



# DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS IN REMOTE NORTH AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES

**Indigenous research and leadership in Ramingining and Galiwin'ku**

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**ARPNet**

Aboriginal Research Practitioners' Network



**NAILSMA**

**NORTH AUSTRALIAN  
INDIGENOUS  
LAND AND SEA  
MANAGEMENT  
ALLIANCE**



Version	Release history	Date
1.0	Initial release of document	24/05/2021



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Industry, Science,**  
**Energy and Resources**

**AusIndustry**  
 Cooperative Research  
 Centres Program

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**Publisher:**

Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC

May 2021

Citation: Sithole B, Campion OB, James G, Burton D, Dhamarrandji M & Hunter-Xenie H (2021) Developing effective emergency management partnerships in remote north Australian communities - final project report, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC, Melbourne.

Cover: ARPNet participatory workshops.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDR	Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience
ARDS	Aboriginal Research and Development Service
ARPNet	Aboriginal Research Practitioners Network
AFAC	Australasian Fire & Emergency Services Authorities Council
BNHCRC	Bushfires & Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre
BFNT	Bush Fires Northern Territory
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CDU	Charles Darwin University
DDA	Dalkarra and Djirrikay Authority
DFES	Western Australian Department of Fire and Emergency Services
DBCR	Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research
EM	Emergency Management
ER	Emergency Response
IEO	Indigenous Engagement Officer
PAR	Participatory Action Research
QFES	Queensland Department of Fire and Emergency Services
NAILSMA	North Australian Indigenous Land & Sea Management Alliance Ltd
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NLC	Northern Land Council
NTES	Northern Territory Emergency Services
NTG	Northern Territory Government
RAF	Research Advisory Forum



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the commitment and interest of Yolngu and Bininj<sup>1</sup> (Aboriginal people from east Arnhem Land and central and west Arnhem Land respectively) involved in this Partnerships Project over the last few years. The local Indigenous research and leadership groups took on this work for their own purposes with their communities and kin, in consideration of persistent and increasing imposition of 'external' (non-Indigenous) influence over, and behavioral expectations imposed upon Indigenous people in their communities.

Many key Bininj and Yolngu have passed away during this project. We acknowledge their influence and importance to this work and its vision to change the nature of community governance and the relationships between their communities and the myriad of agencies offering services. This homegrown leadership favors local knowledge, capability, values and interests to ensure stronger relationships and better outcomes in emergency management (EM) and other sectors.

We also acknowledge the BNHCRC for critical support provided to this project, our engaging and supportive key End User Ken Baulch on behalf of Bushfire NT, and unwavering comradery from Charles Darwin University (CDU)'s Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research. Red Cross staff at Galiwin'ku and senior management in Darwin/Alice Springs made invaluable contributions to the project and we acknowledge and thank them dearly for their efforts and support. ARPNet acknowledges support from the Research Institute for Environment and Livelihoods (RIEL) at CDU for all the support during the project. We also acknowledge the collaboration with Stephen Sutton on the BNHCRC training project.

In memory of all the Elders that passed before the completion of the project.

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<sup>1</sup> Yolngu and Bininj are both local words meaning 'person' and 'people'. Yolngu is derived from the lingua franca generally of East Arnhem Land, including Galiwin'ku, and Bininj from the lingua franca generally of west Arnhem Land, including Ramingining.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### CONTEXT

Through extensive consultations undertaken with regional EM agency and Indigenous community partners across northern Australia under the banner of the BNHCRC, it has been established that an ongoing priority is to support the building of more effective EM agency-community partnership arrangements in remote communities, based on empowerment of and better engagement with community governance structures.

One identified key EM issue for remote communities is the need to be able to empower customary governance structures as a basis for developing and articulating community priorities and needs. To complement this, an identified key issue for EM agencies is to better understand how to effectively engage with community governance arrangements.

This project explored community governance issues and aspirations among Bininj and Yolngu in two major communities of central and east Arnhem Land NT. In recognising persistent and systemic marginalisation issues, such as poor communication and engagement, both Ramingining and Galiwin'ku project leaders sought to provide a stronger foundation for partnerships at community level and a clear direction to EM and other agencies to adopt for more effective and mutually beneficial partnership arrangements in service delivery.

