

**Chapter 7.**  
**Finding new meaning for old values:**  
**Aboriginal cultural tourism planning in and adjacent to protected areas**

**William Hyams**

C/o James Cook University

**Ernie Grant**

Jirrbal Elder

**Alastair Birtles**

James Cook University

**Peter Valentine**

James Cook University

***Abstract.** My doctoral research with the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation on Country-based tourism planning and management in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area explores applications of traditional knowledge within Aboriginal tourism and the real or imagined barriers to its recognition by the broader tourism industry and tourism managers as an essential linkage between Indigenous peoples and their environments. Education/tourism activities on Country may be one of the few ways to preserve knowledge as a lived-experience, as the culture surrounding traditional hunting and access to Country in protected areas evolves. This research has been strongly influenced by senior Jirrbal Elder, Ernie Grant, whose holistic planning and education framework has been adopted by the Queensland Department of Education as a model for cross-cultural education. His style of cultural education at Echo Creek can be viewed as a model of best-practice rainforest tourism, in which traditional knowledge, cultural transmission, and ecosystem and Indigenous wellbeing are indivisible. This holistic approach has the potential for broader application in developing participatory approaches to cultural awareness for a range of protected area stakeholders, including managers and the tourism industry.*

## **7.1 Introduction**

There is increasing interest worldwide in the use of indigenous cultural heritage for tourism (Zeppel 1998). Tourism development presents opportunities for Indigenous communities to benefit economically from protected areas encompassing their traditional homelands (Beltrán 2000; Eagles and McCool 2002). However, many indigenous communities often fail to capitalise on the commercial potential of tourism in protected areas (Johnston 2006). In northern Queensland, Indigenous Australians have only limited involvement in tourism development focussed upon the iconic rainforest environment of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) (Ignjic 2001; Zeppel 2002). Nevertheless, many Aboriginal Traditional Owners of the WTWHA aspire to greater involvement in the tourism industry, as an opportunity to benefit economically from their traditional estates or Country, as well as supporting the maintenance of their Indigenous knowledge systems linking them to Country (Ignjic 2001; WTAPPT 2005). In this chapter, we evaluate Johnston's (2006) claim that the sustainable development of Indigenous cultural tourism requires the integration of localised Indigenous knowledge systems into the tourism planning process. The results of a case study of Aboriginal cultural-tourism planning in the Wet Tropics region,

undertaken as a participatory action research project, provides lessons for managers charged with preserving Aboriginal cultural-heritage values in protected areas by demonstrating how a Country-based approach can support tourism development in which ecosystem and Indigenous wellbeing are indivisible.

An innovative approach to Aboriginal cultural tourism planning was developed with Girramay and Jirrbal Traditional Owners at the Jumbun Aboriginal Community, located immediately adjacent to the WTWHA southwest of Tully in Queensland. The project adopted a Country-based approach to ensure the resulting cultural tourism plan would reflect Traditional Owners' holistic knowledge systems linking Country and culture. This participatory approach allowed for multi-directional learning experiences within which the research team and Girramay and Jirrbal Elders, were all collaborators in teaching, researching and learning (Wright et al. 2007). The resulting tourism planning framework was based on Jirrbal Elder Ernie Grant's *Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework* (Grant 1998) developed for cross-cultural education programs at his nearby Echo Creek cultural education/tourism venture. The framework is based on the interlocking elements of land, language and culture linked holistically through the variables of time, space and relationships. It is based on Grant's life-long observation and experience of the interconnected elements that underpin Dyrbal knowledge systems. For the purposes of academic clarity, we use the term 'Dyrbal', constructed by Dixon (1972) as a collective identifier for those tribal groups including Jirrbal and Girramay, who have shared linguistic and therefore closely related knowledge systems.

Here we present an overview of Aboriginal cultural tourism in the Giringun region, as the local research setting, and discuss the process of adapting Grant's (1998) framework for use as a tourism planning framework based on the component elements of Dyrbal knowledge systems and theoretical perspectives of sustainable cultural-heritage development. We then evaluate the application of this conceptual framework to participatory Aboriginal cultural-tourism planning at the Jumbun community. Finally, we consider how the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into tourism-planning processes may provide a more holistic and integrated process for re-creating Aboriginal cultural landscapes as opportunities for Country-based cultural tourism. This research review contributes to debates about the potential for cultural tourism to support social and economic development of culturally distinct communities living in and adjacent to protected areas.

## **7.2 Country-based Aboriginal tourism planning in the Giringun region**

This review forms part of a participatory action research project launched in late 2006 in partnership with the Giringun Aboriginal Corporation ('Giringun'), to assess opportunities for Traditional Owner engagement in tourism planning and management in the Giringun region. Giringun represents the interests of nine Traditional Owner groups (including Girramay and Jirrbal) whose Country broadly extends from Rollingstone southwest to the Valley of Lagoons, northwest to Ravenshoe and northeast to Maria Creek. Giringun Country also includes all the offshore islands and waters surrounding the Hinchinbrook, Goold, Brook and Family Islands (Bock and GAC 2006). These tribal boundaries therefore overlap with substantial sections of both the WTWHA and of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area (GBRWHA) between Cairns and Townsville (Figure 7.1). Traditional Owners of Giringun Country comprise a culturally diverse population, with different contact histories and varying degrees of attachment to traditional cultural lifestyles, including Indigenous knowledge systems and language.

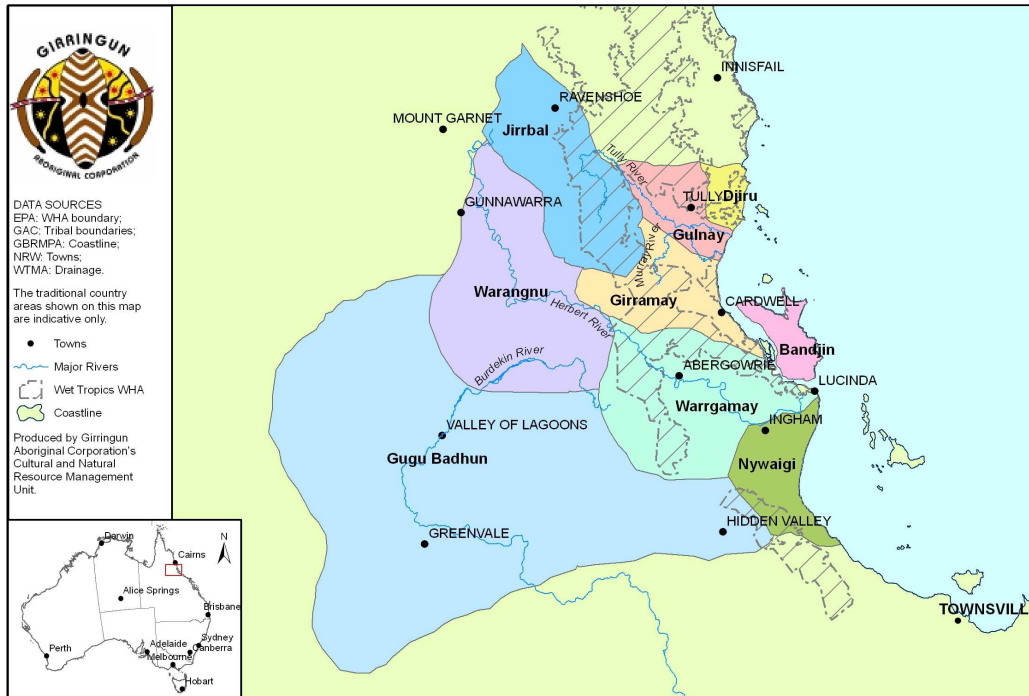


Figure 7.1: Indicative tribal boundaries of Traditional Owner groups in the Girringun Region and boundaries of the southern section of the WTWHA

Girringun provides leadership, direction and assistance to its Traditional Owner members in the Girringun region. Girringun has adopted a holistic mission to its role as an Indigenous governance organisation supporting Country-based (land and sea) planning and management, to enhance the social, cultural, spiritual, environmental and economic wellbeing of Country, culture and people (GAC 2005). The Girringun Board consists of one Elder and one elected member from each of the nine aligned Traditional Owner groups. This governance structure enables the consideration of Indigenous knowledge within decision making at a Board level.

