



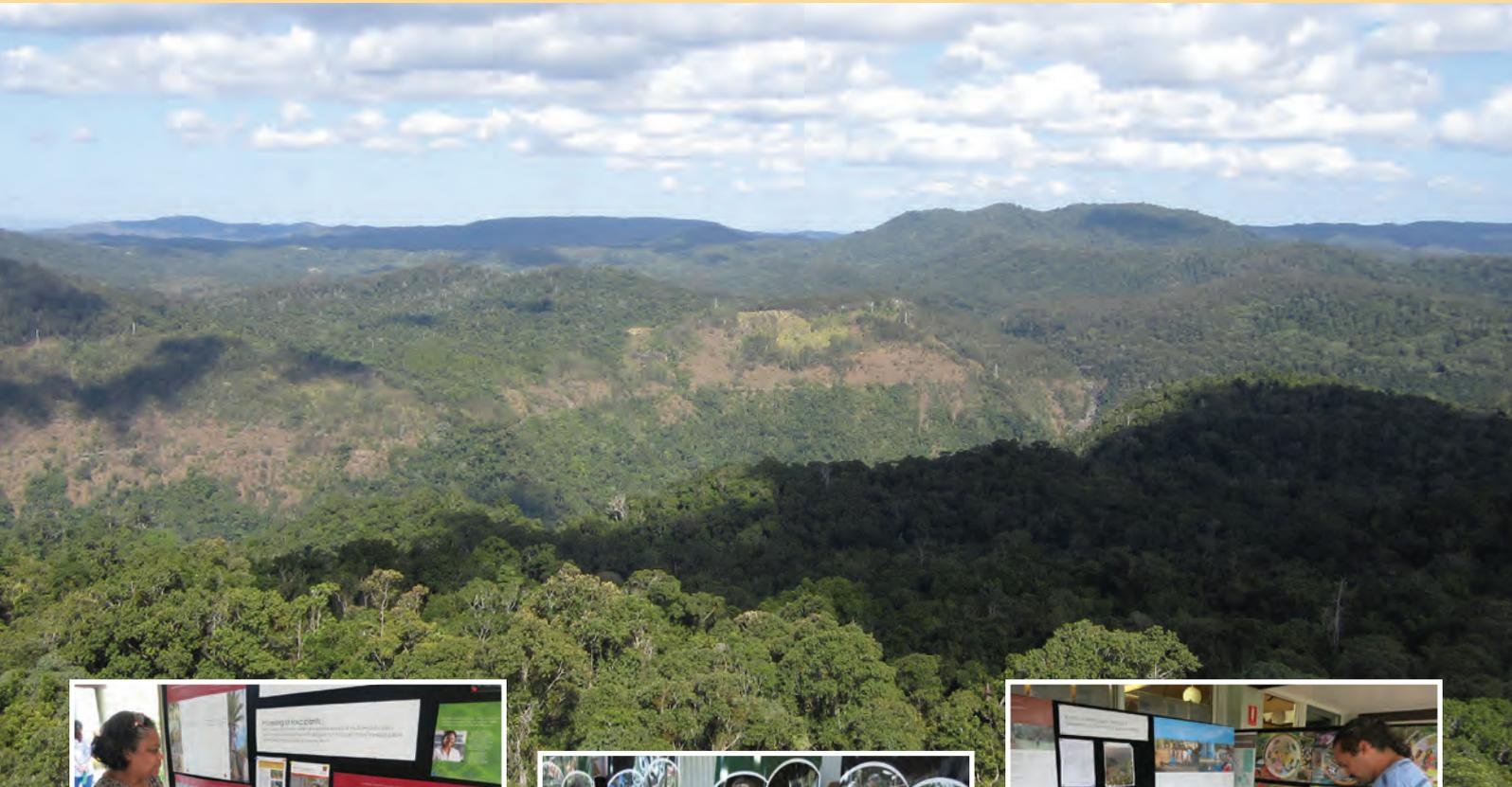
National Environmental  
Research Program

TROPICAL ECOSYSTEMS *hub*

Technical Report

## Participatory evaluation of co-management in wet tropics country

Interim report - December 2013



Rosemary Hill, Kirsten Maclean, Petina Pert, Joann Schmider and Lavenie Tawake



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment,  
Water, Population and Communities



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## INTERIM REPORT

December 2013

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December 2013

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## Acronyms Used In This Report

<b>AC</b>	Aboriginal Corporation
<b>AIATSIS</b>	Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
<b>ARM</b>	Aboriginal Resource Management (section of WTMA)
<b>CPR</b>	Common Pool Resources
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Environment
<b>ESF</b>	Keeping Engagement Strong feature
<b>GBR</b>	Great Barrier Reef
<b>GERIAS</b>	Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Australian Studies
<b>ILUA</b>	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
<b>IPA</b>	Indigenous Protected Area
<b>NERP</b>	National Environmental Research Program
<b>NRM</b>	Natural Resource Management
<b>PIP</b>	Participant Information Pack
<b>RAP</b>	Rainforest Aboriginal People
<b>RAPA</b>	Rainforest Aboriginal People's Alliance
<b>RAPSF</b>	Rainforest Aboriginal people Keeping Strong feature
<b>RRRC</b>	Reef and Rainforest Research Centre Limited
<b>QLD</b>	Queensland
<b>TEH</b>	Tropical Ecosystems Hub
<b>TO</b>	Traditional Owner
<b>WTMA</b>	Wet Tropics Management Authority
<b>WTRA</b>	Wet Tropics Regional Agreement
<b>WTWHA</b>	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

## Abbreviations Used In This Report

**e.g.** For example

## Acknowledgements

This research is supported financially by investment from the Tropical Ecosystems Hub of the Australian Governments' National Environmental Research Program and co-investment from the CSIRO Building Resilient Australian Biodiversity Assets Theme. Many other organisations are making invaluable in-kind contributions to the co-research. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance for their important role as the regional leadership group in advancing the regional priorities of Rainforest Aboriginal peoples within the Wet Tropics region. We would also like to acknowledge the in-kind co-investment and support from our co-research partners: the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance (including Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation (AC); The Central Wet Tropics Institute for Country and Culture AC; and Giringun AC); Mandingalbay Yidinji AC and their Djunbunji Land and Sea Program; Wet Tropics Management Authority; Terrain NRM; the Australian Conservation Foundation; the Indigenous Protected Area and Working on Country programs of the Australian Government's Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet; the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service of their Department of National Parks Recreation Sport and Racing; James Cook University's Cairns Institute, the **Regional Advisory and Innovation Network (RAIN)** and Smyth and Bahrtd Consultants. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies for the reciprocal partnership with their Native Title and Joint Management research project led by Toni Bauman.

### Author contributions

Earlier versions of Figures 1 and 2 were published in Maclean et al (2012), which details the various author contributions. Since that report, a further twenty individuals reviewed and suggested revisions to the framework at a participatory workshop held on 17 October 2012 (Hill et al. 2012a). The updated versions presented herein were finalised by Kirsten Maclean, Joann Schmider, Lavenie Tawake, Rosemary Hill and Petina Pert.

Rosemary Hill wrote the first draft of the report, which was finalised through co-author review and input.

Data for the report were contributed at two participatory workshops. The first was held by Giringun Aboriginal Corporation in Cardwell on 23 November 2013, and sixteen Traditional Owners associated with GAC contributed invaluable data. The second workshop was held by the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance at the Genazzano Centre, Lake Tinaroo on 30 November 2013 and twenty four Traditional Owners contributed further invaluable data. A team including Alf Joyce, Joann Schmider, Lavenie Tawake, Kirsten Maclean, Rosemary Hill, Allan Dale, Jim Turnour, Natalie Stoeckl and Michelle Esparon facilitated the data collection in small groups.

Data were analysed by Petina Pert, Rosemary Hill, Kirsten Maclean and Lavenie Tawake.

## Executive summary

This technical report contributes to the December 2013 Milestone for the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) Tropical Ecosystem Hub (TEH) Project 12.1 Indigenous co-management and biodiversity protection. The overall goal of this co-research is to interrogate the capability of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) and other collaborative planning models and mechanisms to provide the means for effective engagement of Indigenous knowledge and co-management for biodiversity and cultural protection in the region; and to provide for joint management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area between governments and Rainforest Aboriginal people, in partnership with communities. Our definition of co-management as a *continual solution-building process, not a fixed state, involving extensive talking, negotiating together and jointly learning so it gets better over time*, underpins our derived framework of co-management (see Fig 2). This framework, that includes thirteen separate but related parts that can be grouped into two features of co-management (*Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong*; and *Keeping Engagement Strong*), guides the participatory evaluation shared in this report. The framework was refined from earlier project work (see Maclean et al, 2012), ongoing discussions with the project co-research team and a regional participatory workshop held in October 2012 (Hill et al. 2012).

The results reported here are located within the second phase of a three year co-research project, providing an interim participatory evaluation of co-management in wet tropics country, NE Australia<sup>1</sup>. Both qualitative and a quantitative data contribute to the evaluation which was conducted together with Rainforest Aboriginal peoples in two separate workshops. Workshop one was hosted by Girringun Aboriginal Corporation in Cardwell on 23 November 2013, and brought forward data informed by the nine tribal groups that are represented therein. Workshop two was hosted by the Rainforest Aboriginal People's Alliance as part of the 'Warrama: for Rainforest Country, Kin and Culture' held at Genzanno 28 November-1st December 2013. This workshop brought forward data informed by the wider twenty tribal groups across the region of wet tropics country. A health rating of 1 to 5 (where 1=very sick; 5=excellent health) was given to three indicators (structures, processes and results) for each part of the framework at both workshops, and the reasons for the ratings discussed in small groups.

This Interim Report presents a quantitative analysis of data from both the Girringun and RAP Workshops, but qualitative and spatial analysis of only the Girringun data. The short time frame between the regional RAP workshop and the data for report submission did not allow for a full analysis of the data, which will be included in the Final Participatory Evaluation Report in June 2014. This Final Report will also include data from participatory workshops with governments and other partners involved in co-management of wet tropics country

Both the Girringun and RAP workshops evaluated the structures, processes and results for the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* parts of the framework as in better health than those for *Keeping Engagement Strong*. The results of participatory evaluations reported here resonate with the concept of the creation of an equitable intercultural space as the key means of achieving co-management (Hibbard et al. 2008; Hill 2011). Indigenous Protected Areas were identified as the most useful tool for creating an equitable intercultural space, due to their adaptability and flexibility, providing opportunities for effective collaboration with government and others.

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<sup>1</sup> Phase one is documented in Maclean et al. 2012 and Hill et al. 2012; phase three will be presented in an overview report in December 2014.

# Co-management of wet tropics country

## *Introduction*

This technical report contributes to the December 2013 Milestone for the National Environmental Research Program (NERP) Tropical Ecosystem Hub (TEH) Project 12.1 Indigenous co-management and biodiversity protection. The overall goal of this co-research is to interrogate the capability of Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs) and other collaborative planning models and mechanisms to provide the means for effective engagement of Indigenous knowledge and co-management for biodiversity and cultural protection in the region; and to provide for joint management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area between governments and Rainforest Aboriginal people, in partnership with communities. This technical report provides an interim report on participatory evaluation of the status of Indigenous engagement towards joint management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage.