The project in Ramingining, central Arnhem, was facilitated by and undertaken through the engagement of community based Indigenous researchers from the Aboriginal Research Practitioners Network (ARPN) at Research Institute for Environment and Livelihoods (RIEL) at Charles Darwin University. In Galiwin'ku, east Arnhem, Yalu (a community developed research organisation) partnered with the North Australian Land and Sea Management Alliance Ltd. (NAILSMA) to start the project, later joined and directed by senior Yolngu leaders. All work was conducted on Country, whether in the town areas or at regional homelands.

### APPROACH

Research in Galiwin'ku and Ramingining employed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach, unique in the context of research efforts in Australia, but more accommodating to local Indigenous perspectives, circumstances and sensitivities than 'mainstream' research. PAR is a generalised approach, adaptable in each setting, that engages the research participants in the design and operation of the research and as beneficiaries. Research and utilisation often merge, delivering secondary benefits (planned and unplanned) along the way: local jobs and training, increased community confidence, better engagement and project transparency, more resources 'sticking' in the community etc. The tendency for PAR to engage numbers of local people and for it to align with local timeframes may make it a more costly exercise than merely 'sending in' researchers, though in the remote communities where trained PAR practitioners live, the issue of costliness may be more perception than reality. Needless-to-say, the outcomes justify the approach. Further characteristics of the PAR approaches in these 2 projects are discussed below.



The PAR approach captured important historical anecdotes revealing that engagement in the Mission era prior to 1970, for example (substantially due to mission personalities), was held in much higher regard than the engagement in the post-Land Rights era from 1976 onwards. The reasons for this are not explicitly explored in this report, suffice it to say that processes of bureaucratisation, creating dependence, increasing centralisation of populations and desensitised administration from afar are important contributors to the erosion of local governance and productive engagement<sup>2</sup>. The advent of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act of 1976 was a game changer for Indigenous rights and interests, but the development of resilience at the community level was impacted by other factors and processes, explored in this work, often contradicting the aspirations of many, promised in the land rights era.

The PAR approach also enabled nuanced understanding of the cross-cultural context in which EM operates and a constructive view of a Yolngu-led pathway to much needed change.

Finally, the PAR approach enabled practical use of mid-stream research results by community leaders (who are also research recipients). In Galiwin'ku, leaders adapted the work to explore and develop an independent and credible voice for Yolngu authority, manifest in the DDA, while in Ramingining, experienced community based PAR practitioners drew their tools from The ARPNet Dilly Bag (a set of tools adapted for use by Aboriginal researchers) and used these tools to explore issues around emergency response ensuring wide participation (see below). These outcomes may not have been possible using mainstream research methods.

The related work that NAILSMA, ARPNet and CDU undertook to scope interest and opportunities at government and agency level was critical in engaging them in the work Yolngu and Bininj were developing. Numerous discussions and fora were held with Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australian and Federal Government agencies working in emergency management and with NGOs, particularly Australian Red Cross.

It was important to recognise that the research would not deliver outcomes for the main user groups (Aboriginal community groups and government agencies needing to improve the provision of critical services) except where active partnerships were or could become a common goal amongst the stakeholders in the action research endeavor.

## ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

This project examined partnerships between communities and EM agencies through the example of the preparation and response to two cyclones, Lam and Nathan, that struck east and central Arnhem Land in 2015 – a good example because of underlying issues that became apparent in the months after cyclones Lam and Nathan occurred.

With the aim of creating a stronger foundation for partnerships between community and EM and other agencies, the research teams undertook a range

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<sup>2</sup> For more discussion on this topic in the Galiwin'ku research projects see Dhamarrandji A M, Maypalama E, Burton D. (2017) Burrumalala (Strong Winds) Research Project Report.



of activities, both prescribed and reflexive, all contributing to important outcomes or goals:

- Numerous workshops, meetings and discussions were held locally, with a diverse group of agencies, and between collaborating communities. These have contributed enormously to building stronger connections between and beyond communities and impact positively on local governance.
- Researchers were involved in formal and informal leadership training, improving leadership confidence and abilities. They participated in the BNHCRC project to develop materials for more effective leadership training on Country which produced novel ideas and models for training.
- The shared learning workshops between Galiwin'ku and Ramingining were greatly appreciated by participants, expressing greater confidence, sense of mutual support and self-governing capacity.
- A number of tools developed to improve local EM capability have resonated within and between the two research projects, and with some key EM agency leaders.
- Research leaders have been advocating their work at conferences and seminars, with a view to improving their exposure, recognition and promoting better engagement between EM and other agencies and remote communities. These goals also apply to persistent dissemination of the research story and results, locally and to the EM sector. This is attracting positive attention and potential opportunity for future progress in partnership building and resilience.