Like other Aboriginal custodians of the WTWHA and GBRWHA, Girringun Traditional Owners have concerns about the level of recognition of Aboriginal cultural values within tourism planning and management and their limited involvement in the tourism industry (Zeppel 2002; WTAPPT 2005; Nursey-Bray et al. 2005). This is despite both the WTMA and GBRMPA identifying the potential benefits of greater Indigenous engagement within tourism businesses and in strategic and planning discussions about tourism (GBRMPA 2005; WTMA 2000).

Girringun has identified the sustainable development of Country-based Aboriginal cultural tourism as an important goal in the Girringun region. Appropriately designed Aboriginal cultural tourism is viewed as an opportunity to raise awareness of Traditional Owners' connection to Country, while highlighting how tourism development can support the maintenance and sharing of Aboriginal cultural values (P Rist personal communication 14 April 2007). This view relates closely to Wearing and Huyskens' (2001) argument that ecotourism frameworks may be a catalyst for shifting protected area management away from Euro-centric models of conservation toward models that empower Aboriginal people to participate in all aspects of management and policy making.

To coincide with the hosting of the Second Indigenous Land and Sea Management Conference by Girringun in October 2007, the Girringun Board sought to showcase Girringun Country as an interconnected cultural landscape. Using four emerging but still relatively undeveloped Aboriginal cultural tourism enterprises in the region, Girringun wanted delegates to experience the richness of Traditional Owners' relationship to the natural/cultural environment and their localised Indigenous knowledge systems through Country-based tours. However, in June 2007, the regional Gumbudda Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) which provided business support and wage subsidies for several emerging Aboriginal tourism ventures in the region was closed. At this time of funding uncertainty, Girringun's desire for a greater role in Aboriginal tourism planning became a pragmatic necessity to avoid the possible dismantling of these emergent tourism ventures. Fortunately, Girringun obtained funding for a tour-guide training program from Townsville Enterprise, a regional economic development body, to support the continuing development of the tours. The research team participated in developing and evaluating this guide training program. The training content and methods reflected insights from the academic literature on sustainable cultural-heritage development and Aboriginal cultural tourism, practical industry experience of guiding best practice and involvement of Girringun Elders for the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems.

Four Aboriginal tours were identified for involvement in the guide training program: 'Jumbun Aboriginal Tours' (Girramay/Jirrbal); 'Mungalla Aboriginal Tours' near Ingham (Nywaigi); 'Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp' in the Tully Valley (Jirrbal); and 'Bandjin Saltwater Expeditions' to Hinchinbrook Island (Bandjin). Of these four, Jumbun Aboriginal Tours was selected by Hyams as a suitable case-study for a detailed evaluation of the potential of Country-based tourism planning in Girramay Country. After the closure of the local CDEP, Jumbun had limited access to other forms of support for tourism planning and mentoring. Tourism planning was undertaken with the close involvement of Grant and other guides at the nearby Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp, in neighbouring Jirrbal Country, with regular updates to the Girringun CEO and governing Committee.

### **7.3 Aboriginal Cultural Tourism in the Girringun Region**

Previous research into Aboriginal cultural tourism in North Queensland has not been undertaken from a regional Country-based perspective that accords with tribal boundaries of representative Indigenous organisations such as Girringun. However, previous reviews into Aboriginal cultural tourism in the Wet Tropics are relevant to this study (Sofield and Birtles 1992; Zeppel 2002; O'Rourke and Memmott 2005 and 2007; Ignjic 2001). Sofield and Birtles (1992) produced the first Aboriginal Tourism Strategy for the WTWHA, which recognised the diversity of Aboriginal tourism opportunities in the Wet Tropics. They recommended using the Aboriginal Cultural Opportunity Spectrum, based on the well-known Recreational Opportunity Spectrum to assist Traditional Owner groups in the planning of Aboriginal tourism. More recent reviews have tended to focus on inadequate business planning and the lack of a strong profit motive as reasons for the failure of many Aboriginal tourism ventures in the Wet Tropics (Ignjic 2001). While providing useful business advice, Ignjic (2001) views cultural motivations as factors that can hamper business success, rather than exploring how the harnessing of Indigenous knowledge can underpin a strong business model. Ignjic (2001) recommends the formation of business hubs to support emergent Aboriginal cultural tourism enterprises, in the areas of business planning and co-operative marketing. This is a valuable insight that has been acted upon by Girringun as

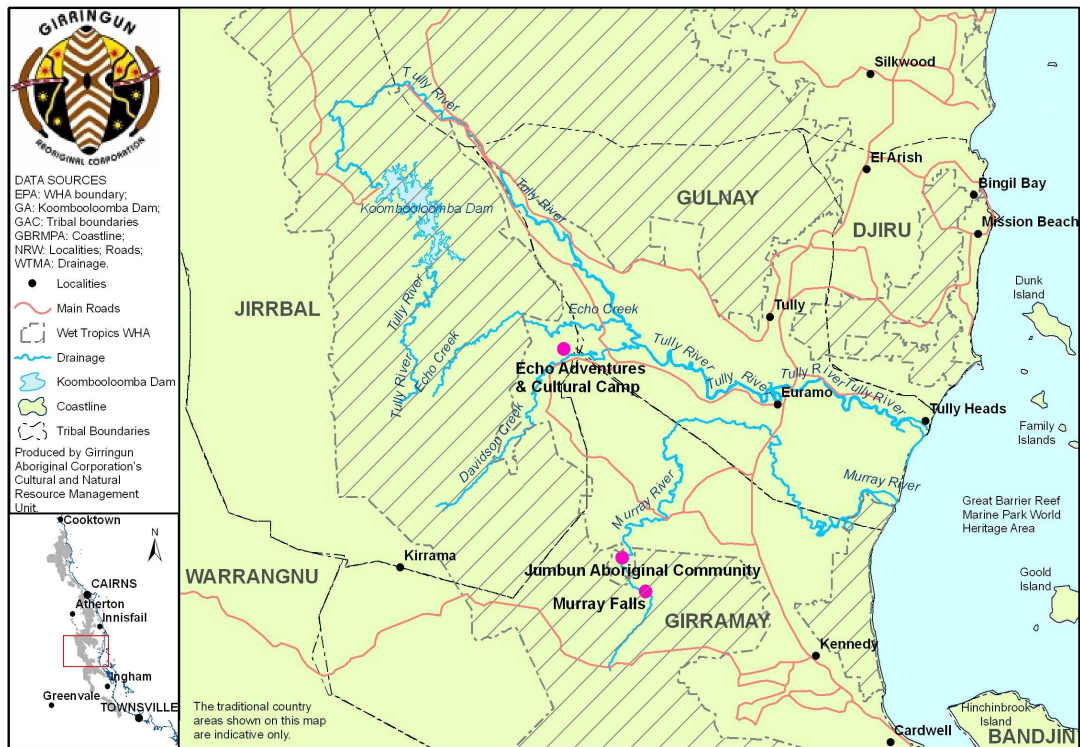
a member of, and facilitator in, designing the new regional Aboriginal tourism marketing and promotional organisation 'Dreamtime Tracks' based out of the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre.

