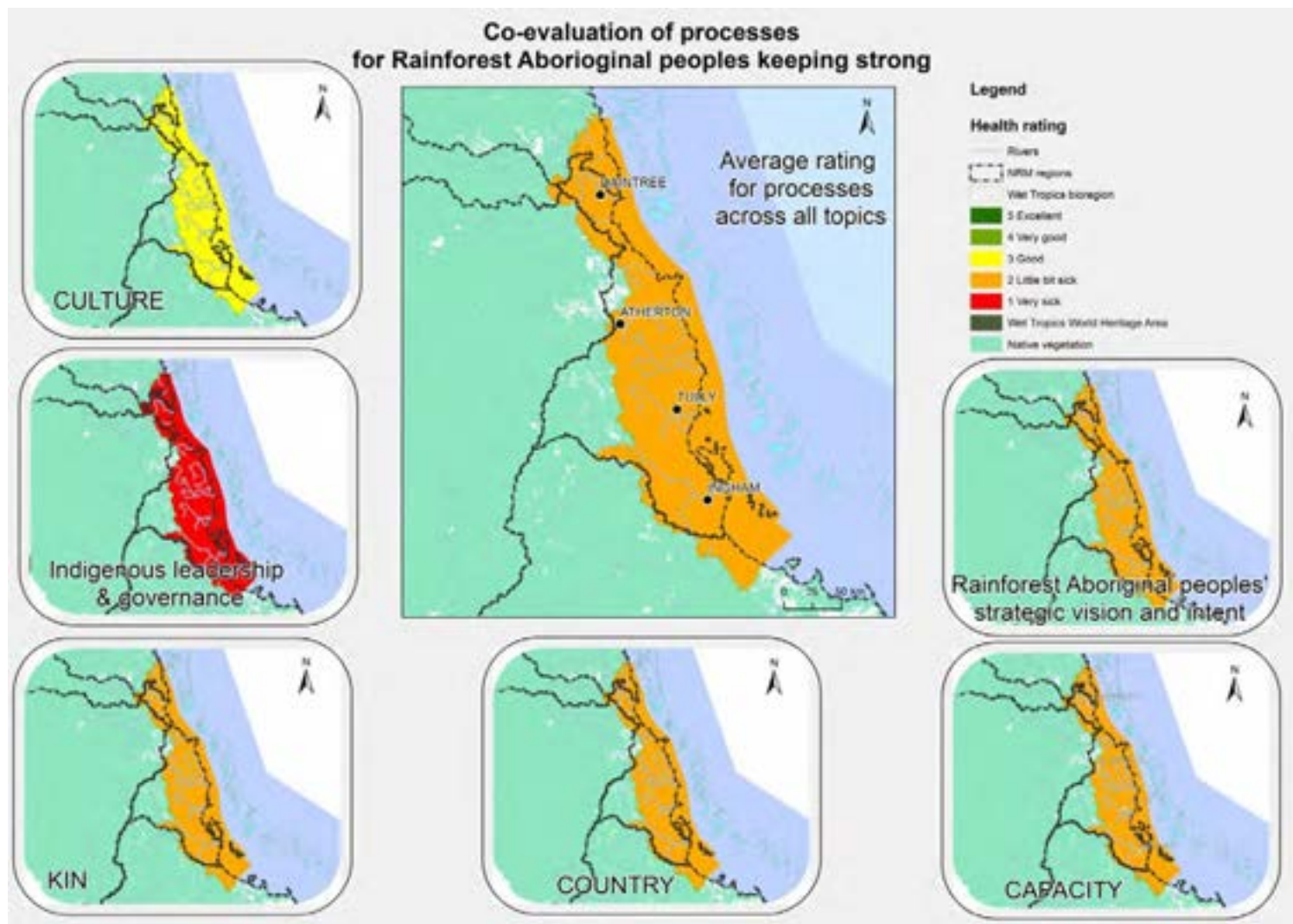


Figure 20: Partners' regional health rating of support for *processes* for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* in wet tropics country

It was also noted that Aboriginal organizations sometimes don't match people to job requirements well:

Capacity means making sure the right people are doing the right jobs.