## FINDINGS

There were a number of manifest and many more subtle findings from the research, summarised in the table below.

Focusing on preparation and response to natural hazards such as cyclones does not address underlying issues with community resilience and well-being.
Key ingredients for community resilience include healthy social, cultural and economic assets.
Indigenous authority is being eroded faster now than ever and many people are disengaging from service providers and the complexities of managing their community.
Service provision across agencies (EM and others) lacks coordination and transparency and erodes Yolngu community confidence and engagement.
There is poor communication and transparency between EM agencies and Yolngu/Bininj people.
EM and other agencies are keen to improve engagement with Aboriginal community leaders but lack understanding of how best to achieve this, and what benefits change in engagement logic would produce.



Yolngu are keen to engage better and willing to help find pathways to help agencies do this.
Community Emergency Management plans are not easily accessible to Yolngu people in communities (physically or linguistically).
Issues that hamper relationship building tend to be systemic. Initiatives towards improving relationships tend to be personality driven, rather than whole-of-agency driven.
Yolngu and Bininj leaders need dedicated infrastructure to function more effectively and securely in the long term.
There is a lack of appropriate local tools for engagement and EM operation.
Local capability is largely ignored in EM response and recovery.
There is poor cultural literacy amongst EM and other agents.

Whilst the Yolngu/Bininj research focused on responses to cyclones Lam and Nathan, in Galiwin'ku and Ramingining, it quickly became important to reflect on the status of Yolngu/Bininj leadership, authority and decision-making and the processes they feel are eroding their values and community well-being. Whilst the influences on their authority in community management are highly complex (cultural, economic and historical), the research confirmed a core of deleterious issues around colonial agency virtually unanimously expressed by respondents.

Community leaders concluded that they needed to reinstate Yolngu/Bininj authority based in customary law, to provide a forum or foundation for partnership through which EM and other agencies can offer and deliver services more effectively. Interpretation of this need, though consistent in principle, differed in the two project areas.

Experiences from cyclones Lam and Nathan strongly suggest the value of engaging with existing Aboriginal governance structures. Bininj and Yolngu have a great deal to offer hazard assessment, preparation and response and are pushing for equitable and authoritative involvement in all aspects of EM management as the only way to maximise positive EM outcomes. Local knowledge, skills and other assets should be engaged and developed to achieve more effective EM outcomes. What this looks like in each place will be unique.

## UTILISATION

Significant challenges in utilisation are triggering reflection on how EM (and other) agencies deliver their services; prompting a shift in awareness as to what Indigenous community members require for long term improvement in safety, well-being and prosperity; and developing the tools of engagement, trust and respect to achieve greater success and mutual benefit in service delivery. Although some agencies express interest, there is little evidence of understanding or genuine desire for change that would stimulate meaningful reform. Bininj and Yolngu are ready to work on developing an agreed approach to strengthen governance around EM and they need relevant agencies to take



them seriously. Concomitantly, they are keen to develop materials and strategies, and apply effort to assist EM agencies to understand their circumstances and the principles and benefits of successful community engagement.

ARPNNet, NAILSMA and DCBR (Darwin Centre for Bushfire Research) have been working in parallel across other jurisdictions of northern Australia, and in government spheres in the NT, to understand the challenges to and help progress more equitable and functional relationships in the emergency management space. This 'global' part of the project story is of significant interest to leadership groups in Ramingining and Galiwin'ku who seek the opportunity within the NT Partnership Projects to engage directly with emergency management leadership. It has also given them a sense of common interest and comradery with countrymen in other communities, including some interstate, and raised an awareness for future possibilities in their own endeavors – such as engagement of their Ranger groups directly in aspects of hazard preparation, response and recovery.