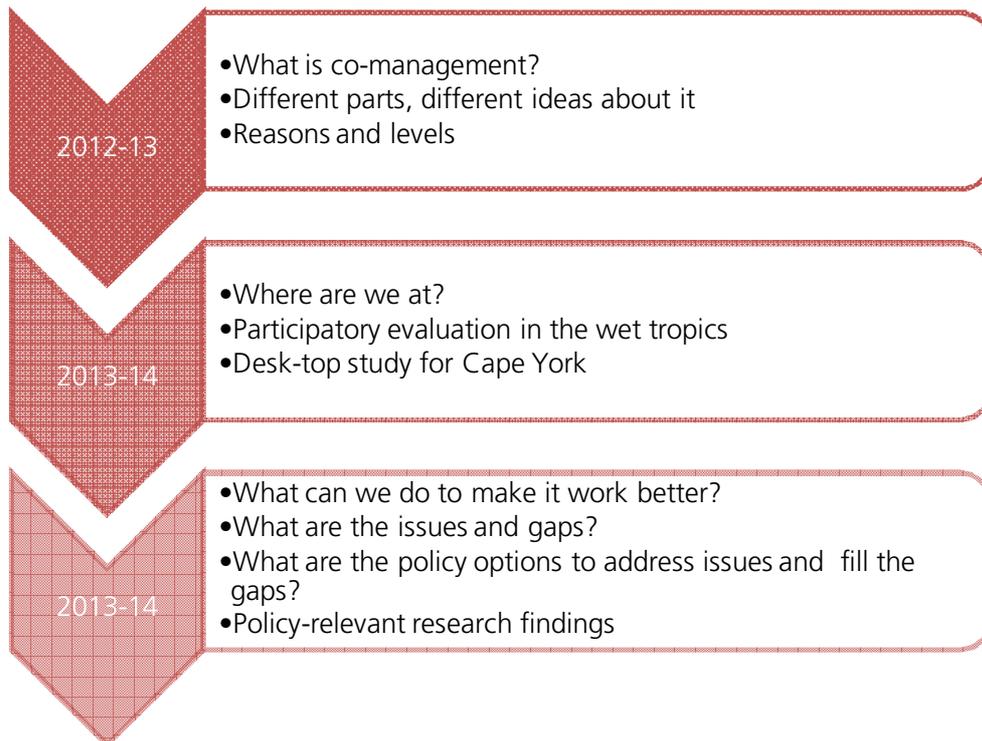
The initial stage of our co-research (September 2011 to March 2012) involved establishing co-research partnerships. Eighteen meetings and three multi-stakeholder workshops lead to a co-research design that includes:

1. Collaboration agreements with the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance (including Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (AC), The Central Wet Tropics Institute for Country and Culture AC and Jabalbina Yalanji AC); and with Djunbundji Land and Sea Program (Mandingalbay Yidinji AC).
2. A co-research team that includes the above organisations together with the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA); the Indigenous Protected Area and Working on Country programs of the Australian Government's Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet; Terrain NRM; the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; the Australian Conservation Foundation; the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service of their Department of National Parks Recreation Sport and Racing; James Cook University's Cairns Institute; and Smyth and Bahrdt Consultants.
3. Ethics Approval from the CSIRO Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee, based on a set of processes to adhere to Guidelines on Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (AIATIS 2012).
4. Adoption of co-research approach that provides for Indigenous governance and social learning (Maclean et al. 2012, Figure 3, p.2).

Following establishment of the overall co-research design and partnerships, a three-phase approach was adopted to enable the research goal to be delivered.

- **Phase one** (completed December 2012): participatory development of a testable framework with thresholds to analyse progress towards Indigenous co-management and biodiversity protection in the Wet Tropics. This framework addresses three questions:
  - What are all the parts that make up effective Indigenous co-management and biodiversity protection in the Wet Tropics, and how are they linked?
  - How do these parts change over time and space in movement towards Indigenous co-management?
  - At what point have we arrived at joint management (thresholds)?
- **Phase two** (current): participatory evaluation of the current status of Indigenous co-management in the Wet Tropics using the framework; desktop evaluation of Cape York Peninsula. This phase seeks to answer the following questions:
  - Where are we in a change pathway towards Indigenous co-management in the Wet Tropics? How does our pathway compare with that in Cape York Peninsula and other places?

- What are the issues and gaps in our current status? What are the policy options to address issues and fill these gaps?
- **Phase three** (by December 2014): identification of a priority set of policy options to bridge the gaps, and provide for recognition of Indigenous knowledge and co-management for biodiversity protection in the Wet Tropics. This phase seeks to answer the following questions:
  - What policies will help movement along the path towards effective Indigenous joint management?
  - What is the policy-relevant information underpinning these recommendations?



**Figure 1 Phases in the co-research addressing *Indigenous co-management and biodiversity protection***

## ***What is co-management?***

We have adopted the following short definition for the purposes of our co-research:

*Co-management is a continual solution-building process, not a fixed state, involving extensive talking, negotiating together and jointly learning so it gets better over time.*

In Australia, earlier concepts of co-management or joint management were essentially formulated in terms of some arrangement of power sharing between governments (either Australian, State or Territory) and an Aboriginal community with resource/land rights and interests, leading to concepts like “the Kakadu/Uluru model”. Our definition largely mirrors that of Carlsson and Berkes (2005)<sup>2</sup> but takes account of important features identified at our regional workshop in October 2012 including:

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<sup>2</sup> “Co-management is a continuous problem-solving process, rather than a fixed state, involving extensive deliberation, negotiation and joint learning within problem-solving networks”.

- *Co-management involves co-evolution; it's a pathway we are going down, and also a process of where we want to get to.*
- *Co-management is not linear—there are feedbacks and loops involved.*
- *It's an (institutional) multi-lane highway with multiple destinations, and different vehicles, buses, mini-vans, and motorbikes<sup>3</sup> (Hill et al. 2012a).*

Our definition underpins our co-management framework, which is depicted in two diagrams:

- Parts (topics) of co-management in the wet tropics (Figure 2).
- Co-management journey-ing in the wet tropics (Figure 3).

The framework recognizes that arrangements for power-sharing with governments through “regimes for joint management” as one of the parts of co-management, bringing together the two strands of definition in the literature (Berkes 2009; Carlsson and Berkes 2005; Hill et al. 2012a). In total, thirteen separate but related parts of co-management are identified, which can be grouped into two features of co-management.

**Rainforest Aboriginal<sup>4</sup> peoples keeping strong**—co-management cannot provide the means for effective engagement of *Indigenous knowledge* unless Rainforest Aboriginal people are thriving and able to keep their knowledge systems alive, which requires attention to the following:

- Culture: Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' worldviews, lore, language, law, dreaming and their ways of knowing, doing and being.
- Kin: Rainforest Aboriginal peoples relationships, networks and connections.
- Country: Traditional knowledge and practices, including story places, fire management, totems, hunting, fishing and collecting plants and animals, making a living from country.
- Indigenous leadership and governance: strong institutions and grass-roots organisations supporting Traditional Owner (TO) groups, language group alliances, regional alliances; co-management between TO groups that share boundaries, intra-group issues resolution.
- Capacity: skill, expertise, knowledge and financial resourcing.
- Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' strategic vision and intent. This is the pivot-point of co-management, as the tribal autonomy and sovereignty that TOs have over an area of country provides the mandate to “act on the front foot” and engage the multiple non-Indigenous main-stream organizations. Institutional fragmentation is such that there is no equivalent government organization with a similar mandate; limited attempts have been made to develop such through “whole-of-government” approaches (Morgan Disney & Associates Pty. Ltd. 2006; Smith 2007).

**Keeping engagement strong**—similarly co-management cannot provide the means for effective *engagement* of Indigenous knowledge unless engagement mechanisms are thriving and strong, which requires attention to the following.

- Principles: providing for fluid movement for self-determined levels of involvement in the shared space, which allows for each TO group's distinct trajectory and for difference across scales (local, sub-regional, regional).
- Relationships: good relationships enable (rather than constrain or contain) Indigenous roles, which requires a flexible approach.
- Protocols: for a range of engagement processes.

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<sup>3</sup> Quotations from workshop discussions and summaries are italicized throughout.

<sup>4</sup> Rainforest Aboriginal is capitalised throughout in accordance with their wishes.

- Regimes for joint management: clearly defined government role established through legislation and policy.
- Mechanisms: Strategic and practical plans and documents; roundtable of stakeholders who follow up with actions.
- Issues resolution: Mechanisms for sorting out issues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations and people.

The upper part of diagram (Figure 3) depicting co-management journey-ing in wet tropics country recognizes that the aspiration of Rainforest Aboriginal peoples is to run country themselves from their own cultural authority, and shared management is a stage of this journey. We recognize that the history of colonization is very important to the current status of co-management of country (Veland et al. 2013). Prior to colonization, Rainforest Aboriginal people had occupied and managed country for millennia, with archaeological records showing at least 8000 years (Cosgrove et al. 2007). Colonization led to a disruption of their cultural authority to run country, although many practices, and associated knowledge systems, adapted to the changed circumstances, ensuring continuity of culture and customary law (Hill et al. 2000).