The support for processes of Indigenous governance and leadership were rated the same as the support for structures—'very sick'. Again there was a lot of discussion about this theme, and the gaps and tensions encountered. Partners recognized that there were some differences perceptions, understanding and in requirements here:

Indigenous concepts of leadership might be different to what partners are seeking from 'leadership' ... partners seeking leaders to facilitate discussions with TOs versus people 'speaking for country'.

Lack of understanding of building Indigenous ... leadership concepts of [Aboriginal] culture at odds with what partners are seeking to negotiate.

Indigenous governance and leadership has also been impacted by colonialism:

Traditional Owners are renegotiating leadership where there has been disconnect from country.

The perceived good health of support for structures for RAP strategic vision and intent did not flow through to processes, which were perceived to be lacking support:

Intent comes through IPA and country-based planning. Not driven by agencies, but are what TOs want them to be. Get the strategic vision, TO can do that, has been \$ to support that...

Processes seem to get a bit weaker...planning phases strong, but implementation, adaptive processes tend to be weak ... implementation evaluation seem to be really lacking.

Indigenous-driven planning processes were commended several times in the workshop e.g.

Land and sea country planning is the most effective vehicle.

Frustrations were expressed that this is not always supported properly as the foundation of the journey that TOs are partners are embarking on:

We need funding to do that [land and sea country planning] first, not just funding for rangers and to deliver on-ground work. No money is available for negotiation and consultation with partners.

Processes for Keeping Engagement Strong

The partners' regional evaluation rated structures for RAPKS overall as 2.1, "little bit sick"; all themes were rated at this level except for 'issues resolution' which was rated "good" (Figure 8). Again, people noted the variability across the region as a barrier to giving a valid rating. The good rating for issues resolution reflected that things have improved over time:

Have agreements, some processes for groups to be able to hunt, access country for cultural heritage. Some areas are better than others, always need to work on and improve, something that continues to work over time.

People noted again that there often were not processes to deal with 'intractable' issues.

Engagement processes were often hampered by the lack of effective principles:

PBCs are not always able to develop their own core principles, no money for this task, and they are overwhelmed by statutory principles, leading to problems around the boards.

Not a good appreciation in government that PBCs are often very compromised organizations because of the way they were formed.

Building an effective PBC is demanding

People say “we need the government to do away so we can sort out our own business” – only way to have an efficient PBC process is dealing with internal dynamics, PBC needs to be free of baggage.

People also commented that the Crown interest in supporting self-determination needed to be argued, the benefits from sharing management need to be explained, as it involves the Crown losing some power.

Long term view of government to withhold power and suppress Aboriginal history.

Personality issues were discussed in the poor rating of processes for relationships:

Personalities can have a big effect. With one person issues seem intractable then the person changes and the issue moves ... strong personalities and leadership can help relationships, and then a board changes and there's down time.

Relationships are adversely affected by internal conflict, especially where the TO groups lack effective processes internally to address and resolve conflicts. The inequity in resources for relationship-building processes was also noted:

On the government side, people are paid to support co-management, but on the TO side, volunteer time goes into engagement so expectations it are not well balanced.

Process inflexibility is also a barrier to relationships:

Doesn't accommodate what is important to a partnership group at a particular time e.g. some groups don't want to engage, have other business to do, some can engage.

Peoples' perceptions about the support for protocol processes were heavily influenced by a perception that the protocols in the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement (WTRA) have not been successfully implemented:

Need to recognize that the process for working on WTRA protocols was potentially compromised from the beginning. What the parties wanted out of it were different. Cultural mis-match, power mis-match, government reluctant to share power.

Division between different RAP groups also affected the WTRA processes. Some groups were against it. Mandingalbay Yidinji did not sign the WTRA.

[WTRA] Caused outrage on the Aboriginal side because it polarized people into those supporting WTRA and those against it.

People also explained that the policy settings of government changed during the negotiation process for the WTRA—it was started in the context of 'shared responsibility agreements' being supported by the Australian government, who discontinued the policy. Some at the workshop recalled surprise and puzzlement at Rainforest Aboriginal people's interest for the WTRA protocols, which they saw as heavily bureaucratic, essentially a new form of red tape, which they usually were being asked to remove.

Developing protocols is what some Aboriginal people want. Inherently a lot of red tape, they have to go back to other Aboriginal people, but they have to go back, cultural ritual is very important, elders ask for knowledge [about what is happening in co-management] but not directly.