O'Rourke and Memmott (2005) identified three types of Aboriginal cultural tourism in the Wet Tropics: Aboriginal arts and crafts, cultural centres, and cultural tours. They undertook a specific review of eight Dyirbal tourism products including: Nganyaji Interpretive Centre, Ravenshoe; Hull River Mission Interpretive Centre; Gugubarabi project at Echo Creek; Misty Mountains Walking tracks; Mumbay; Jumbun Cultural Keeping Place; Murray River Walking tracks; and Davey (Buckeroo) Lawrence Centre. Of particular interest to this study are Gugubarabi; Mumbay (or Moombay); Jumbun Cultural Keeping Place and Murray River walking tracks. These four directly feature within this review of participatory tourism planning at Jumbun, including the involvement of Grant and Jumbun Elders with previous training and experience with cultural education programs at the nearby Gugubarabi Echo Creek enterprise (now redeveloped as part of the Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp venture).

#### **7.4 Jumbun Aboriginal Tours and Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp**

The homeland estates ('Country') of Girramay/Jirrbal Traditional Owners include a mosaic of land tenures including freehold community land, national parks, private property, and unallocated land. The Girramay native title claim is due for final determination in 2009 (Marcia Jerry personal communication 2 October 2008). These areas also overlap with the WTWHA boundaries, which includes a range of tenures. O'Rourke and Memmott (2007) argued that the cultural tourism opportunities in this region are influenced by this rural demographic in combination with limited Aboriginal control over Country (likely to change with the upcoming Girramay Native Title determination). In addition, almost all of the lowland rainforest Country of the Jirrbal, Girramay and Gulnay tribes has been cleared. Figure 7.2 shows the location of the Jumbun Aboriginal Community (hosts of Jumbun Aboriginal Tours) and the Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp and their proximity to the boundaries of the WTWHA.

Jumbun is an Aboriginal community of approximately 160 persons, comprising mainly Girramay, Jirrbal and Gulnay. It lies about halfway between Tully and Cardwell and just outside the Murray Upper National Park at the foothills of the Cardwell Range (O'Rourke and Memmott 2007). Significantly, many others of Jirrbal, Girramay and Gulnay descent are scattered throughout the region. The Jumbun community is a freehold property owned by the Indigenous Land Corporation but managed by a community company called Jumbun Ltd. It comprises twenty-six houses, a community hall, a heritage keeping place, community store, health centre (ILC 2008), and a recreation and camping area called Moombay. Jumbun had been involved in small-scale cultural tourism before. During the 1990s, the 'Girramay Experience' operated at the Moombay campsite as a privately-owned business operating out of the nearby tourist node of Mission Beach. This business faltered following its sale in the late 1990s (personal communication B Scott 12 April 2008). Efforts to restart tourism activities during the period 2004 to 2007 were compromised by the closure of the regional Gumbudda CDEP program in June 2007, and the loss of tourism infrastructure including a bus and wage-support for tourism trainees. With Jumbun's involvement in Giringun's tourism training initiative and the research team's support of Country-based Aboriginal cultural tourism planning there, Jumbun has overcome numerous obstacles and commenced regular tours in April 2008. At the time of writing, Jumbun is hosting three-hour tours on request that include a guided viewing of the 'Keeping Place', morning tea, Moombay rainforest walk, basket-weaving and traditional-jewellery demonstrations (Figure 7.3).



**Figure 7.2:** Location of the Jumbun Aboriginal Community and Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp in relation to tribal boundaries and WTWHA boundaries

Jirrbal Elder Ernie Grant's Country lies in the Echo Creek area. The profound cultural importance of this area for Grant motivated him to re-establish the Echo Creek walking track, to support the development of culturally-focussed walking trails within the Wet Tropics and to use the area's cultural significance for education. The Echo Creek Walk follows an Aboriginal walking trail along a tributary of the Tully River linking the Countries of the Girramay, Jirrbal and Gulnay on the coastal plain and the Jirrbal clans on the tableland. The Echo Creek Walking track is one of several in the WTWHA promoted as Aboriginal transit routes, which were used for access to seasonal camps and regular tribal meetings (Pentecost and Milne 1994) (Figure 7.4).

The Echo Creek enterprise consists of the walking trail to the Echo Creek Falls and a cultural theatre and 'keeping place' museum located at King Ranch. Grant trained several Aboriginal cultural guides from the Jumbun Aboriginal community to lead the walks explaining the Indigenous knowledge of the area to guests. Grant sought to develop the cultural training program at Echo Creek using the holistic approach to Indigenous knowledge that he was exposed to as a child growing up in the area. These facilities were opened in 2003 with funding from the Queensland Heritage Trails Network. Local government support was also gained for land to site the theatre and signage. The enterprise has benefited from the involvement of a (non-Indigenous) tourism professional for marketing the education programs initially for school groups and increasingly for conference groups and tourists. The Gugubarabi Echo Creek enterprise formed part of the El Rancho Del Rey tourism venture until its sale in late 2003 (Memcott and O'Rourke 2005). It has now been remodelled and reopened with AusIndustry support, as part of a joint venture called Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp, with upgraded camp facilities and a greater range of recreational activities on offer. Grant's cross-cultural education programs have continued with limited disruption during this business restructuring.



**Figure 7.3:** Images from Jumbun Aboriginal Tours: **1** Jumbun Keeping Place; **2** weaving *jawun*, **3** guide sharing knowledge of *baygal* (hairy-mary lawyer cane); **4** Murray River crossing at Moombay site



**Figure 7.4:** Jirrbal Elder Ernie Grant during a cultural education workshop at the Echo Creek Walking Track

Echo Creek is culturally significant to Grant and other Jirrbal, because the land is still intact and provides the opportunity for transmitting the Indigenous knowledge of the area's plants, animals, sacred and story places and the seasonal and spiritual relationships linking them and the Aboriginal people as one entity. The Echo Creek walk has provided an opportunity to record Indigenous knowledge systems in combination with scientific approaches. Over 120 species of plants are identified and recorded with Girramay, Jirrbal and scientific names on the trail and two story places are featured on the walk (O'Rourke and Memmott 2007). In early 2008 Giringun has undertaken a Traditional Knowledge Recording Project with Grant and other Indigenous knowledge consultants along the Echo Creek walk.

### **7.5 Dyrirbal knowledge and the holistic planning and teaching framework**

Ernie Grant uses his Echo Creek enterprise to share the richness of Dyrirbal knowledge systems within innovative cross-cultural education programs hosted at the facility. Grant (1998:2) explained how Indigenous knowledge underpins his relationship to his 'Country' in the following way:

... it relies on observation; it is closely aligned to nature and the environment – with particular emphasis on cycles and patterns and the effect each has on the other; and of course it is based on the undeniable link between land, language and culture.

It is this linkage between land, language and culture and the importance of cycles (time), place (the meaning and significance attached to place) and the relationships that link these elements together, which underpin Grant's *Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework* (1998) (Figure 7.5).

The framework was developed to help address Grant's (1998) observation that the Western-based education syllabus was not meeting the needs of Indigenous students. This observation has been validated by education researchers who have noted the potentially damaging impacts of Western education upon Indigenous social and emotional wellbeing (Boughton 2000; Malin 2003; McRae et al. 2000; Nakata 1999).