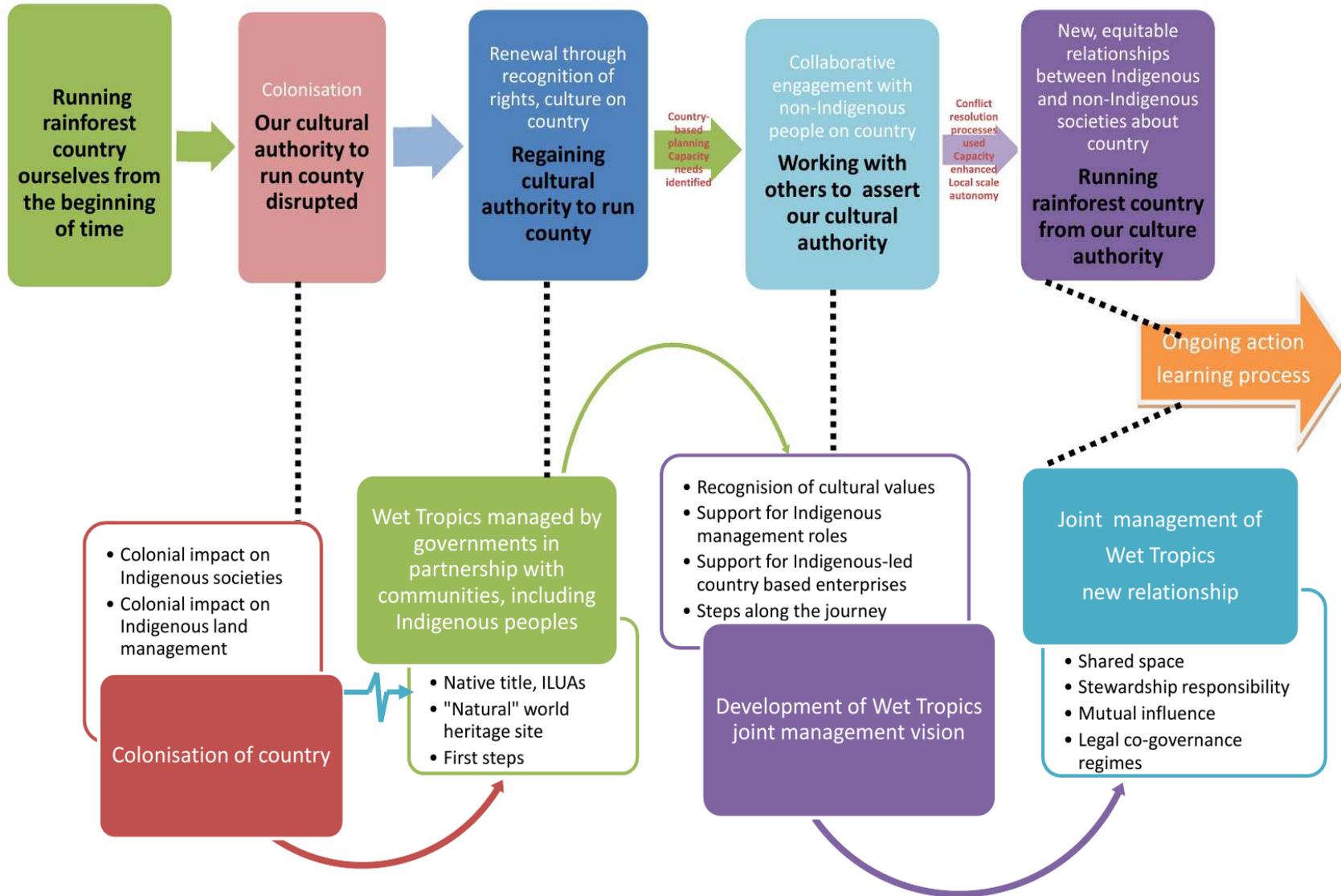
Australian Indigenous peoples continent-wide continue to assert sovereign rights and interests to control and management of their customary estates. Policy mechanisms have been established by Australian governments to respond to these claims since the 1970s including through land rights and native title legislation, agreements, funding programs and collaborative projects (Hill et al. 2012b). Indigenous interests have now been recognized to varying extents over more than half of Australia (Hill et al. 2013). This includes over 16% held through tenure, 8.3 % where native title is held over the whole area, a further 12.9 % where it is held over half the area, and 39% covered by Indigenous Land Use Agreements.

The lower part of the diagram depicting co-management journey-ing in the wet tropics (Figure 3) recognizes colonialisation of country was based on the doctrine of "terra nullius" effectively rendering Indigenous rights and interests legally invisible until the High Court decision recognizing native title in 1992. The *Wet Tropics World Heritage Area* was declared prior to the declarations of both the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act (Queensland)* of 1989 and the *Native Title Act (Commonwealth)* of 1993. New policy mechanisms including native title, Aboriginal land tenure, Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs), and Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs), have gradually led to recognition of Indigenous rights and interests over much of wet tropics country (Figure 4). The national significance of the cultural values of the wet tropics were recognized in 2012 through listing under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (Commonwealth)* 1999 (Department of Environment 2012).

Figure 2 Parts (topics) in co-management of wet tropics country



Figure 3 Co-management journey-ing in wet tropics country



## ***Who is involved in co-management in wet tropics country?***

Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance (2013) provides a useful snapshot of the range of organizations and groups involved in co-management in wet tropics country.

- 20 tribal groups:
  - Eastern Kuku-Yalanji, Western Yalanji, Muluridgi, NgadjonJii, Jirrbal, Mbabaram, Warungu, Warrgamay, Gugu-Badhan, Wulgurukaba, Nywaigi, Bandjin, Girramay, Gulnay, Djiru, Mamu, Gunggandji, Yidinji, Djabugay and Yirriganydji (Figure 4);
- ~120 Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' (RAP) clans;
- ~70 RAP legal entities including Prescribed Body Corporates and Cultural Heritage Bodies
  - E.g. Jabalbina Yalanji Land Trust;
- Sub-regional and regional RAP bodies
  - e.g. Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, RAPA
- 2 Land Councils,
  - North Queensland and Cape York.
- ~ 20,000 Rainforest Aboriginal persons.

In addition RAPA (pers. comm, Joann Schmider, RAPA, 18 November 2013) identified a large number of "mainstream" organisations involved as partners:

- Wet Tropics Management Authority (joint Australian/Qld)
- Several Australian government agencies
  - e.g. Department of Environment, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- 9 Qld government agencies
  - e.g. Department of Environment and Heritage, Department of National Parks Recreation Sport and Racing;
- 11 Local Government Authorities
  - e.g. Tablelands Regional Council, Yarrabah Council, Douglas Shire Council;
- 3 Regional NRM bodies
  - Terrain NRM, Cape York NRM and Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM;
- Multiple Non-government environment organisations
  - e.g. Carins and Far North Environment Centre, Australian Conservation Foundation
- Industry
  - e.g. Tourism, agriculture
- Private landholders.

A number of international organisations are relevant to co-management of wet tropics country, including for example the World Heritage Committee, and the Indigenous International Forum on Biodiversity. The types of partnership, levels of commitment, and authority exercised by these agencies vary widely according to their relevant formal institutions including conventions, declarations, laws, policies, plans and regulations. Our institutional analysis (Macleay et al. 2012) also identified a high level of variation in the way these institutions recognise Aboriginal rights, cultural values and roles in environmental management.

## ***Where does co-management occur in wet tropics country?***

From the perspective of Traditional Owners, co-management is relevant to all those parts of their customary estates where their rights and interests are shared with others. In the wet tropics context, only small areas exist where native title rights have been determined to be exclusive. Giringun Aboriginal Corporation has mapped and agreed on the boundaries of the customary estates of the nine tribal groups represented in their organization. Customary Aboriginal tenure is, however, based on sites and centre so of estates, often leaving boundaries as overlap zones rather than clear lines of demarcation (Sutton 1995). Locations of customary estates for tribal groups in wet tropics country are depicted in Figure 4.

This co-research focuses on co-management for biodiversity protection, and we are therefore primarily concerned with areas of remnant vegetation, depicted in Figure 5. Nevertheless, Traditional Owners recognize that partnerships and relationships with people who hold the land where no native vegetation remains, such as farmers, urban-dwellers, and business men/women, form part of co-management.

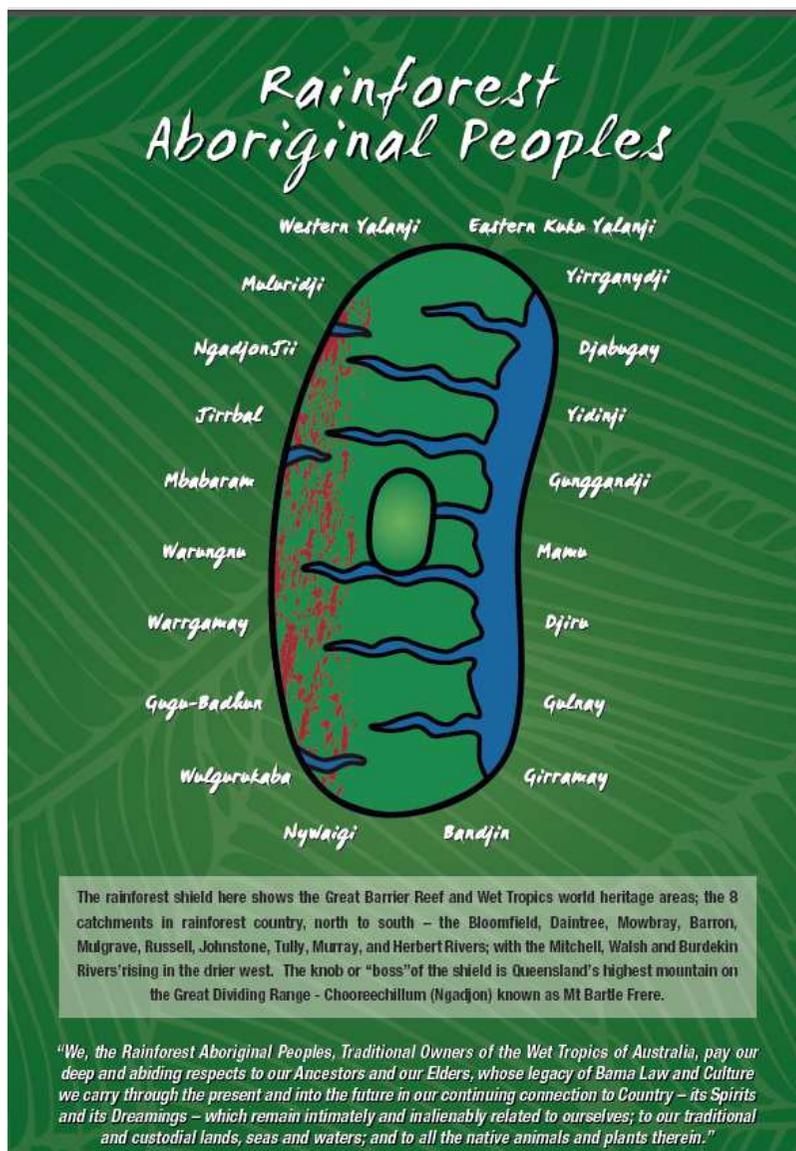


Figure 4 Rainforest Aboriginal tribal groups (RAPA 2013)



Figure 5 Some co-management areas in wet tropics: recognized Native Title, Indigenous Protected Areas, the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and remnant native vegetation

## ***Indicators of co-management in wet tropics country***

Our analysis of frameworks for co-management (Maclean et al. 2012) identified that development of indicators are typically either stakeholder-derived or externally-derived through expert advice drawn from international peer-reviewed and “grey” literature. Both approaches have strengths and weaknesses. Approaches that emphasise stakeholders’ roles have tended to be relatively simplistic and often ignore important variables and issues of temporal and geographical scale. On the other hand, externally-derived approaches that use expert advice drawn from international peer-reviewed and “grey” literature have tended to be heavily theoretical and exclude local people (Cundill and Fabricius 2009). The largely stakeholder-derived approach to development and application of indicators in four co-managed protected areas in the Northern Territory resulted in between 12 and 27 diverse indicators for each protected area, with twelve common indicators across all four. Common indicators included: communication between partners; management planning; training in governance; natural resource and biodiversity management; traditional knowledge transfer; combined use of traditional and western knowledge; equipment availability; employment levels; and associated enterprises (Stacey et al. 2013). The largely externally-derived approach to indicators of governance for participatory evaluation of four case studies of natural resource management in South Africa resulted in twenty indicators developed to measure key attributes of four system variables: social capital; adaptive capacity; self-organisation; and operational preconditions for the emergence of adaptive governance (Cundill and Fabricius 2010).