The rating of support for regimes and power processes as “little bit sick” is consistent with the lack of good statutory mechanisms for power sharing and devolution. The roles of IPAs are limited in this regard:

No formal level through which IPAs change the government processes. At a basic level – senior rangers may take a role on country. But the IPA declaration does not result in any delegation of roles, responsibilities etc. from the state.

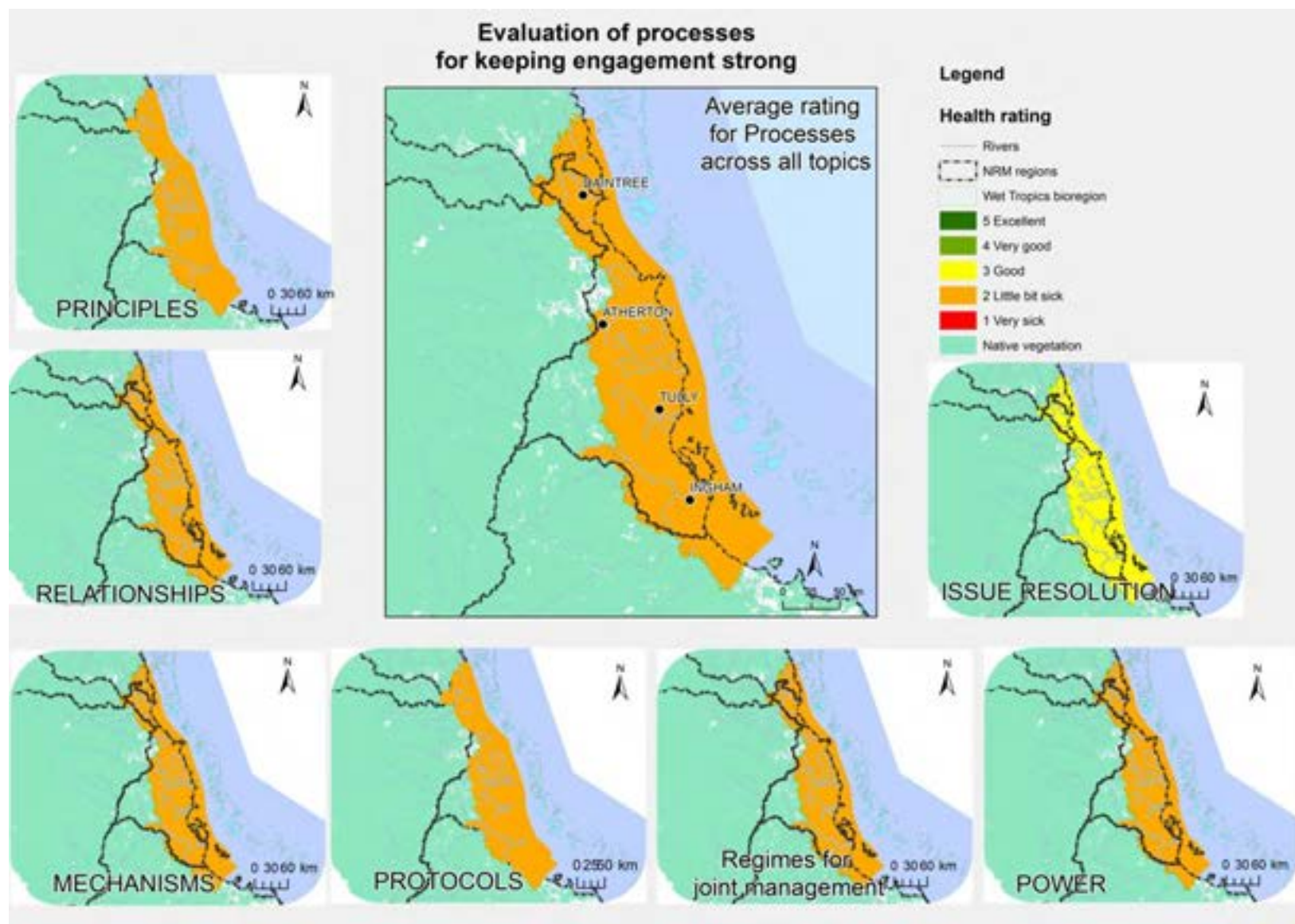


Figure 21: Partners' regional health rating of *processes* for *Keeping Engagement Strong* in wet tropics country

Results for co-management of wet tropics country

Partners' health rating of results from *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* (RAPKS) was slightly higher than that for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (KES) (Figure 5). Again, partners noted the variability across the region and the difficulty of giving a valid overall rating at the regional scale.