Exley and Bliss (2004) argued that the Indigenous world-view of environmental cycles, patterns and relationships, expressed through Indigenous languages and shaping cultural identity, are often silenced by the Western approach to education. Their analysis suggests that Western education is based on knowledge systems that present a more compartmentalised organisation of knowledge. They found that when classroom teachers and those working with at-risk Indigenous students were given professional development training in Grant's (1998) holistic framework and used culturally-relevant texts, students spent less time within a reading recovery program compared to students with teachers not receiving this professional development training (Exley and Bliss 2004). This finding supports the view of Schwab (2001 quoted by Dunbar and Scrimgeour 2007) supporting change within education practice, arguing that:

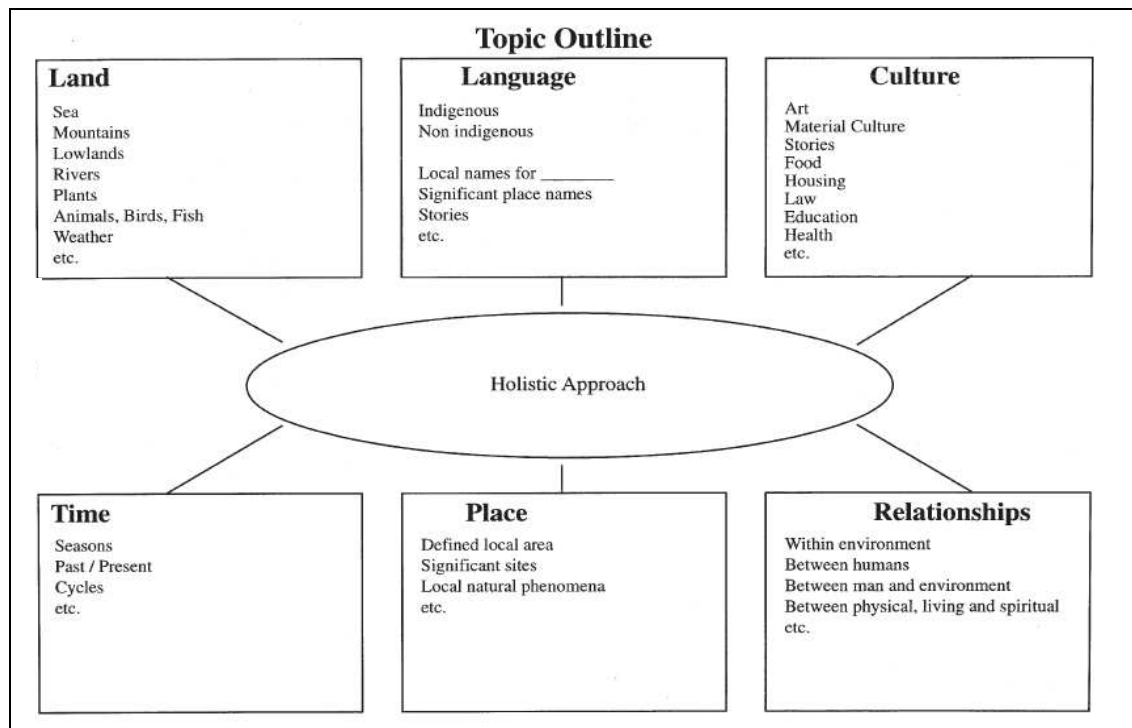
Policy makers seldom recognise the degree to which Indigenous people are disappointed in the failure of western education to conserve and reaffirm elements of traditional culture.

In highlighting how Eurocentric approaches to education have failed to adequately integrate Indigenous worldviews, this quote emphasises the importance of exploring whether tourism practice and research also marginalise Indigenous peoples' culture and knowledge systems. This consideration sparked interest in the use of the framework in a cultural-tourism planning context. It provided an opportunity to assess whether one of



the reasons Indigenous people have received limited benefit from tourism in protected areas, has been due to a lack of integration of Indigenous knowledge systems.

Grant (1998) developed his holistic education framework based on his own experiences of the cultural lifestyle he had as a Jirrbal man growing up in the rainforest in the Echo Creek/Davidson Creek area and reflection upon the subsequent changes to his Country and lifestyle. The holistic framework forms a key part of cultural education programs at the Echo Creek enterprise. Educational workshops provide an epistemological introduction to using the holistic framework for education programs that privilege Indigenous perspectives and cross-cultural histories. Grant invited Hyams to attend a two-day cross-cultural education workshop hosted by the Queensland Department of Education in September 2007, and this experience inspired the adaptation of the framework for cultural-tourism planning. Grant uses the framework to chart the changes to his Country from pre-contact through to present day. Dyrbal Indigenous knowledge systems feature in the workshops to revise existing historical interpretations of settlement history in the region. The effects of the loss of special places, of language and of the culture binding Indigenous knowledge of people and their environment are explored through time. Grant uses the local region to show how Western culture has steadily replaced traditional culture or given new cultural forms blending the two. Finally, Grant fits the Echo Creek cultural education program within this holistic picture of change of relationships between people and Country.



**Figure 7.5:** The Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework (Grant 1998)

The framework shown in Figure 7.5 provides for the analysis of any topic using a holistic perspective. Each of the elements is interrelated such that if one element is changed, all other domains are affected. For example, it allows an analysis of a local region, by capturing changes to land (or sea if Sea Country), language and culture throughout the history of contact between Aboriginal and Western colonisation. These time periods can be broken down into as many periods as necessary or can be based on

natural or seasonal cycles. Grant uses the following temporal divisions as a standard template: pre-contact, contact, post-contact and contemporary (i.e. up to and including the present). For each time period the state of the land, the maintenance of traditional language and the transmission of culture can be analysed from a cross-cultural perspective to show how Western culture and settlement history have altered Aboriginal peoples' relationships to Country.

Place is a crucial element for putting land, language and culture into the dynamic context of a people's relationship to Country. Place can be understood as the significance and meaning attached to different sites on Country, that is, the land (or sea). This is the process by which Aboriginal societies collectively value and identify their cultural heritages (and therefore themselves). Changes to Country can be monitored by the loss of significance for previously significant places such as story places, campsites, bora sites, wild resource areas, etc. This loss of significance or knowledge can be understood as a combination of changes to land (or sea), language and culture. Changes to the land through clearing and agriculture will severely impact on the ability to visit and maintain connection to places, especially if they have been destroyed or changed by the alteration of environmental processes. Similarly, if humans are removed from the land and memories and stories cannot maintain the Indigenous knowledge of those sites this will affect the significance of the place. Importantly however, new sites may become more significant as other sites are altered or destroyed or where knowledge is lost. This provides an insight into the evolving qualities of Aboriginal cultural heritage as a process of collective re-valuing. The loss of traditional language will limit the full meaning and significance of stories attached to place, because language includes the detailed naming of important sites linked to a people's identity and cultural lifestyles. The importance of the stories associated with place cannot be underestimated as an oral record that reflects the intimate nuances of a culture. These changes to local cultural elements such as art, law, education, food, stories, health etc. will all alter the significance of places as new cultural priorities emerge (Grant 1998). Grant's identification of language as a central component of Dyirbal knowledge systems is reflected in the linguistic analysis of Dyirbal 'song poetry' by Dixon who argued that the loss of these songs and their particular linguistic forms will limit the transfer of the knowledge embedded within them (Dixon and Koch 1996).

Relationships are central to the holistic qualities of Dyirbal Indigenous knowledge linking land, language and culture through time and space. For example, relationships between cultural practices and land can be explored within the context of language revival or loss, while changes to land will affect the relationships between a people and its environment because this will affect language and culture as already described. Relationships were a dominant feature of cultural lifestyles in which up to twenty kinship classification labels identified the connection of everyone in a group with each other and to other local tribes and provided the spiritual links to land (Dixon 1972). Relationships were also important within nature – the cycles and patterns that could be used and incorporated within cultural life. Analysis of the relationship between a people and Country can also be explored through time. As Aboriginal cultures evolve and respond to new influences within Western culture, old relationships may change and new ones may emerge. For example, the kinship system may never be reinstated fully but it may have a place alongside new relationships based around family, communities, tribal groups and new cross-cultural identities. Larsen (2006) argued from a Canadian Indigenous research perspective that it is these new relationships within Indigenous societies that can provide opportunities for socio-cultural regeneration and alternative development agendas based on a re-evaluation of collective relationships to Country.