Our approach aims to combine the strengths of both stakeholder and expert derived approaches. Our framework for co-management in wet tropics country is largely stakeholder-derived through several rounds of co-design, review and workshopping in large and small groups. For the indicators, we drew on the dual global stakeholder consultation and expert-derived approach developed by the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, together with the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the TebTebba Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (Stankovitch 2008). This work identified the importance of recognizing three types of indicators for each topic under consideration (Stankovitch 2008, p. 88):

1. Structural indicators: referring to recognition of rights through the ratification and approval of juridical-legal instruments, the existence of basic institutional mechanisms, intention of the nation-State to accept norms, as well as national laws.
2. Process indicators: referring to policy instruments, public programs, and specific interventions, and measure the degree of progressive realization of rights, which are more sensitive to measuring change. Thus, process indicators deal with the policies and norms adopted to exercise rights.
3. Results indicators: referring to individual and collective achievements. They measure the total realization of the other indicators. They are slow to measure the degree of realization of human rights.

We workshopped this approach at meetings of the co-research team, with an in-depth focus during the meeting on 16 September 2013. While the overall approach of structures, processes and results was agreed as useful, we identified the need for re-design in a number of aspects. First, we considered that all three types of indicators should address Indigenous customary institutions, not just those of the nation-state. Second, we agreed that results included the condition of country as well as that of people. Third, we recognized that the language was not

suitable to underpin a participatory evaluation. We therefore adapted the description of the indicators to take account of these issues, arriving at the descriptions presented in the Methodology section below.

## ***Criteria for analysis and benchmarking thresholds***

The first two types of indicators are clearly related to best-practice standards addressing structures and functions identified in the literature. The best-practice standards addressing *structures* focus on the requirements for equal partnerships, agreement-making, respect for rights, decentralisation, participation, equitable benefit-sharing, and recognition of international responsibilities (Beltrán 2000; IUCN WCPA and WWF 2000; Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2004a). Best-practice standards in relation to *functions* focus on common features: diverse arenas of social engagement; multi-party and multi-level endeavours; a negotiated, joint decision-making approach; and a flexible process rather than a stable and definitive end point (Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* 2004b). Options for action are associated with such features—including for example sophisticated intercultural engagement and productive human relationships. The consolidated best-practice standards for *Structures* and *Functions* are presented in Tables 1 and 2 respectively. Note that the standards for structures are underpinned by Common Pool Resource (CPR) theory in co-management, while the standards for functions are underpinned by governance theory in co-management (Sandström 2009). Best practice standards for *Results* are still to be identified. Potential standards include those established through the Outstanding Universal Value requirement of World Heritage; through the criteria for National Heritage; and conditions of integrity associated with both.

**Table 1 Best practice standards for structures in co-management (Hill 2011)**

Principle	Criteria
Respect the rights of Traditional Owners, custodians or users to lands, territories and resources	Indigenous land ownership Free, prior and informed consent of the traditional owners Legal protection for rights and interests of parties Bipartisan political approach
Respect and strengthen Indigenous peoples' institutions and customary laws	Coherent and effective Indigenous representative party with legitimacy Sufficient resources to enable Indigenous participation Conflict management
Respect and strengthen Indigenous peoples' exercising of authority and control	Commitment of Indigenous people to take up the opportunity Appropriate technical and other advice Clear understanding of Indigenous ideas about success Traditional Owners in driving role

**Table 2 Best practice standards for functions in co-management (Hill 2011)**

Feature	Key enabling mechanisms
Arenas of social engagement, encounter and experimentation	Productive working relationships Balanced community development approach Participatory approach, including on-country work Sophisticated intercultural engagement Training for all involved Innovation and research Emphasis on role of youth
Multi-party but also multi-level and multi-disciplinary endeavour	Commitment of all parties High level leadership Diversity of partnerships including with neighbours Clearly defined responsibilities
Negotiated, joint decision-making approach and some degree of power-sharing, sharing of responsibilities, and distribution of benefits amongst all institutional actors	Sense of power-sharing Secure funding Sharing of financial and other benefits Competent and effective governance
Flexible process rather than a stable and definitive end point	Progressive and incremental approach to capacity building of all parties Flexibility

## Methodology

The co-research methodology meets the standards of the Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, GERIAS (AIATSIS 2012). Ethics Clearance was granted by the CSIRO Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Qualitative, quantitative and spatial social research methods were applied to our data collection and analysis (Bryman 2012). Collaboration agreements with the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance (quorum includes Girringun Aboriginal Corporation (AC), The Central Wet Tropics Institute for Country and Culture AC and Jabalbina Yalanji AC); and with Girringun Aboriginal Corporation underpinned the selection of co-research participants and the design to ensure appropriate data, that reflect the common property rights in Indigenous knowledge systems, were able to be collected. According to these agreements, the Aboriginal Corporations (AC) are responsible for guidance to help ensure the Aboriginal governance and cultural requirements are met in the co-research; for ensuring participation in workshops associated with the co-research; and for sharing of information that is informed by the wider Traditional Owner community association with that AC. The co-research team decided that the best way to ensure appropriate co-evaluation at the Girringun sub-regional scale, and at the regional wet-tropics scale, was through workshops hosted by Girringun AC and the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance respectively. Two workshops were held, and the participants at each contributed in accordance with cultural protocols that enabled them to make commentary at the relevant scale.

The first workshop was hosted by Girringun AC and conducted at the Cardwell Community Hall on 23 November 2013. The second was hosted by the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Alliance as part of the 'Warrama: for Rainforest Country, Kin and Culture' held at Genzanno 28 November-1st December 2013. Twenty four Traditional Owners contributed data.

Sixteen Traditional Owners contributed data via the Girringun workshop. Four members of the co-research team, including two Traditional Owners, facilitated the workshop. The workshop ran for four hours, excluding breaks for lunch and refreshments. The workshop began with a presentation and discussion to provide an overview of the research project. As several people present at the Girringun workshop wanted to get fuller understanding of the research, this session continued for almost two hours. A Participant Information Pack (PIP) was provided that met the requirements of both the AIATSIS (2012) GERIAS and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007 Updated May 2013*. The PIP included an overview of the project, details of how information from the workshop would be used in the project, the workshop aim, details of protection and sharing of intellectual property rights, the research consent process, the risks and potential benefits of the co-research. The PIP included Figures 2 and 3 (above), a 'health indicator assessment sheet' (Appendix 1) that would be used to co-evaluate. The PIP also included a form to enable both written and oral consent from the participants who signed it during the workshop.

Participants at the Girringun workshop co-evaluated the six *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* topics through a one-hour discussion in the morning, and the seven *Rainforest Engagement Strong* topics through a one-hour discussion in the afternoon. Participants organised themselves into three groups with four to six Traditional Owners in each, and a facilitator from the co-research team. The co-research team leader allocated two topics from the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* topics (see Figure 2) to each group in the morning. In the afternoon, two of the groups were allocated two topics from *Rainforest Engagement Strong* while the third considered three topics.

Each group was asked to give a numerical rating to the 'health' of structures, processes and results associated with each topic, and to discuss the reasons for that rating. Structures, processes and results were defined as:

- **Structures.** Setting things up—both RAP and government/others—like starting organisations, getting the constitutions in place for organisations, making agreements (like Indigenous Land Use Agreements), making new laws or rules, having Native Title recognised, agreeing on protocols.
- **Processes.** Doing things—both RAP and government/others—like making plans, getting people to meetings, starting projects, getting Indigenous Ranger Groups out ‘caring for country’, exercising native title rights (hunting, lighting fires), finding ways to sort out arguments, teaching language, finding partners, working together with partners.
- **Results.** Things actually changing—both RAP and government/others—like the country getting healthier, RAP knowing their language and culture, government people showing respect for RAP law, good relationships being in place, protocols being followed.

The ratings for health were given to structures, processes and results for each topic, according to the decision rules shown in Table 1.

**Table 3 Decision rules for rating health of indicators**

Health rating	Decision rule – health of indicator
5 Excellent	This indicator is excellent and continuing as is will keep it in excellent health.
4 Very good	this indicator is very healthy and does not need too much different to be done to keep it healthy
3 Good	This indicator is healthy and may need something more or different to be done to keep it healthy
2 Little bit sick	This indicator is a little bit sick and needs work to be done to make to healthy. If no work is done it will get worse.
1 Very sick	This indicator is very sick and if no work is done to make it better it may never be healthy again.

The same set of generic questions was posed to guide the discussions of why the ratings were given.

- **Structures:** Do we have the right structures for this part of co-management? Examples? Health rating? What are the issues & gaps? What do we need to do to move forward?
- **Processes:** Do we have the right processes for this part of co-management? Examples? Health rating? What are the issues & gaps? What do we need to do to move forward?
- **Results:** Are we achieving the results we want from this part of co-management? Examples? Health rating? What are the issues & gaps? What do we need to do to move forward?

Workshop participants were asked to record their group discussion and the health rating in particular on butcher’s paper. Some participants at the Girringun workshop contributed additional information on the sheets in Appendix One. Facilitators also took notes during the discussion. The morning and afternoon discussions ended with a reporting session where each of the workshop groups shared their butcher’s paper notes with the other participants. Facilitators took notes during the plenary discussions.

Workshop two hosted by RAPA followed the same procedures to meet ethical requirements for information provision and consent. A similar format was adopted for the data collection with a few notable differences. There were twenty four Rainforest Aboriginal people who contributed data and seven facilitators (including four members of the co-research team, and three other researchers who were involved in the Warrama). Participants organised themselves into seven workshop groups. Six of the groups co-evaluated two topics from Figure 2, and one group co-evaluated only one topic. These groups included from three to five Traditional Owner

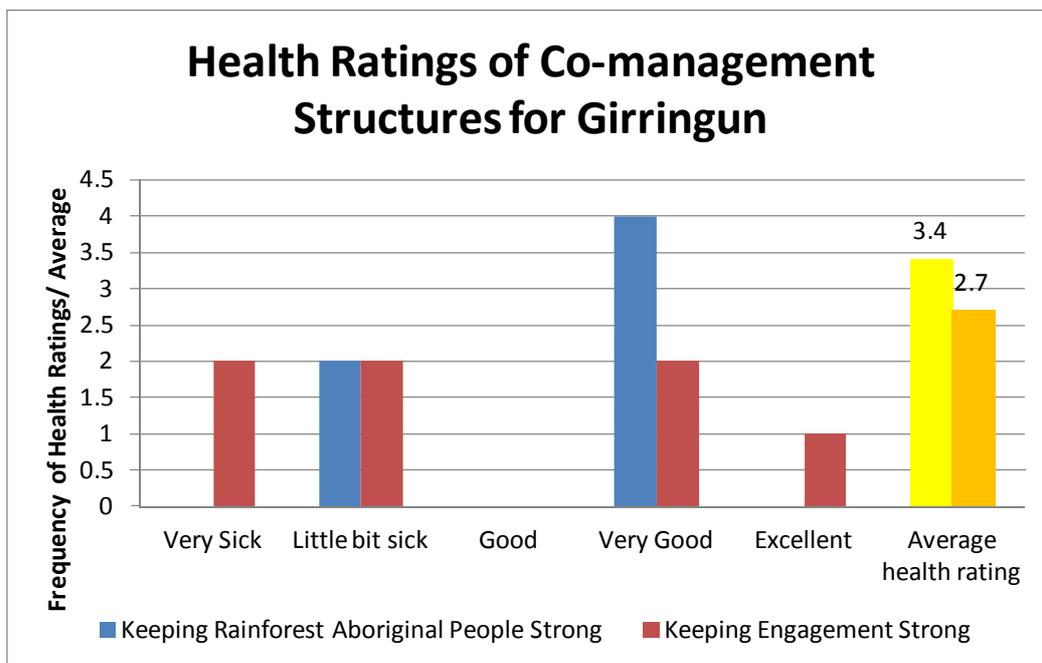
participants and a facilitator, one of whom was also a Traditional Owner. Workshop two ran for one hour. The introductory presentation did not allow for questions or discussions and lasted only 15 minutes, instead of almost two hours at Giringun. Participants were provided with sheets on which to write any questions, but no questions emerged. The small groups discussed their topics for 45 minutes, instead of the one hour at the Giringun workshop, and there was no 'reporting back' session at the end. Instead the butcher's paper notes were displayed during morning tea, and participants were encouraged to add questions or comments using sticky post-it notes; although none did. An audio recording was also made of the discussions had by each group.