## NEXT STEPS

This BNHCRC research project is now complete, but for Bininj and Yolngu this important effort over the last few years has created a foundation for real change. Although they see a long road ahead, their findings provide some clarity now about what needs to be done. The project has identified key issues impeding efficiency in emergency management and response, and the delivery of more desirable outcomes for remote Indigenous communities. In order to progress the dialogue created by this research, toward more practical and tangible end-use outcomes, the 'next steps' of a broader project need to be realised. They can be summarised as:

Draft/complete tools for communication, education, and EM action.
Seek long term commitment to support partner/engagement process.
Clarify and pursue additional research needed.
Identify opportunities to share experience with other communities and plan a scaling-up process.
Pursue and expand local leadership and EM practitioner training.
Design and seek investment for dedicated leadership centres for training, planning, meetings/workshops, coordination etc.
Further engage ranger organisations in the conversation, planning and capability building and in Ramingining, drawing on the BNHCRC's <i>Northern Australian bushfire and natural hazard training</i> project, on lessons learned regarding clan-based learning and capacity building.
Continue and extend relationship with NTES and others.



## INVESTMENT NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Next steps and future developments in resilience and partnership-building require investment. The project could not drill down to investment planning detail but did broadly consider investment needs and opportunities emanating from the findings and suggested actions. These ideas are summarised in the table below.

Human time and effort to progress local and collaborative work, including meetings, workshops, planning sessions etc.
Opportunities for collaborative engagement between and with remote communities and EM agencies
Material and production costs for comms and other tools
Infrastructure dedicated to Yolngu/Bininj multi-function work needs (training, workshopping, data, information and other keeping place, leadership hub)
Training, capability building and education (local and agency focused)
Scaling up capability
Local leadership center/ vehicles
Ranger group capability building/clan-based capacity building
Future research capability



## END-USER PROJECT IMPACT STATEMENT

From the start, the participatory action research approach adopted in Ramingining and in Galiwin'ku assumed community ownership of the project, the process and its outcomes. With the benefit of support from these projects the unique and significant needs of these two communities were able to be more clearly defined so that strategic research and responses to those needs could inform healing and progress towards local well-being aspirations. By virtue of this these two communities consider themselves the primary end users.

The disempowerment, relative poverty, poor service delivery, erosion of cultural values and secondary impacts of the colonial enterprise, such as conflict, dependency, vulnerability and substance abuse are well recognized as products of inequitable neo-colonial relationships. They are not caused by Yolngu/Bininj, though their manifestations in community are the subject of constant Yolngu/Bininj anxiety and efforts at remediation<sup>3</sup>. Despite agency personalities and good will, these ongoing issues are systemic. Yolngu and Bininj know this very well and as such much of their effort in these projects is aimed at creating tools and opportunities for EM and other agencies to rethink basic approaches to their relationship with communities – building partnerships from the ground up instead of imposing abstract authority from the outside and problem-solving from afar. In this respect the end user group of course includes key service providers, whose relative wealth, influence, responsibility and capability are a key to resolving equity issues and co-developing resilience. This is an important departure from the norm and has been an important contribution to the BNHCRC focus on utilisation.

## COMMUNITIES AS END-USERS

### Elders impact statement – Ramingining

When I am in Darwin, at the BNHCRC Utilisation workshop, I met up people from NTES, FR, Royal Commission Red Cross and scientists, friend and Queensland, NT Central Arnhem Land. Them Balanda wanting to talk, they want to know about us. I feel proud that we are talking, but I want to see more talking with countryman on country. The future in our own hands, I have been thinking about that statement and how we can make it happen. We shared our stories about our governance structure, how we can make governments agency to understand that this is what we want to make it happen. To move forward we need to fix the problem in our own communities from Island's and mainland to do that we need extra funding to do our own consultation we like to talk to everyone including Aboriginal organisation to move forward we need to think about how to bring money to make our own and to run business management and we want to keep our family in Safety place by connecting them back on country.

**Otto Champion**, *Ramingining, November 2020*

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<sup>3</sup>Dhamarrandji A M, Maypalama E, Burton D. (2017) Burrumulala (Strong Winds) Research Project – Galiwin'ku 2016. NAILSMA. Darwin, NT.



## Elders impact statement – Galiwin'ku

This project has supported Yolngu leaders at Galiwin'ku to once again find common ground and unite in one group with one spirit. Under this project the Yolngu community at Galiwin'ku has experienced the idea of peace, justice and good governance. Together as a Yolngu community we hope that Balanda will recognise and support these dreams by respecting Yolngu authority under Yolngu and Balanda law.