## **7.6: Adapting the Holistic Planning and Teaching Framework for sustainable cultural heritage development in protected areas**

For many Aboriginal communities, the opportunities for sharing cultural knowledge have been severely limited by the colonial history of forced removal of Aboriginal groups from their homelands, and alteration of natural environments through development (Burgess and Morrison 2007). This has reinforced the urgency felt by Aboriginal persons to identify and protect the cultural knowledge that remains as an embodiment of their cultural heritage (Horstman and Wightman 2001). Maintaining the protocols and observational practices for transmitting cultural knowledge from Elders to younger generations is essential for sustainable cultural heritage management. Where environments are still intact and the cultural knowledge of those places can still be transmitted in accordance with customary laws and practices, these cultural landscapes have profound cultural heritage significance. The challenge for protected area managers is to facilitate tourism planning and interpretation strategies in parks that reflect this holistic and dynamic perspective of Aboriginal cultural heritage.

The difficulty for managers is that heritage landscapes (both natural and cultural) are rarely an uncontested domain (Cotter et al. 2001). Heritage can be understood as a social process, which links people and places through the creation and transmission of place identities. The use of heritage for tourism relies on particular constructions of heritage that may form the basis of a tourism product or provide a unique character or set of values, which enable the selling of a place as a tourism destination (Ashworth 2003). Constructions of heritage are not fully inclusive and often the heritage gaze of the tourist will legitimise the power balance of social and political structures within communities and societies (Hall 2003).

This argument has particular relevance to Aboriginal tourism planning in protected areas. Zeppel (2001) argued that Aboriginal cultural landscapes are reconstructed as heritage tourism attractions by heritage agencies, protected area managers, the tourism industry and by Indigenous groups. This conclusion is based upon MacCannell's (1989) site/sight sacralisation model, which conceptualises the heritage construction process for tourism as a linear progression in which the tourists' search for meaning and authenticity within travel experiences constructs new meanings for sites. MacCannell's (1989) stages of site/sight sacralisation are: naming (official recognition such as heritage listing); framing and elevation (official boundaries); enshrinement (e.g. interpretation through signage and cultural centres), mechanical reproduction (presenting attraction through books, photos, websites, etc.) and finally social reproduction (where a group or region will name themselves after the famous attraction as a projection of their identity).

The difficulty with the site/sight sacralisation model is its external tourist-centred focus that shifts meaning-making away from the custodians of a place to outside tourism and heritage interests. In MacCannell's model, the social reproduction stage is the final point in this heritage process. This runs counter to the holistic cultural heritage values of Aboriginal peoples in which cultural heritage (linking land, language and culture) is the starting point for identifying their relationship to Country. This underlines the importance in seeking alternative cross-cultural perspectives within cultural heritage constructions, driven by the holistic quality of Indigenous knowledge systems.

The cultural heritage aspirations of Aboriginal peoples will often include tangible and intangible heritage values that reflect historic and contemporary relationships to Country. These may include the maintenance of cultural practices and transmission of traditional knowledge (English 2002). For example, sites where Aboriginal persons may collect or have collected wild resources in the past may be sites of cultural heritage significance from an Indigenous perspective. This Indigenous perspective of cultural

heritage differs from the typical site-based archaeological approach to cultural heritage assessment underpinning heritage assessment laws (English 2002). However, there is increasing recognition by protected area managers that Aboriginal 'traditional cultural lifestyles' also form an important component of Indigenous cultural heritage (GBRMPA 2005:46). For example, Traditional Owners continue to work with the WTMA and partner agencies to manage the WTWHA as a 'cultural landscape' that respects the powerful spiritual relationship between Owners and their Country (WTAPPT 2005:37).

Theoretical principles for the successful integration of the cultural heritage interests of local and Indigenous communities within tourism development can be drawn from the international cultural heritage development and ethnomusicology literature (Galla 1999; de Varine 2006; Davis 2004). Davis (2004) outlined how eco-museums or community museums provide opportunities for local constructions of heritage to support cultural tourism development for local communities. The challenge for Aboriginal communities is to find similar space for such local cultural heritage development. The role of culture within development was described by Galla (2006:3):

... culture is a driving force and goal for development as well as a key factor impacting on every stage of the development process.

From this analysis, sustainable cultural heritage development relies upon recognition of the value of cultural diversity within communities (regardless of socio-economic status) and committed individuals. De Varine (2006:226) described how this cultural development process should occur:

... this has to be done in the language of their/our own culture, through transmission from generation to generation of values, memories, material, and immaterial elements.

This quote captures the dynamic nature of culture and the importance of its transmission for sustainable cultural heritage development. This is a crucial process within cultural heritage development such as cultural tourism, in order to avoid static representations or 'museumised' representations of indigenous cultures (MacCannell in Cole 2006).

Based upon the epistemological foundations of Dyrirbal knowledge linking land, language, and culture and the fluid interconnectivity of time, place and relationships, Grant's (1998) framework is conceptually well-suited to harnessing the dynamism of cultural-heritage development. The next stage is to evaluate in practice whether the framework is effective as a cross-cultural planning tool suitable for both Indigenous custodians identifying how their cultural heritage can support development aspirations, and relevant to protected area managers developing tourism and interpretation policies to manage an area as a living 'cultural landscape'. In the following sections we review how this conceptual framework was operationalised through a series of co-learning initiatives. The resulting Jumbun Cultural Tourism Plan is presented. The concluding discussion evaluates the significance of Aboriginal tourism planning at Jumbun based on the capacity of Grant's (1998) framework to support Country-based participatory planning in a cross-cultural context.

## **7.7 Study Methods**

This study was based on thirteen months of ethnographic fieldwork undertaken as a participatory action research (PAR) project. PAR has been identified as an appropriate method for cross-cultural research involving Aboriginal Australians (Ivanitz 1999; Henry et al. 2002; McTaggart 1991). The approach has also been advocated for social science research projects on co-management or joint management arrangements in protected areas because it aims to alter existing power relations within a given context

(Wearing and Huyskens 2001). PAR has also been singled out as an important technique in empowering Indigenous communities where the integration of traditional knowledge and Western management approaches is an important goal (Wearing and Huyskens 2001).

It is important to note that PAR is not a methodology but a research paradigm to contest the dominance of positivist claims that demand a clear delineation between researcher and subject. There are three common attributes that distinguish PAR from other research approaches in the social sciences: shared ownership of the research project; an analysis of social problems from a community perspective; and an orientation towards community action (Henry et al. 2002). All three of these attributes apply to this study. Importantly PAR can be used to overturn the passivity of subjects as they become active participants or co-researchers in a cyclical process of planning, action, reflection and evaluation (McTaggart and Kemmis 1988; Wadsworth 1998).

The selection of research method for this study was influenced by the researcher's role, which ranged across the observer-participant spectrum (May 1997), depending upon the time, place and participants. Data were recorded using digital audio recordings, photography and written notes. Participant observation was a balance between the two concurrent roles of active participation and data collection. Field diaries were used to record outcomes of community tourism workshops, informal conversations and Country-based fieldwork with Aboriginal knowledge consultants.

Different data sets were collected from various community members including male and female leaders, Elders, younger Traditional Owners and other tourism and government stakeholders with an interest in Aboriginal tourism development within Girringun Country. Whenever possible, verbal accounts of the researcher's interpretation of the relevant issues were checked with participants as a form of 'respondent validation' (Cole 2007). A close working relationship developed between the researcher and Grant and other Girringun Elders with particular interests in cultural education, heritage, cultural tourism or a mixture of these. As the research progressed their roles shifted from being expert consultants with whom the researcher needed to engage to check the accuracy of Indigenous knowledge to ensure the cultural legitimacy of the process, to one where they became active co-researchers. This process of broadening ownership of the research process and its outcomes is continuing.