All the qualitative data shared in workshop one was coded using NVIVO software. Short time-frames between the second workshop and the due date for this Interim Report precluded analysis of the qualitative data, but similar methods will be used in the future. These data were analysed and are presented in this report according to the structures, processes and results; first for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* and second for *Keeping Engagement Strong*. All the quantitative data were entered into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis of numerical patterns, and ArcGIS for analysis of spatial patterns. Sufficient time was available for analysis of the numerical patterns in the quantitative data from the second workshop but not for analysis of the spatial patterns. These analyses, together with the results of further data collection exercise, will be provided in the final version of this Interim Report, due in June 2014.

## Results

### ***Girringun participatory evaluation of structures for co-management of wet tropics country***

GAC evaluated the structures for the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RPASF) as overall healthier than those for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (ESF) (Figure 6).



**Figure 6 Health of co-management structures in wet tropics country**

#### ***Structures for Keeping Rainforest Aboriginal people strong***

Strengths in the RPASF feature were identified primarily in relation to the closely related topics of *Indigenous Leadership and governance*, and *RAP Strategic vision and intent*; and the also closely related topics *Kin* and *Culture* (Figure 7).

The cultural and spiritual foundation is viewed as the primary source of structural strength:

*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.*

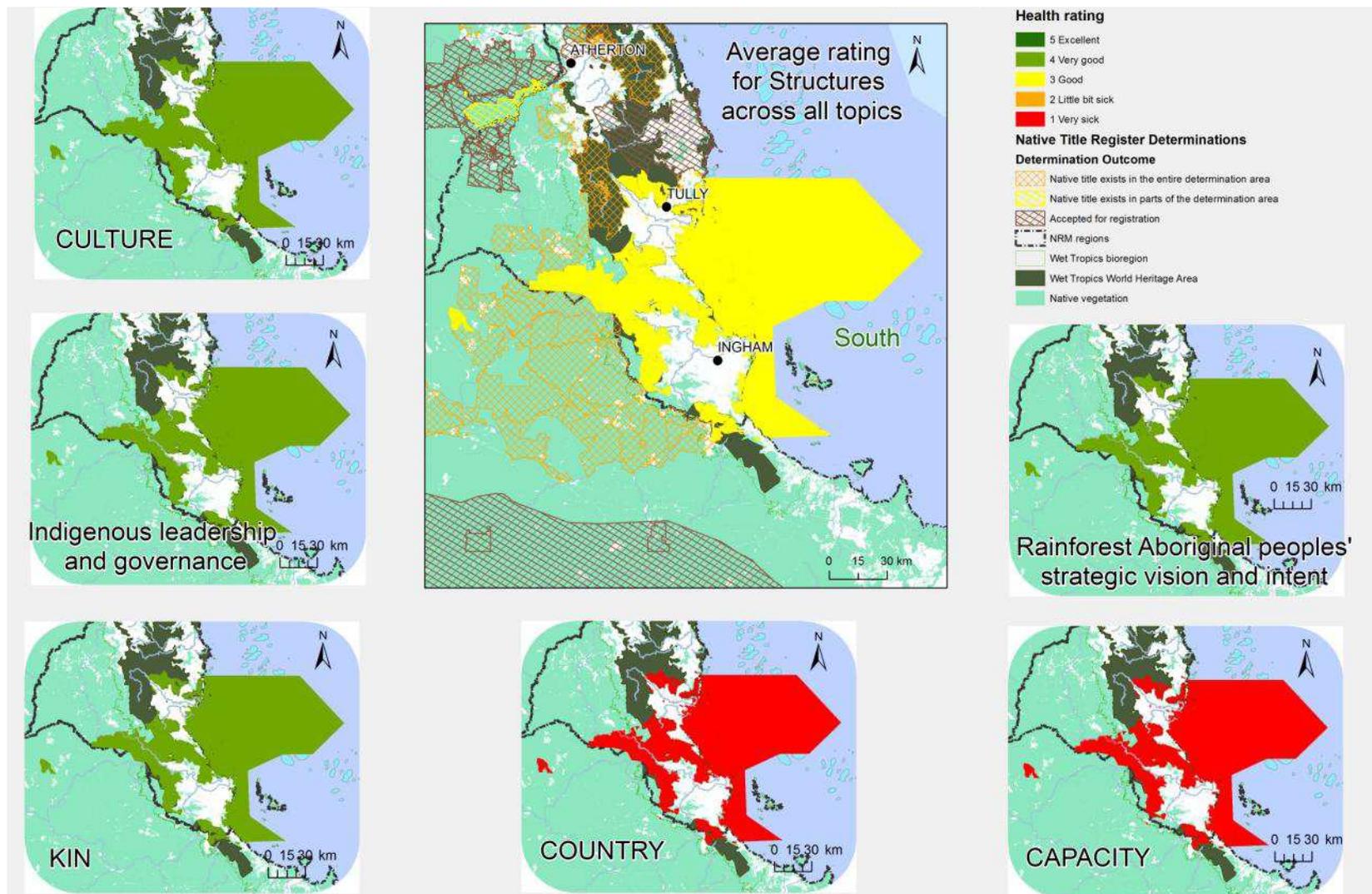


Figure 7 Giringun Co-evaluation of structures for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong*

The structures associated with Indigenous Protected Areas are viewed 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 ... 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.*

High health ratings for *Kin* and *Culture* reflect aspects such as the strengths of wet tropics clan groups working together, and the Giringun focus on establishing structures to support cultural transmission:

*Cultural art and craft and language programs in place at Giringun to support TOs to move forward.*

The poor health rating for the *Country* and *Capacity* topics reflect 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.*

The capacity of people 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 (Giringun) 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.*

The most commonly identified issue for improvement in the structures of RPSF 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 Giringun ... 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.*

While room for improvements in structures were clearly identified, 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.*

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.*

## **Structures for Keeping Engagement Strong**

Strengths in the Keeping Engagement strong feature (ESF) were identified primarily in relation to the closely related topics of *Protocols* and *Relationships* (Figure 8).

Girringun 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.*

The strength perceived in structures for protocols is associated both with cultural protocols, and with those established in the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement (WTRA) after many years work. The “good” health rating for power reflects Girringun’s approach of continuing to exercise their rights through a co-existence approach with incremental improvements over time:

*We act as though Girringun 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.*

*Regimes for joint management* and *Mechanisms*, again closely related topics, were both rated as “very sick”. Although the protocols were established in the WTRA, structures to ensure implementation through regimes and/or mechanisms have not been put in place:

*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.*

Concerns were also raised about 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.*

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.*

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.*

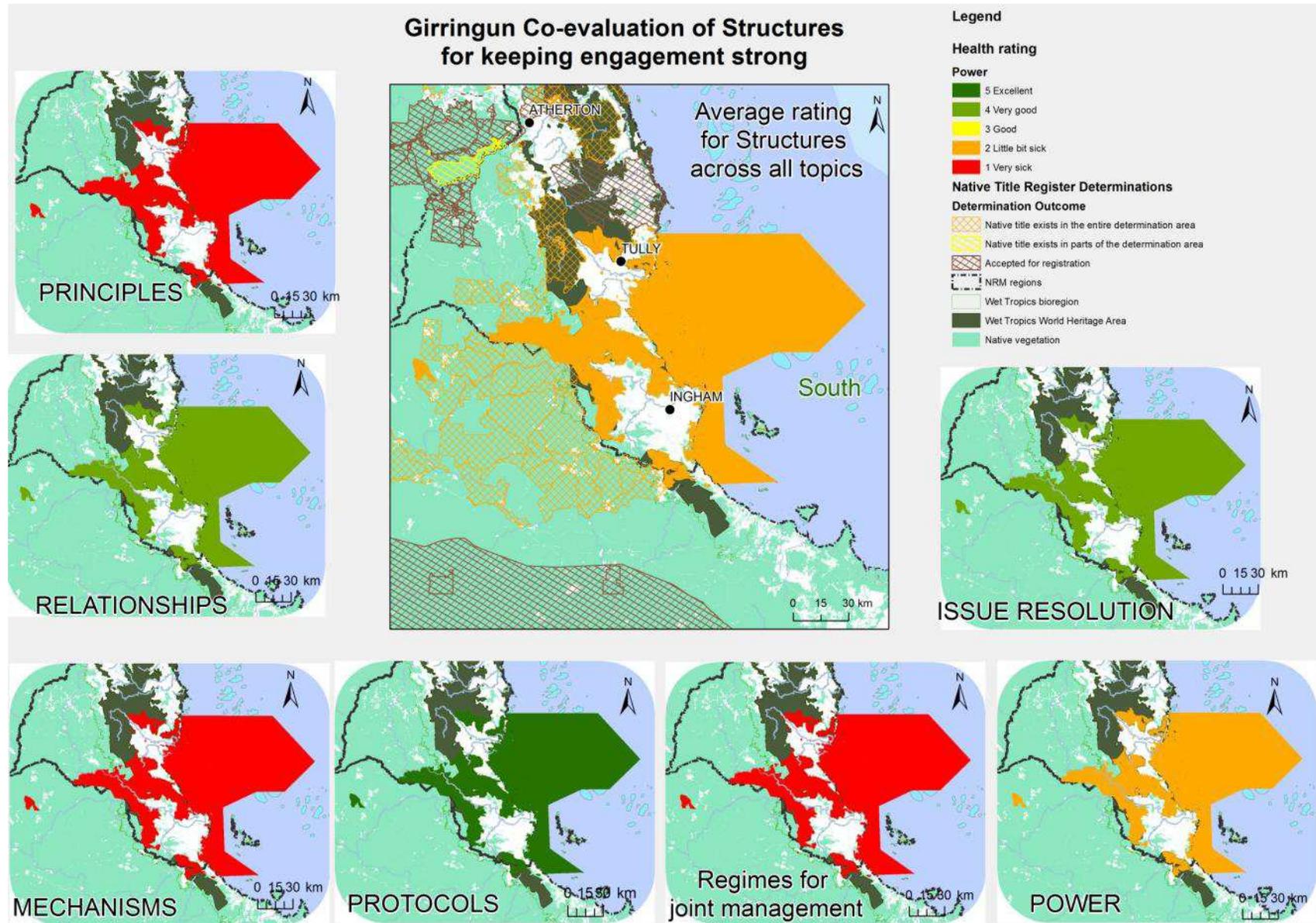


Figure 8 Girringun co-evaluation of structures for Keeping Engagement Strong

*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.*

Structures for supporting resolution of issues and conflicts such as that over fire management were viewed as "very good" over all but absent in some contexts:

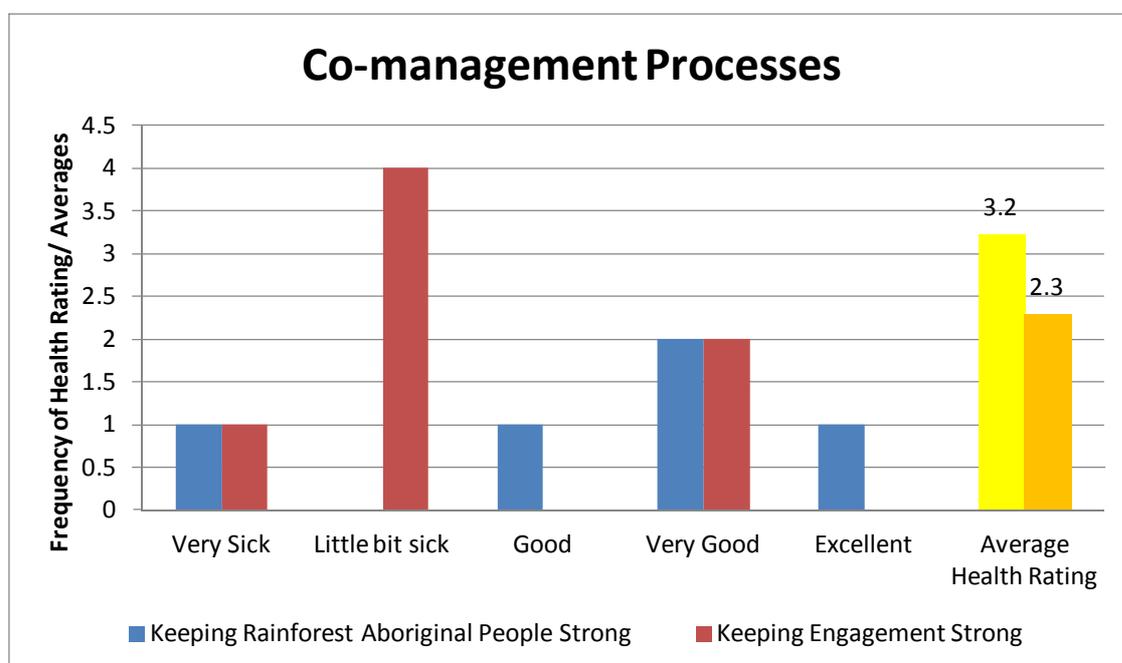
*"But on dispute resolution eg businesses in a national park, there's no structures ... government hide behind government policy."*

Structures for engagement with business were identified as a key gap. 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-gazetted because they cost too much to manage;
- Building partnerships with business, such as the one developing with Hancocks;
- Preparing the case for policy changes in order to be ready for the opportunity when it arises; and
- Reinforcing with government the capability of Girringun people to manage country.

### ***Girringun participatory evaluation of processes for co-management wet tropics country***

GAC evaluated the processes for the *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong* feature (RAPSF) as overall healthier than those for the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (ESF) (Figure 6).



**Figure 9 Health of co-management processes in wet tropics country**

### **Processes for Keeping Rainforest Aboriginal people strong**

Processes to support Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' strategic vision and intent were regarded as in "excellent health" (Figure 10). 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 Giringun. 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.*

The role of these elders in identifying young people to step up into leadership roles was 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 Giringun, 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.*

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.*

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.*

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 Giringun ... 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.*

While processes for supporting *Kin* are rated highly, 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.*

Processes for Culture are only rated as "good", compared to the structures for culture which are rated as "very good". This slippage reflects the fact that some groups are ahead in taking up opportunities, and the need for more activities focused on cultural transmission:

*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.*

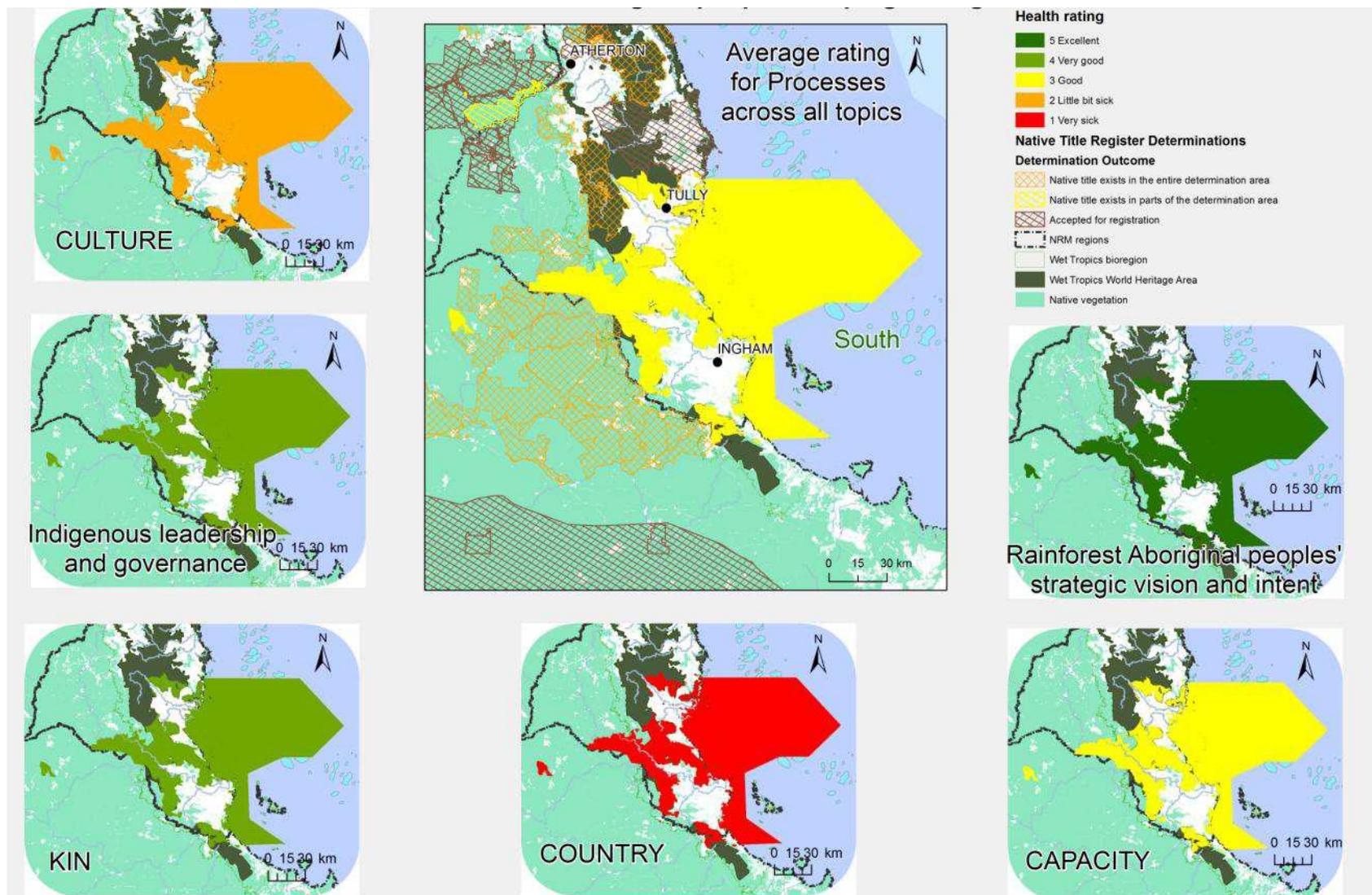


Figure 10 Giringgun co-evaluation of processes for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong*

The “sick” rating for capacity building processes 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).*

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 Giringun mob ... But in the group, there will be people who want to keep it to themselves, not to share benefits.*

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.*

Building youth leadership is also a key strategy:

*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.*

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*

### **Processes for Keeping Engagement strong**

Strengths in the processes to support the *Keeping Engagement Strong* feature (ESF) were identified primarily within *Protocols* and *Relationships* (Figure 11). 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.*

Relationships are central plank of Giringun overall strategy:

*For Giringun “our reputation creates the relationship”.*

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 Giringun is our own structure, our own sovereignty. Not some bloke that comes from Brisbane to tell us what our country is.*

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.*

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 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.*

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?*

There is also a perception of loss of processes:

*The Regional Agreement gave us some processes, we had our Co-Chairs going to the Principal Agency Forum, but that's not happening now.*