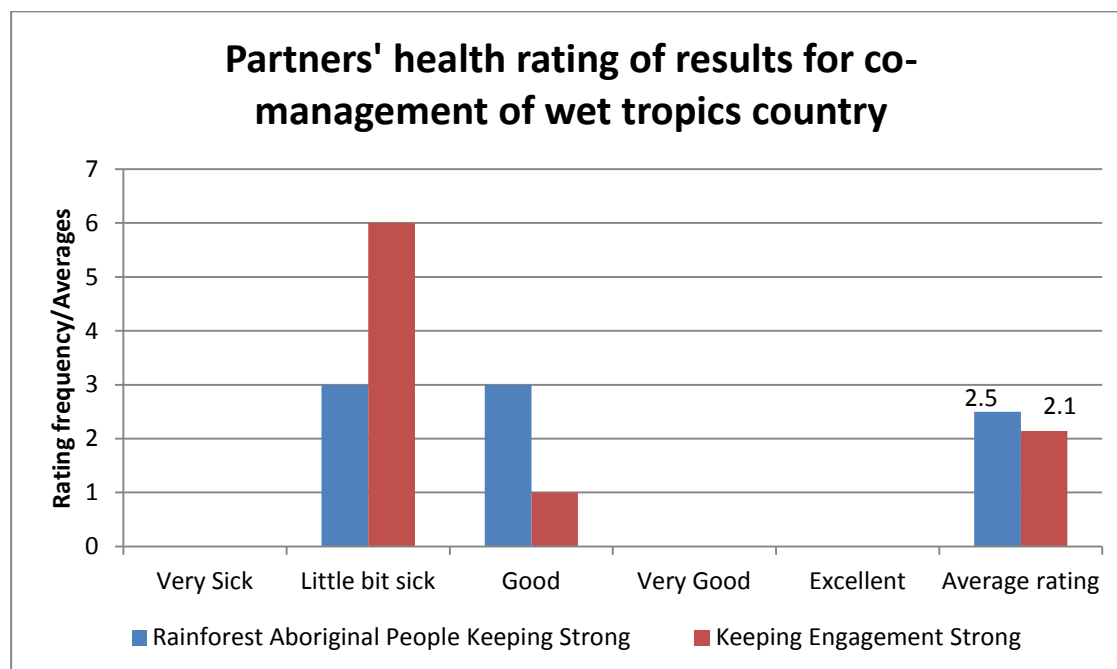


Figure 22: Partners' health rating of results for co-management of wet tropics country

Results for Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong

The partners regional evaluation rated results for RAPKS as 2.5 which we have rounded to "little bit sick" overall while identifying the culture, kin and capacity themes as in "good" health (Figure 11). The qualitative analysis of the data associated with results matched better with the categories of biocultural interlinkages (Hill *et al.* 2011; Persic and Martin 2008). (Table 1) The results in this section are presented in accordance with those categories.

Category of biocultural interlinkages	Related themes in our diagnostic
Language and linguistic diversity	Culture
Material culture	Culture
Knowledge and technology	Capacity
Modes of subsistence	Country
Economic relations	Mechanisms
Social relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political relations Legal-institutional 	Kin, relationships Indigenous leadership & governance Principles, regimes, protocols
Belief systems	Culture

Table 4: Categories of biocultural interlinkages and the themes in our analysis

Social relations

Improved social and political positions and relationships of Aboriginal people were perceived as a key result of their engagement in management on country:

Aboriginal people are starting to be leaders, starting to be considered powerful, influential, undertaking advocacy, mentoring.

More Indigenous leaders taking roles, engagement of traditional people with government and NGOs is becoming evident.

This leadership, and matching leadership in partners, is what overcomes barriers and leads to real results:

TOs taking governments on a journey, like Giringun has on co-management, strong outcomes can arise. Has to be flexibility. Key partners in government need to make their own commitment to brief up their own structures, so that the policy settings can accommodate the journey that they are taking people on.