A key activity undertaken within this research was working with one of Ernie Grant's kin relations, as an expert Indigenous knowledge consultant to undertake collaborative Country-based tourism planning at both Echo Creek and Moombay. This involved recording cultural knowledge of important plants using audio and photography. Plants were identified that would form the basis of a cultural walk which could perform the twin goals of demonstrating the complex interrelationships of Girramay/Jirrbal Indigenous knowledge, and being simple enough for guides who did not have a strong grounding in cultural knowledge to be able to learn it over a period of two to three months. This knowledge was placed on audio compact discs, transcribed and presented in a manual, with photos accompanying each knowledge segment, and using the words of the Elder. Cultural knowledge was cross-checked with recorded information elsewhere and other knowledge consultants including Ernie Grant. These manuals were then distributed to the new guides who were supplied with compact disc layers to facilitate learning before and during tour training sessions (Figure 7.6).

The knowledge consultant's familiarity with the holistic framework and Ernie Grant's cultural education programs at Echo Creek inspired the training program structure. Wherever possible, the training schedule focussed on cultural activities that

could place the shared Indigenous knowledge within a visual and historical context. For example, the identification of scar trees with shields or boomerangs cut from them could provide an historical link with culture, while the ongoing use of those same plants as wild resources could be provided. This approach to structuring a cultural tour reflected the cultural-training approach developed by Ernie Grant and taught to his kin relations and indicated of the importance of an Indigenous knowledge process for cultural transmission being used within the tourism planning process.



**Figure 7.6:** Trainee tour guides using Indigenous knowledge manuals during tour training at 1 Moombay Walking Track and 2 Echo Creek Walking Track

Two tour-training sessions were facilitated by a (non-Indigenous) tour guiding consultant who tailored how the cultural knowledge information recorded by Elders within the tour manual should be presented within a tour setting. Girramay and Jirrbal Elders also attended to provide additional knowledge about the information within the tour manual and, where relevant, their own life experiences about the Indigenous knowledge being shared. This involvement of senior Elders within the training program provided opportunities to make the knowledge in the audio and manual a ‘lived-experience’. It also bolstered the importance and value of the training program because of the inherent respect shown by the younger guides to their Elders and the depth of their traditional knowledge.

Efforts to maximise the involvement of Elders within the training program were inspired by the design of Ernie Grant’s cultural training program at Echo Creek. The tourism training sought to provide a new context for Elders to share Indigenous knowledge of Country. This proved to be a highly successful approach to cultural tourism training because it allowed integration of Indigenous knowledge as tour content, and also shaped how the training process was undertaken to reflect cultural protocols of knowledge transmission to younger generations.

Following the successful development of the Jumbun tour, including the training of five new guides, two participatory-planning workshops were held with the Jumbun guides including an Elder, to reflect on the tour training and overall tour planning and development process. In these workshops, Grant’s (1998) framework was used to structure discussions. An A3-size blank template of the framework was used by each of the guides and Hyams, to structure their own ideas about the tour and aspirations for its development. During these sessions Hyams was a facilitator who also provided advice on the business and networking activities essential for the development of a viable tourism business. This process of co-learning was enhanced by the presence of a Jumbun Elder with a detailed knowledge of Girramay Country. The Elder was able to

assess feasible options for inclusion of story places within tourism activities subject to certain restrictions under Aboriginal law. As the Jumbun Cultural Tourism Plan was developed, it was also presented to the Jumbun Community Chairperson for comment, while final checking for accuracy and additional information was undertaken by Ernie Grant. The Jumbun Cultural Tourism Plan is provided in the next section. For the purposes of this publication, the plan has been simplified to remove any content which would compromise the intellectual property rights of Girramay Traditional Owners, including names of specific story places, stories and significant cultural heritage sites discussed in the actual plan.

## **7.8 Discussion**

The Jumbun Cultural Tourism Plan (JCTP) is the first step in developing a comprehensive business plan for Jumbun Aboriginal Tours. The next stage in Jumbun's tourism development is development of a three to five year financial plan to underpin the cultural-heritage development aspirations of the JCTP. The JCTP provides strategic direction for developing such a business plan from a holistic perspective, incorporating Dyrbal knowledge perspectives alongside sustainable management principles.

This participatory planning process has features that can be replicated in other Aboriginal cultural tourism planning settings. The following discussion highlights some of the key features of the JCTP and provides general comment on their significance to those stakeholders whose support will be necessary to support a Country-based approach to Aboriginal cultural tourism development in protected areas.

The analytical utility of Grant's framework for tourism planning was immediately apparent to the Jumbun Community, who were able to integrate their knowledge and perspectives into the tourism planning process. However, for those stakeholders perhaps not used to Indigenous knowledge systems, it is valuable to examine some of the linkages between the three component elements of Dyrbal knowledge: land, language and culture, with the variables of time, space and relationships. The following section highlights some key issues identified within the JCTP. As each component element is dependent on all the others, all must be considered concurrently.

The JCTP emphasises the importance of land (and environmental resources) for underpinning cultural-tourism aspirations at Jumbun. At present the tour is limited to community land including the new 'Keeping Place' and Moombay, as a traditional campsite with recreational infrastructure suitable for tourism. The Girramay and Jirral people ranged widely throughout their Country according to natural cycles and ceremonial and trading responsibilities (Dixon and Koch 1996). With so much environmental degradation since European settlement, the Moombay walking track provides a rare opportunity to share Indigenous environmental and cultural knowledge of lowland rainforest plants and animals and their associated role in Dyrbal culture for food, ceremony, cultural materials, hunting, etc. For example, the construction of *mija* ('living places') made from a variety of different plant materials provides an opportunity to maintain this cultural skill as a lived-experience (since they are no longer used for camping). The development of a business plan to accompany the JCTP will require documentation of the requirements for collection of materials for constructing and maintaining *mija*. This will also require strategic consideration of necessary permits to ensure that access to other sites in Girramay Country, including sites within the WTWHA, can be undertaken on a regular and legal basis.

The environmental resources used within the tour are highly reliant on the maintenance of Dyrbal knowledge systems. The continuing involvement of Girramay and Jirral Elders will be essential for the development of Aboriginal tourism at Jumbun.