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.*

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.*

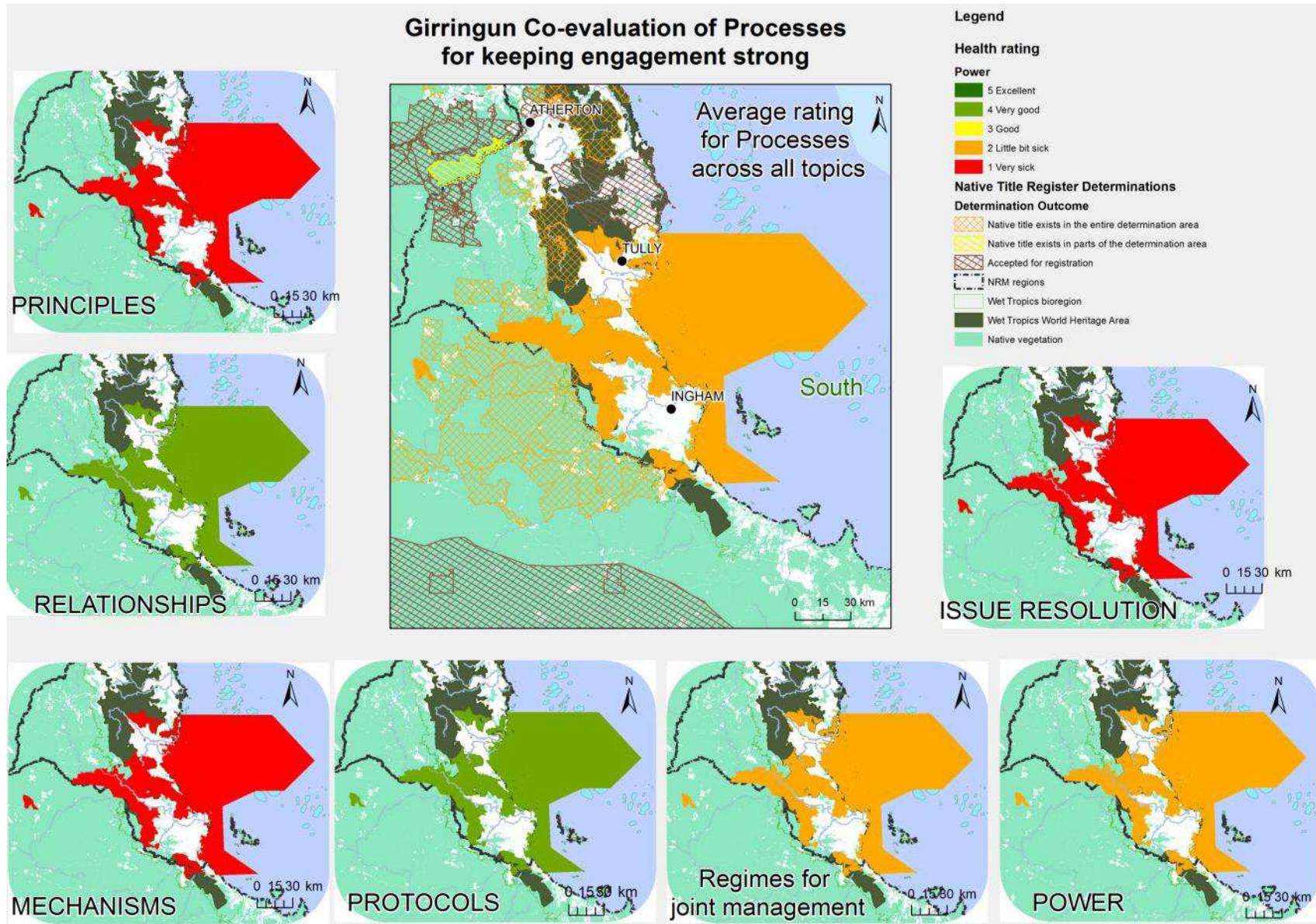
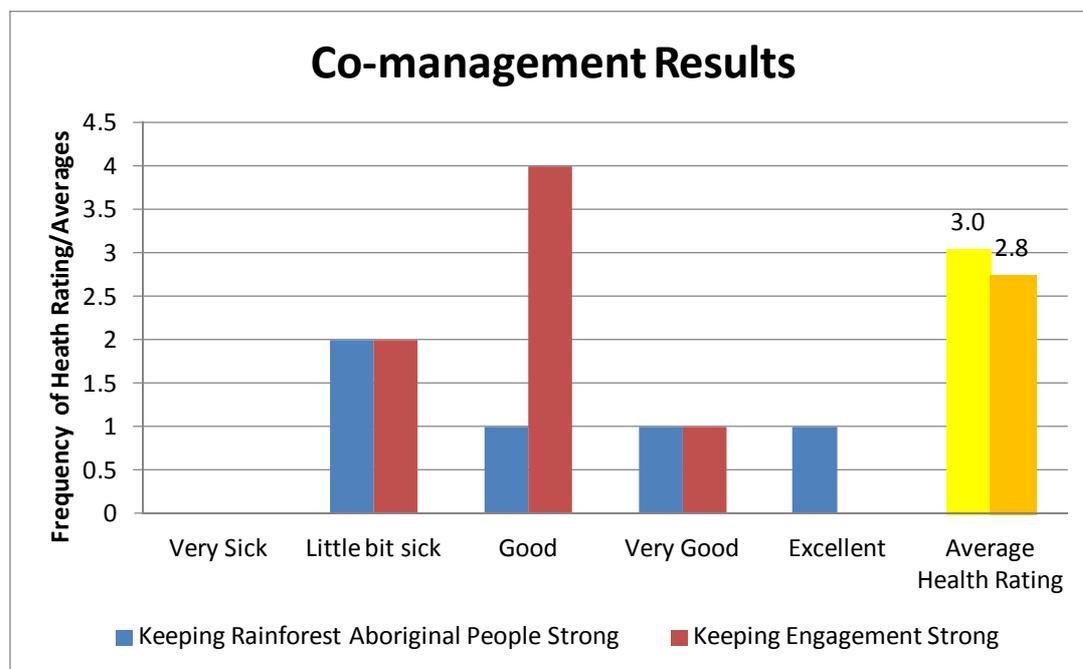


Figure 11 Girringun co-evaluation of processes for *Keeping Engagement Strong*

## ***Girringun participatory evaluation of results for co-management in wet tropics country***

GAC evaluated the results for the Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong feature (RAPSF) as overall healthier than those for the Keeping Engagement Strong feature (ESF) (Figure 12).



**Figure 12 Health of co-management results in wet tropics country**

### ***Results for Keeping Rainforest Aboriginal people strong***

Strengths in the results for the Keeping Rainforest Aboriginal people strong feature (RAPSF) were identified only in relation to Rainforest Aboriginal peoples’ strategic vision and intent (Figure 13). 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.*

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.*

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.*

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.*

Gaps are identified in the patchy distribution 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.*

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.*

Gaps also exist in obtaining native title recognition:

*More acquisition of traditional land with native title claims would be good.*

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.

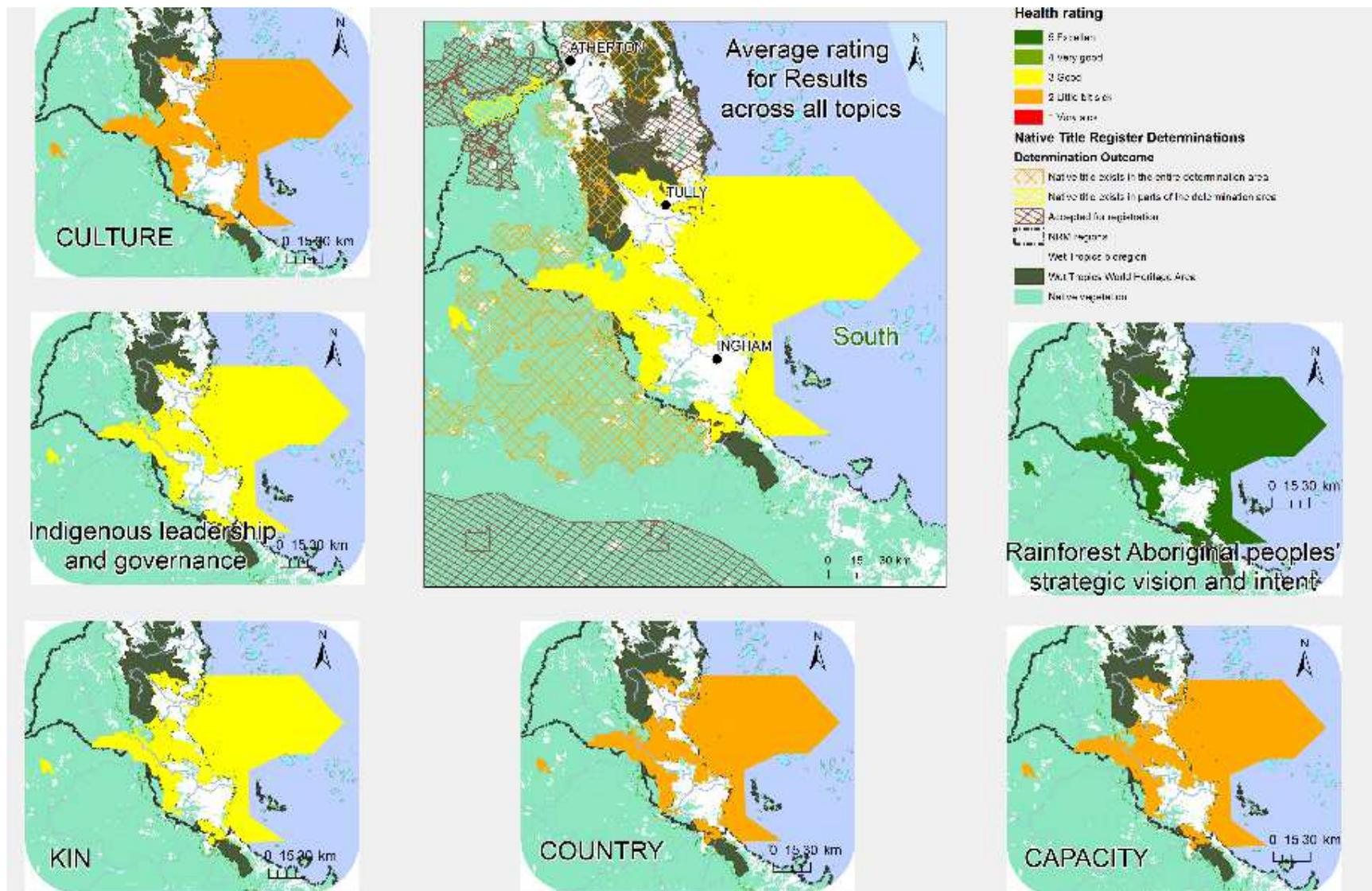


Figure 13 Giringun co-evaluation of results for *Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Keeping Strong*

## **Results for Keeping Engagement strong**

Results from Protocols, Power and Regimes for joint management, were rated as “good” despite the limitations identified for structures and processes (Figure 13).

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.*

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.*

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.*

People are also frustrated that the years of effort that put into establishing structures through agreements and plans 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.*

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.*

While the move to de-gazette parks is viewed as a potential threat to values, the Giringun 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".*