Cohesive structures on both sides of the fence allow good outcomes.

Legal-institutional relations that are grounded in Aboriginal culture produce results:

Culturally assured engagement that is clear where the responsibility lies, that directs the external agency with cultural assurance. Critically important to the vehicle.

Cultural governance with board structures, if TOs have cultural authority and sit on the Board, structures are stronger.

Culture – language, material culture, belief systems

Intergenerational transfer of culture is recognised as a key result;

Signs that the elders are bringing people on is a positive, young people are taking over welcomes to country.

Kids, younger generation are embracing culture through language and dance.

The recognition of cultural values through national heritage listing in the wet tropics was highlighted as a key result that underpinned support for country, culture and kin. The fact that local governments now have policies in place and registers of cultural sites is also a positive result. Support for native title recognition also supports results for strengthening culture in some cases.

Economic relations

Employment is a key result from co-management of country:

A lot more Aboriginal people seem to be getting opportunities to work on country.

Modes of subsistence

People are regaining access to their economies on country:

Greater leverage is being exercised by Indigenous people in land management.

The condition of country is thereby improved:

More people are back on-country with on-ground work to make country healthy.

Opportunities to strengthen results – culture

People recognise that changes need to keep happening, particularly in government support for and recognition of culture:

Government people do not necessarily modify behaviour, dilemmas. Governments should acknowledge Aboriginal lore but sometimes really struggle to do this.

The change in status of Aboriginal people as they become land-owners places a different obligation on management that is not yet delivered:

Current land management needs to change to include the maintenance of culture as well as landscape.

While natural heritage listing is perceived as a key result, a senior Aboriginal leader at the partners workshop expressed concern about the level of cultural governance:

Need to contract processes out to the tribal level. Cautious about it, risk that processes, systems, and governance could be regional and may indeed threaten the cultural norms about individual groups engaging on country.

MY sees that if intergenerational transfer is not done by our group in our way it is extinguishment. Discussions, processes and outcomes need to be identified and driven by the group.