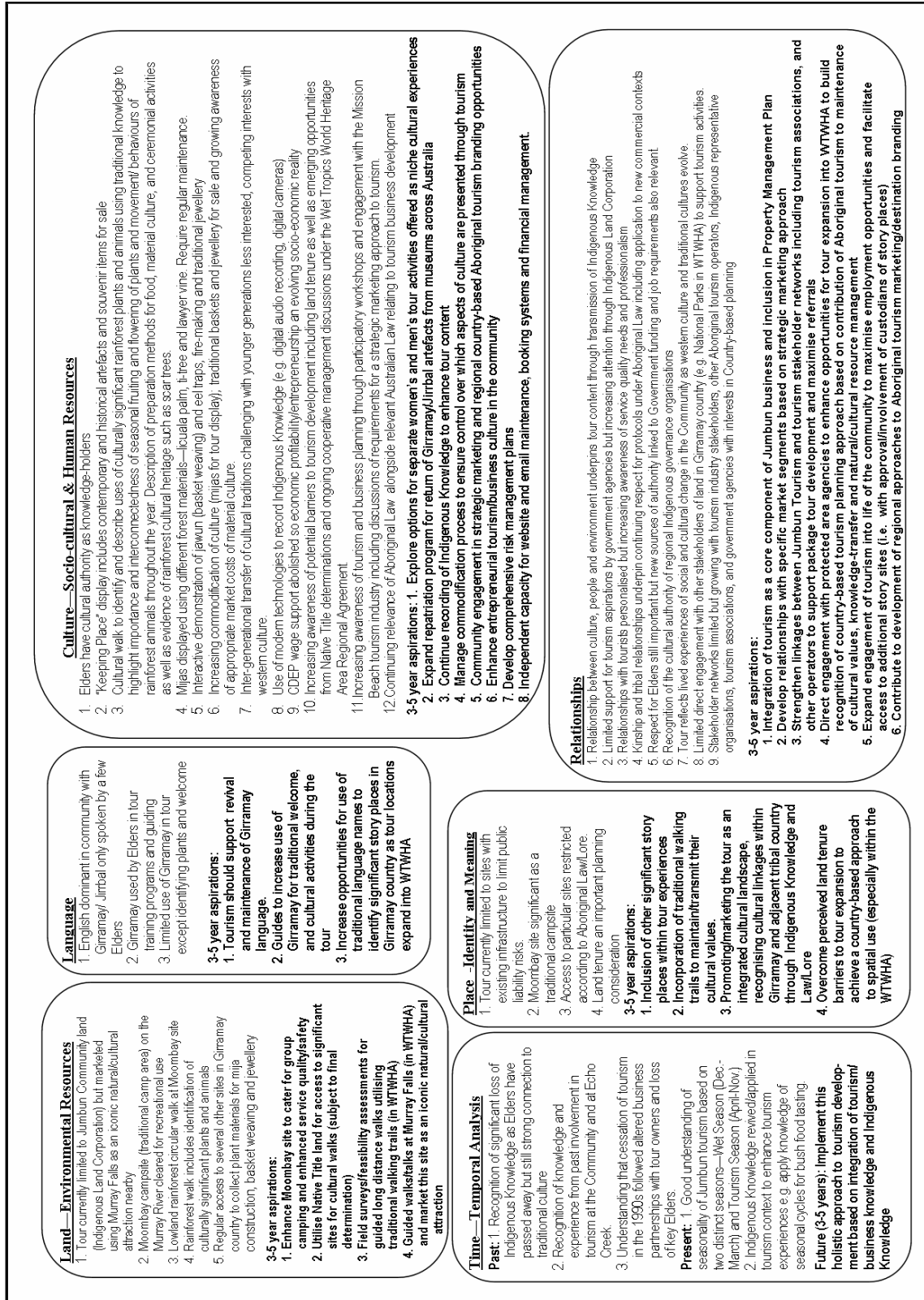


Figure 7.7: Jumbun cultural tourism plan



Indigenous knowledge will enhance the tour experience based on the Elders' knowledge of natural cycles. For example the collection of seasonal fruits will require forward planning to identify suitable sites and minimise environmental impact by visiting a range of sites throughout a season.

The Jumbun guides aspire to an expansion of the land (environmental resources) that can be utilised for tourism to enhance the cultural heritage significance or 'place meaning' within their tourism activities. For example, the identification of culturally significant sites that may become available for tourism access after the upcoming Girramay Native Title determination was an important consideration during planning workshops. In addition, the community are keen to continue cultural heritage surveys and tourism feasibility assessments of long distance walking trails in the WTWHA, such as the Juburinny and Gayjul Tracks, that have significant cultural values. Such long-distance walks would expand the opportunities for tourism to contribute to the sharing of Indigenous knowledge relating to those areas of Country. Similarly, the nearby Murray Upper National Park has as its main attraction the iconic Murray Falls. This is a sacred site which forms part of many stories from the *jujaba* or time of creation, that link the spiritual life of Girramay/Jirrbal people with every part of the landscape including rock formations, waterfalls, valleys, mountains and watercourses (Dixon and Koch 1996). Apart from a walk to a lookout above the falls (currently closed), there is almost no recognition of the falls as a sacred site to the Girramay and Jirrbal peoples.

Until very recently there was a strong perception within the Jumbun Community that they were unlikely to have any involvement in planning and managing tourism in those parts of Girramay Country outside of their direct control, such as the WTWHA including Murray Falls. This has limited their tourism aspirations in the past. The JCTP indicates that Jumbun residents have begun to realise the considerable potential of tourism in revitalising their connection to place from a Country perspective. This can be achieved in part through the expansion of tourism activities to include visiting significant story places within the WTWHA. The community has begun negotiating with their Elders to explore new opportunities provided by tourism for the sharing of Indigenous knowledge and associated stories. The JCTP recognises the importance of involving those Elders who speak for Country associated with particular stories to be featured in the tour. Expanding the tour to include visiting Murray Falls would provide an opportunity to share the rich cultural values associated with such stories to educate visitors about Girramay Country as an integrated cultural landscape, while still respecting restrictions and protocols under Aboriginal Law/Lore.

The maintenance and revival of Dyirbal languages is a critical consideration for the sustainable development of Jumbun Aboriginal Tours. There were many fluent speakers of Dyirbal dialects in the 1960s when Dixon (1972) undertook his research. Today, language is rapidly being lost as the few Elders who remain fluent have limited opportunity to pass on their language to younger generations. Language is embedded in the Country through Indigenous knowledge. While the current modest tourism operations focussed on the Moombay site provide some opportunity for the learning of language and therefore transfer of the Indigenous knowledge of that area, this is a tiny part of Girramay/Jirrbal Country. As fewer members of the Jumbun Community range through Country for resource collection, the knowledge of language names for sites and resources on Country are increasingly difficult to maintain. The Jumbun guides aspire to access greater areas of their Country through tourism activities, as an opportunity to visit and share more of their sites. This will enhance opportunities for maintaining language which has a specific place-based context. By generating an economic value associated with learning traditional language, its survival becomes more likely.

Realising aspirations for greater use of Dyirbal language on Country will require the support and engagement of protected area managers of the WTWHA. The maintenance of languages requires regular access to all parts of Country regardless of tenure. The learning of traditional language by younger Owners will continue to underpin the maintenance of Aboriginal cultural values within the WTWHA. Support for language-learning programs is not currently recognised by protected area managers as an important component of cultural heritage management. A good starting point for proactive policy-making in this area will be the renaming of sites within the WTWHA using language names, to promote awareness of Indigenous languages and, by extension, support Aboriginal tourism market development. This aspiration was also identified by Smyth (2002) in developing cultural indicators for the WTWHA based on a pilot project with the Jumbun community during 2001.

Culture is a critical component of the JCTP, which charts how culture can underpin sustainable cultural heritage development (Galla 2006). In particular, the JCTP identifies the valuable role that tourism can play in supporting the inter-generational transfer of Indigenous knowledge, with the Elders as knowledge-holders. The Jumbun 'Keeping Place' provides an opportunity to maintain the cultural and historical knowledge associated with artefacts and the methods of their use. In addition, cultural tourism provides an economic basis for the continuation of cultural traditions such as basket weaving, *mija* construction, food preparation methods, traditional jewellery etc. Tourism has also given the community a greater sense of how their cultural traditions can be commodified and valued within a market economy. By including reference to this process of commodification, the plan empowers the community to decide for itself how they will sell and market their culture, rather than allowing outside interests such as the tourism industry to exert control over their cultural tourism activities.

The Jumbun community's continuing interest in the possibilities of tourism has coincided with an increased awareness of the necessity for a strong business and entrepreneurial culture to underpin their cultural tourism aspirations. With the closure of the CDEP program in June 2007, only those Jumbun residents with a genuine entrepreneurial interest in tourism continued in the tourism training and planning programs. This continues to be a learning process as the guides experience how difficult it is to develop a financially viable tourism business without wage-support. Alongside the growing entrepreneurial culture within the Jumbun Community, it has become increasingly important that all activities related to tourism have an economic valuation. This complements the generally held view that a business plan is founded on the principle that a sustainable business must be underpinned by a full economic valuation of the business' component elements. However, Indigenous tourism business plans rarely integrate a full economic valuation of the tourism enterprise in line with the 'hybrid' economy model of Altman (2003). From this perspective, the JCTP can be used to identify those 'customary' activities that are crucial parts of the tour, such as the regular construction and maintenance of the *mija*. These tourism opportunities may compensate to some extent for the loss of customary economic values associated with traditional resource rights such as hunting and collection of wild resources, while still maintaining the cultural heritage values of these resources. The business plan will need to provide an economic valuation of the time taken for collecting materials required for constructing a *mija* or other aspects of Dyirbal culture included in the tour. The critical importance of the Elders' involvement in the tour must be included in the business plan relating to necessary human resources and skill sets. For example, Elders will need to continue to play an important role in ensuring that tourism activities are undertaken in accordance with cultural protocols under Aboriginal law/lore.