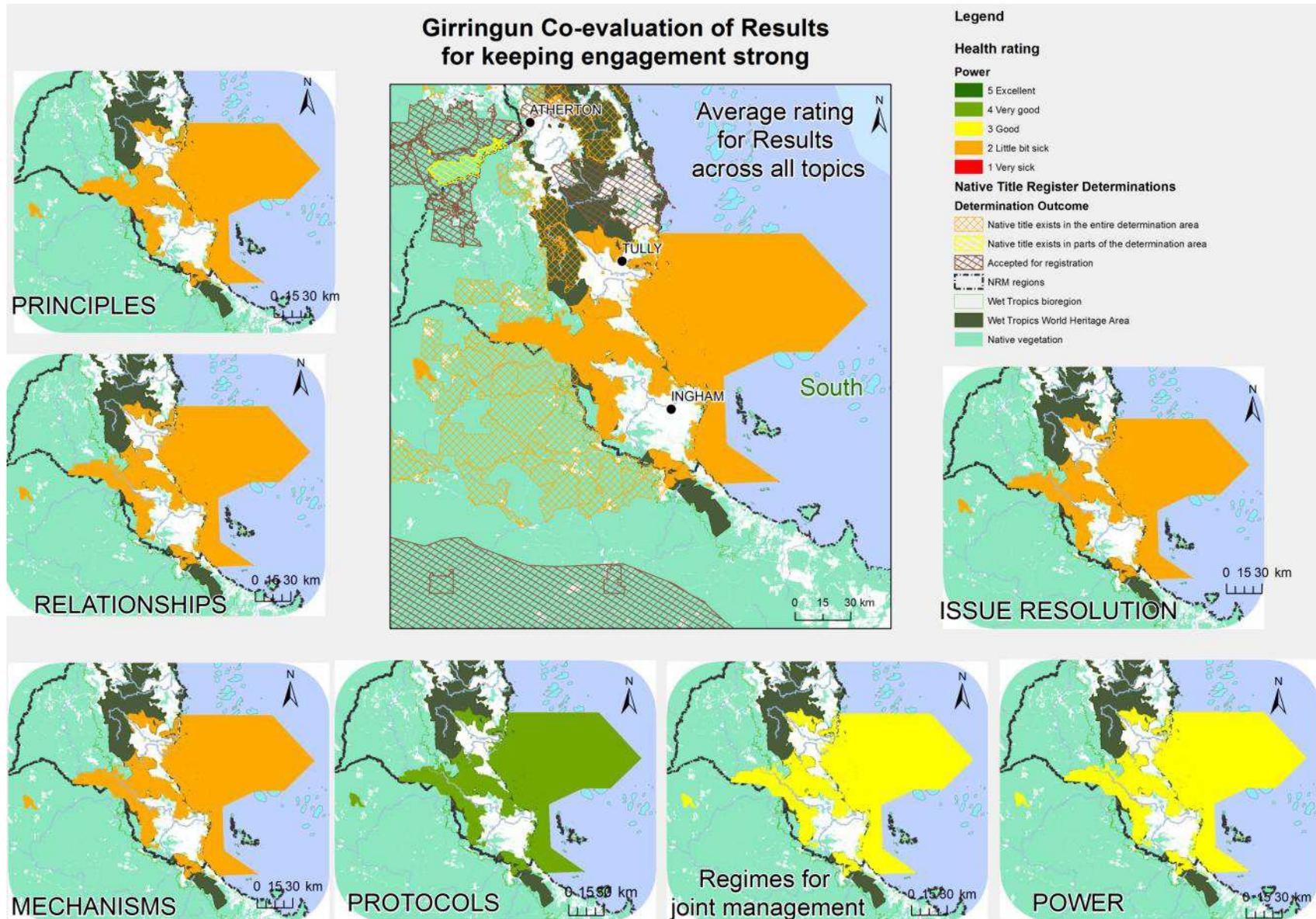


Figure 14 Girringun co-evaluation of results for *Keeping Engagement Strong*

## Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' participatory evaluation of co-management of wet tropics country

Contributors at the co-evaluation at the Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' workshop on 30 November rated the health structures, processes and results for *Rainforest Aboriginal People Keeping Strong* higher than those for *Keeping Engagement Strong* (Figure 15, Figure 16, Figure 17).

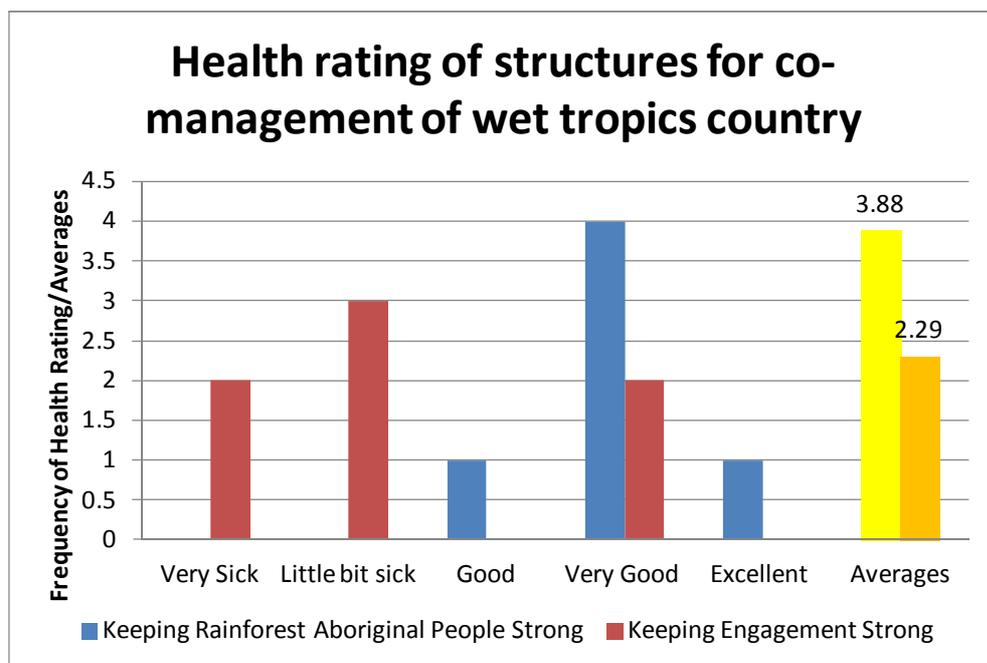


Figure 15 Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' co-evaluation of structures for co-management of wet tropics country

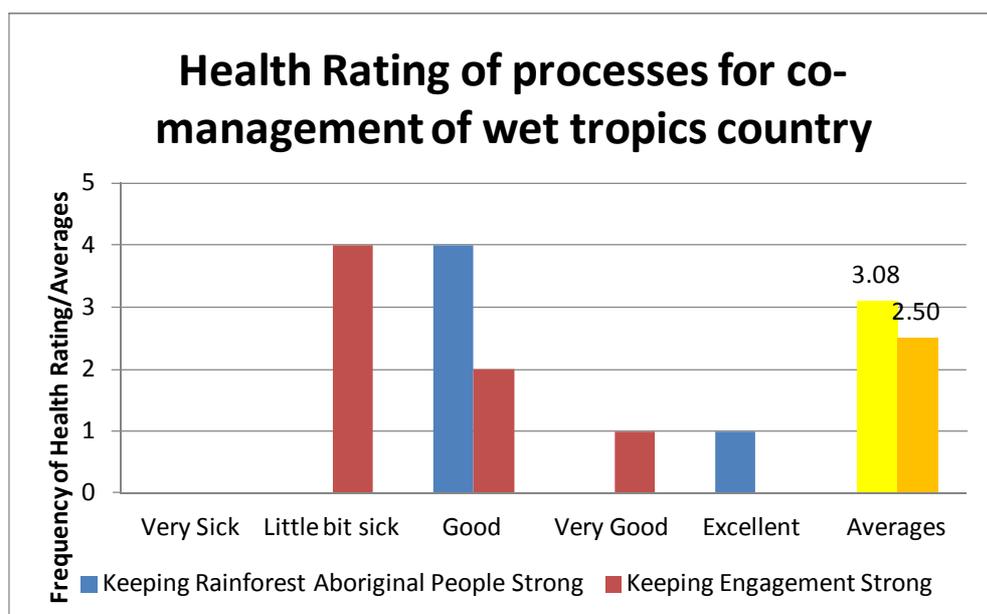
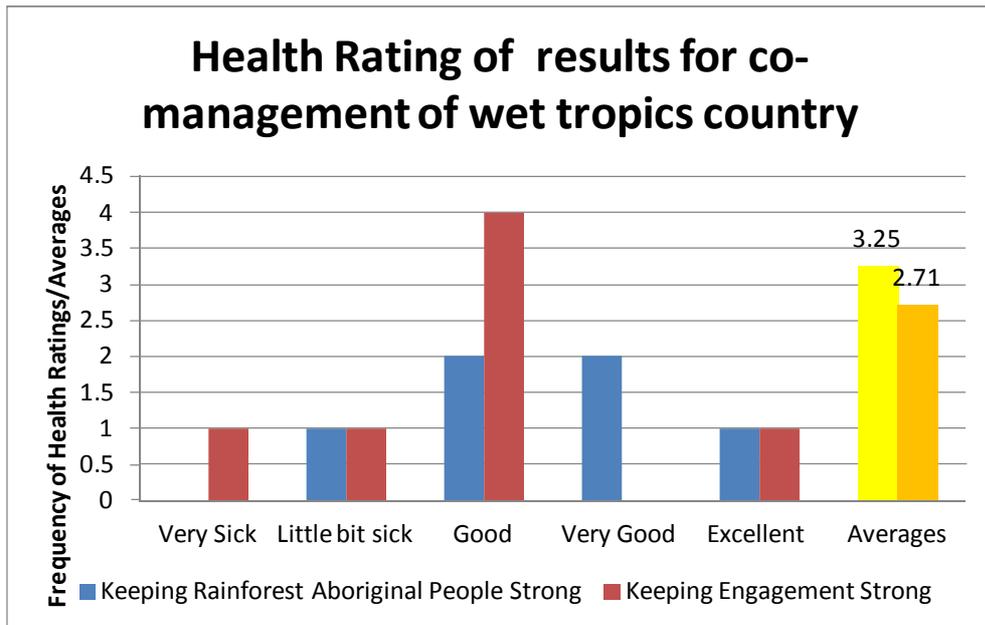


Figure 16 Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' co-evaluation of processes for co-management of wet tropics country



**Figure 17 Rainforest Aboriginal peoples' co-evaluation of results for co-management of wet tropics country**

The overall pattern was similar to that from the Girringun workshop. The gap between RAPSf and ESf was larger for structures and processes than that from the Girringun workshop while that for processes was smaller.

Time between the workshop and the due date for this report did not allow for spatial analysis of at the topics level, or for analysis of the qualitative data to identify the reasons behind the diverse ratings. The outcomes from these further analyses will be presented in the Final Evaluation Report in June 2014.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This Interim Report presents results that are at an early stage of analysis. Further rounds of data collection with many other participants in co-management are needed before the participatory evaluation will be complete. The current stage of the co-research is not sufficiently advanced for extended discussion or conclusion-making. Nevertheless, the results to date resonate with the concept of the creation of an equitable intercultural space as the key means of achieving co-management (Hibbard et al. 2008; Hill 2011). Indigenous Protected Areas have been identified as the most useful tool for creating an equitable intercultural space. Key aspects that underpin their usefulness include adaptability, flexibility, inclusiveness of multiple tenures, ability to build progressively over time, and to foster collaborative partnerships. These features of IPAs are in contrast with those of ILUAs which place parties in a competitive relationship to reach a fixed endpoint at which one or the other will have achieved the upper hand in the final agreement.

We look forward to exploring these and other issues in the next stage of the research.

# Appendix 1

## Small group discussion guide

Please use this sheet to guide your discussion of the topics in three stages. Try to give about 15 minutes to each stage. Keep the group notes on the butcher's paper. We would also appreciate you adding comments here and handing this sheet back to Ro or Lavenie.

<b>Topic</b>				
<b>Structures rating</b>				
1 very sick	2 little bit sick	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Comment				
<b>Processes rating</b>				
1 very sick	2 little bit sick	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Comment				
<b>Results rating</b>				
1 very sick	2 little bit sick	3 good	4 very good	5 excellent
Comment				

**STRUCTURES.** Setting things up —both Rainforest Aboriginal peoples and government/others—like starting organisations, getting the constitutions in place for organisations, making agreements (like Indigenous Land Use Agreements), making new laws or rules, having Native Title recognised, agreeing on protocols.

**PROCESSES.** Doing things—both Rainforest Aboriginal peoples and government/others—like making plans, getting people to meetings, starting projects, getting Indigenous Ranger Groups out 'caring for country', exercising native title rights (hunting, lighting fires), finding ways to sort out arguments, teaching language, finding partners, working together with partners.

**RESULTS-** Things actually changing—both Rainforest Aboriginal peoples and government/others—like the country getting healthier, Aboriginal people knowing their language and culture, government people showing respect for Rainforest Aboriginal law, good relationships being in place, protocols being followed.

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