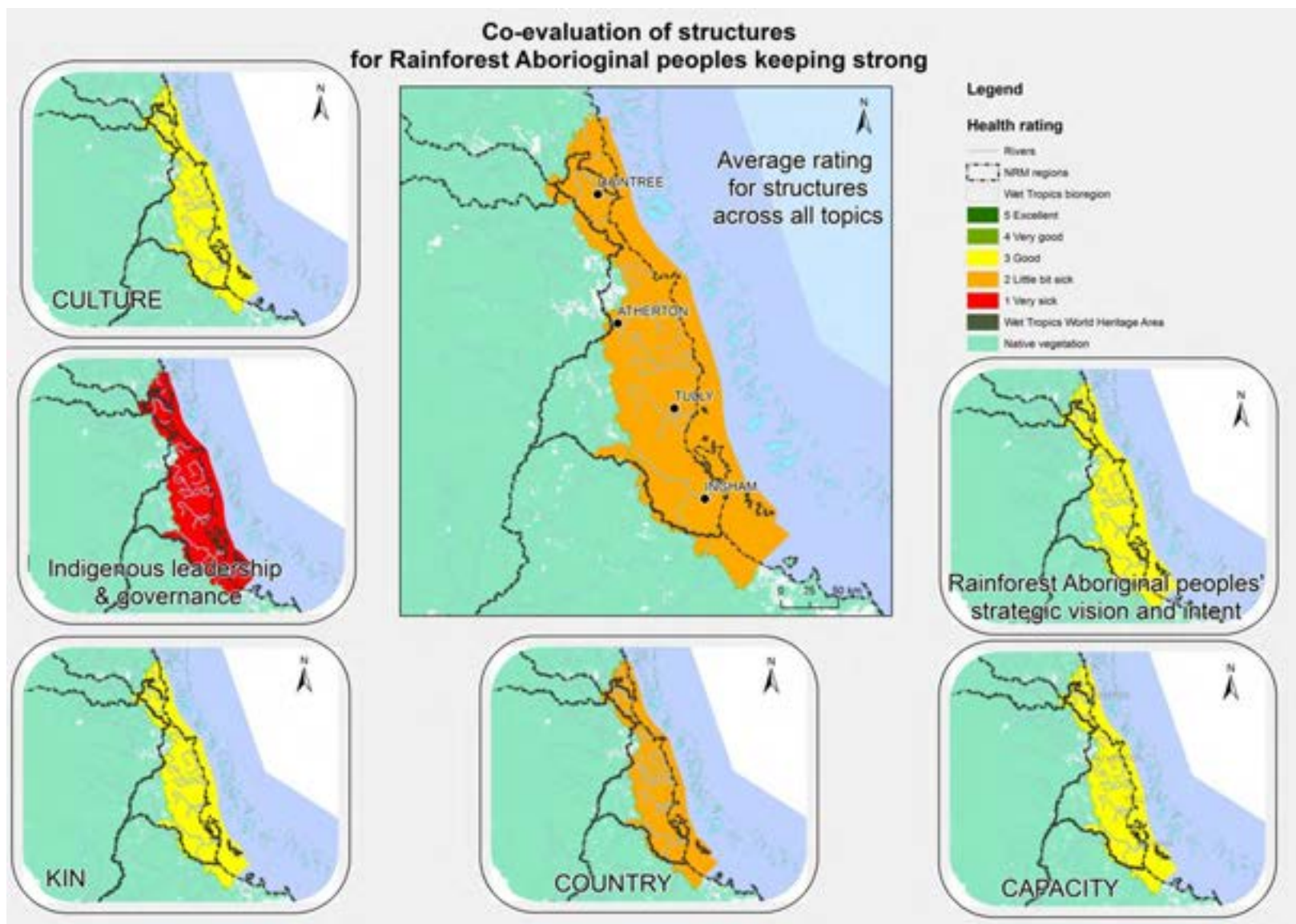


Figure 23: Partners' regional health ratings of *results* from *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* in wet tropics country

Results for Keeping Engagement Strong

The partners regional evaluation rated results for KES as 2.1 which we have rounded to “little bit sick” overall; relationships was the only theme rated “good” for results, all others were “little bit sick” (Figure 11).

Social and political relations

Improved social and political engagement is a key positive result. People also discussed the big change over the last few years in the way Aboriginal people and partners interact:

Need to acknowledge the change, how far we have come together, changing definitions, chucking out co-management and just talking about management, coming together around a common language.

Partners and Aboriginal people also find opportunities to promote common agendas:

NGOs can assist people to lobby government for policy change, financial support, and this has delivered results for land management programs e.g. keeping IPA and Ranger funding at a time of big government cuts.

People recognise that there still are different expectations between Rainforest Aboriginal people and governments in relation to what comes from engagement, but this is qualified by the fact that things have changed.

Having TOs on the Wet Tropics Board is a good result. Things are getting better.

But we are limited in our understanding of the satisfaction of the parties in the wet tropics.

Some good results and examples of engagement were noted:

- Indigenous reference groups, where governments facilitate, take a sit-back role.
- Indigenous-driven leadership training.
- Where economic empowerment happens.

Suggestions for what could be done differently focused on facilitating things from the bottom-up, with TOs in the facilitation role and partners sitting back more.

Protocols for engagement were perceived as flawed but largely irrelevant to getting good social and political relations:

Protocols must acknowledge both western and Indigenous requirements but no protocol talks to both law and lore. Reality is that culture and lore don't meet whitefella law, you have to try and work in parallel with these two things.

You can write in whatever you like [in a protocol] but it doesn't determine how you do business ... there are results, but not because of the red tape.

Knowledge

Developing knowledge together has achieved positive results:

Good, strategic partnerships have come through land and sea management planning. Problem is that land and sea management is not supported post-determinations.

Economic relations

While the positive results for employment from the Australian Government's Working on Country (WOC) program were noted, some potential for improvement was identified:

WOC funding precludes working on water. We need red tape reduction, and a more holistic approach.

In addition, people identified that equitable benefit-sharing is not in place:

Government has all the skills and all the resources, Aboriginal groups don't have the capacity.

Legal-institutional

People noted that the best results occur when Aboriginal groups take the lead – the catch 22 is that many groups do not have the capability to do that.