More than anything, the realisation of the JCTP will require the development of strong and lasting relationships. This view is supported by participatory action research in Cape York by Bennett and Gordon (2007) who demonstrated how the generation of social capital was crucial for the generation of Indigenous entrepreneurship to underpin the sustainable development of Guurrbi Tours. Similarly, the research team has been instrumental in facilitating a range of partnerships with key stakeholders of Jumbun Aboriginal Tours and assisted in identifying other relationships that will need to be fostered as the tour planning and development program continues.

In the JCTP are outlined some key relationships whose continuation or building will be crucial in supporting the business development of Jumbun Aboriginal Tours including: intra-community relations based on respect for kinship and cultural authority of the Elders; government support agencies; specific tourist market segments; tourism industry stakeholders; protected area agencies; and Indigenous governance organisations. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to explore all of these. The focus over the last year has been on developing strong intra-community relations to ensure that the Jumbun guides have a strong support network among their family, and kinship relations with the Jumbun community and Dyirbal people in general. The success of this can be appreciated by the ongoing support and involvement of Dyirbal Elders such as Ernie Grant and professional tourism personnel at the Echo Creek enterprise. As the tour planning process has evolved, a broader support network has become a necessity. The development of strong relationships with tourism industry support networks, such as Local Tourism Organisations, and industry partners, such as accommodation providers, are already a feature of Jumbun Aboriginal Tours and will be crucial for the tour reaching its market potential. Wherever possible these industry partners have provided research feedback to the Jumbun guides and research team through Visitor Surveys. However, it is those stakeholders who can support the holistic Country-based perspectives identified in the JCTP that are particularly relevant to this review.

The Jumbun community's support for regional Indigenous governance provides an important basis from which to build awareness and support for Country-based planning approaches. The Giringun Aboriginal Corporation continues to be an innovative organisation in supporting Indigenous land and sea management in the region. Giringun continues to foster strong linkages between its member Owner groups and Indigenous organisations seeking out new opportunities for collaborative management of Country. This research project has demonstrated how a Country-based approach to tourism planning can support cultural-heritage development aspirations. The research team have gauged high levels of support by other Country-based Aboriginal tourism operators in the Giringun region (including Echo Adventures and Cultural Camp and Mungalla Aboriginal Tours) for Giringun to represent their tourism-related interests in Country with relevant stakeholders including protected area managers.

The engagement of the WTMA and its partner government agencies will be a priority for fostering a Country-based approach to tourism planning as enunciated in the JCTP. Protected area managers in World Heritage Areas have a responsibility to ensure that as state signatories to the World Heritage Convention, management policies protect the natural and cultural heritage of World Heritage values for all time. The WTMA (2007) has a primary goal to:

... provide for the implementation of Australia's international duty for the **protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation and transmission** to future generations of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area.

While the region's Aboriginal cultural heritage values were not specifically recognised in the listing on the World Heritage List, the WTMA is bound to include

their consideration in all management decisions under the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement (WTMA 2005). There is a potential here for management agencies to provide support to Aboriginal cultural-heritage aspirations through a revision of zoning schemes. Such revision would recognise the variety of Aboriginal cultural-tourism opportunities in the WTWHA based upon the distinct cultural diversity of the eighteen tribal groups whose Country intersects with the WTWHA. Potential models for such a scheme include the Aboriginal Cultural Opportunity Spectrum proposed by Sofield and Birtles (1992). Such a zoning scheme could be used in combination with Grant's (1998) framework to provide a participatory Country-based approach to cultural tourism planning within the WTWHA, to ensure that tourism supports the protection and transmission of Aboriginal cultural heritage values.

This discussion has identified the potential role of Jumbun Aboriginal Tours in supporting the maintenance and transmission of Aboriginal cultural heritage values of their Country, including those areas within the WTWHA. There is an opportunity here for additional research to identify how Aboriginal cultural tourism may assist the WTMA in meeting its obligations to Aboriginal cultural-heritage values. For example, a research project could compare the effectiveness of different interpretive mediums employed in the WTWHA, such as Traditional Owner-guided tours versus signage.

This discussion has provided a starting point for Giringun to assert the rights of Traditional Owners in Country-based tourism planning and management. It demonstrates how tourism planning on Country can be undertaken using a framework capable of integrating Aboriginal cultural-heritage values using Dyrbal knowledge systems. There is an opportunity here for Giringun to explore how these cultural-heritage/cultural-tourism principles can support the development of protected area management policies that institute this Country-based approach. Giringun is keen to work with protected area managers to broaden this development process. In particular, Giringun has considered options for the implementation of a cultural-accreditation program for Country-based Aboriginal cultural-tourism operators in the Giringun region. The identification of accreditation criteria could also be based on a variant of Grant's framework and using a guided self-assessment package that would then require validation and endorsement by the Giringun Board. Such programs would assist protected area managers to assess the management contribution of Aboriginal cultural-tourism operators in the 'protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation and transmission' (WTMA 2007) of Aboriginal cultural-heritage values. In time, such a program could be extended to the broader (non-Indigenous) tourism sector to promote the benefits of Country-based tourism planning. Protected area managers will play a crucial role in supporting Giringun's efforts to develop and promote this holistic approach.

The development of 'cooperative Country-based approaches to Aboriginal tourism marketing' is identified in the JCTP as an important aspiration encompassing a range of stakeholder relationships. This aspiration has linkages to Zeppel's (2001) argument that the construction of Aboriginal cultural-heritage landscapes is undertaken by heritage agencies, protected area managers, the tourism industry and by Indigenous groups. The JCTP contains a Country-based vision for tourism development. However, a single Aboriginal tourism operator will struggle to project its particular cultural heritage construction of Country into the marketplace. The strengthening of all of the relationships identified in the JCTP will be important for developing co-operative Country-based approaches to Aboriginal tourism marketing. An essential first step is the strengthening of relationships between Aboriginal tourism operators in the Giringun region, to promote collectively the value of a Country-based perspective that links them

to each other and to the landscape through Indigenous knowledge and respect for Aboriginal law/lore. Girringun has already taken a lead role in facilitating these links between Traditional Owner-driven tourism ventures to ensure that regional marketing approaches communicate the interconnectedness of the Girringun region as an integrated Aboriginal cultural landscape with a respect for Aboriginal knowledge.

Further research into the beliefs held by visitors to the Girringun region about the Aboriginal cultural values associated with the area and available cultural tourism opportunities will support the development of an audience-relevant Aboriginal tourism marketing strategy for the Girringun region. Insights from the community-based social marketing field, pioneered in environmental psychology by McKenzie-Mohr (2000) provide a strong conceptual basis for developing such a research project.

This research demonstrates the value of Country-based perspectives within Aboriginal cultural tourism planning. The integration of Dyirbal Indigenous knowledge systems has supported the development of an innovative participatory planning approach based on Grant's (1998) holistic education framework. This Country-based approach to cultural tourism planning is conceptually linked to sustainable cultural heritage development perspectives that derive their developmental agendas using local knowledge and worldviews. The results of this detailed case study present protected area managers with a range of challenges and opportunities to ensure that the richness of Aboriginal cultural values is appropriately managed and interpreted within protected areas. Identifying avenues to strengthen the engagement of these managers within the planning and ongoing development of Aboriginal cultural-tourism businesses is a continuing objective. Only through closer involvement with the custodians of Indigenous knowledge will protected area managers find new meaning for these old values, to ensure their continuing relevance within the management and interpretation of protected areas.

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William Hyams  
C/o James Cook University  
<[william.hyams@jcu.edu.au](mailto:william.hyams@jcu.edu.au)>

Ernie Grant  
Jirrbal Elder

Alastair Birtles  
James Cook University

Peter Valentine  
James Cook University