Notes on potential topics for tractable ways forward in relation to policy-relevant findings

- Bilateral support between Australian and State governments
- Long-term policy that keeps the government more stable, address churn.
- Adaptive policy that can be adjusted and changed.
- Respect and commitment on both sides.
- Throw out the whitefella timelines and just keep working together.
- Is it co-management, joint management or governance of management?
- Assistance needed for Aboriginal peoples to build their capacity—specific financial resources are needed for that.
- Needs to be a system for building on the learnings of other groups.

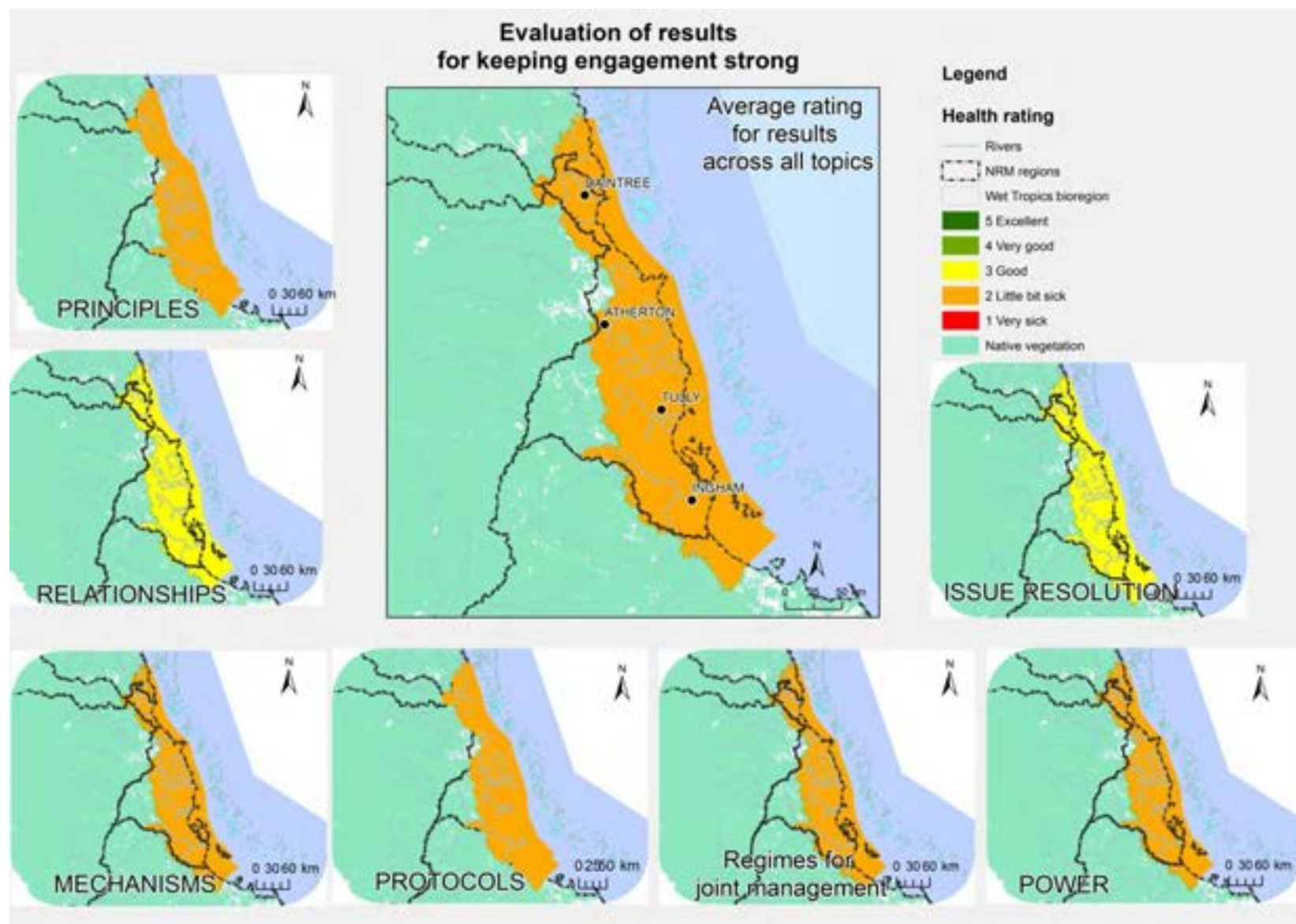


Figure 24: Partners' regional health ratings of *results* from *Keeping Engagement Strong* in wet tropics country

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