We need leaders of the emergency service agencies, and others like the Northern Land Council and other government leaders to come to us, the community leaders, just as this project has shown how. They need to show respect to the Yolngu community and talk to our leaders first before coming to deliver their services, doesn't matter who they are.

We are the holders and the keepers of Yolngu law. We are responsible for the land and the people. This project unites us with the common cause of protecting our rights, interests and values under the law. Yolngu leaders at Galiwin'ku are ready to begin again, working for each other, working with government and non-government agencies like emergency service agencies to regain the vision of our community.

The idea of working directly with emergency service leadership reminds us of the days when the missionaries helped Yolngu to build something good. Not like slaves, but teaching us like we were apprentices, finding our own way forward, that is what this project has been doing for us, that is our vision now. We would like to keep sharing our experience with Ramingining and other Yolngu communities here in the Territory and in Queensland and WA.

We have the power to help the emergency service providers do their job but they must see us, our law, our systems, our leaders. We can work hard to support good emergency management here at Galiwin'ku but that needs mutual respect, resources and the time so we can get it right. We want to take it further with this project but we need support, we have nothing. The agencies like the Emergency Services people are the ones who have all the resources. Most of us don't even have jobs or cars, or even a shelter to gather for our important meetings.

**Maratja Dhamarrandji and Ted Gondarra on behalf of Galiwin'ku community participants, Galiwin'ku, January 2021**

This project has made us proud, just like we were in the mission times when our minds and our sweat were worth something and Yolngu and Balanda worked together and we built a beautiful community. That is the measure that brings life and unity.

**Ted Gondarra, Galiwin'ku, December 2020**



## **BUSHFIRES NT (NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT) IMPACT STATEMENT**

Delivery of emergency management services in remote, predominately Indigenous, communities across northern Australia has long presented significant challenges for the emergency management sector.

These challenges largely stem from a range of well-known circumstances in remote communities. The sheer remoteness of many of these communities creates difficulties of access, particularly at times when emergency events are underway. Typically, the resources required to assist communities to undertake effective EM preparation are not available locally, and local capacity to respond to, or recover from, emergency events is not well developed.

The responsibilities of EM agencies in all aspects of emergency response are outlined in legislation. Regulatory frameworks exist for planning, preparation, response and recovery; to some extent, agencies are resourced to coordinate or carry out these functions. By and large, given the resources available and the prevailing regulatory framework, the staff of EM agencies undertake their responsibilities remarkably well. This project focused on two large coastal communities in the Top End of the Northern Territory. Both Galiwin'ku and Ramingining have suffered severe impacts from multiple cyclone weather events in recent years. This project has shown that there are significant shortfalls in the level of engagement between EM agencies and these communities. Highlighting these problems has already seen renewed efforts within NT Government agencies to recognise the complex cross cultural issues affecting engagement, and to find ways to engage better. A recent workshop brought remote community and EM agency representatives together in a very positive way. Commitments were made to work on building better engagement and to support local capacity building.

There is still some way to go, but it is clear that this project has been successful in identifying and highlighting problems and initiating improvements that will benefit both remote communities and EM agencies. It is clear that the project has been a resounding success.

**Ken Baulch**, *Bushfires NT, Northern Territory Government*



## INTRODUCTION

Natural hazards in the remote Northern Territory such as cyclones have arguably been managed as best as possible given the typically insubstantial relationships emergency management agencies have with traditional Aboriginal landowners and their wider communities. Preparation and response to the two cyclones, Lam (Feb. 19-20) and Nathan (March 22), that struck east and central Arnhem Land in 2015 are a case in point, prompting practical research into how we can strengthen existing governance arrangements in remote areas to promote and enrich such relationships. This project extends a suite of projects hosted by Charles Darwin University under the Northern Hub of the Bushfires and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre, collectively addressing 'building capacity in north Australian remote communities.

Under the collective theme of developing effective emergency management partnerships, the project focused on two of the several communities in Arnhem Land struck by cyclones Lam and Nathan – Galiwin'ku and Ramingining. Indigenous leadership in these communities were again struck by underlying issues effecting cultural authority, including poor consideration of community members as core players holding significant knowledge and other assets valuable to hazard preparation, response and community reconstruction. Whilst Galiwin'ku residents, for example, greatly appreciated the effective response delivered by EM agencies, the events and their aftermath also brought to the surface issues of lost cultural authority, disempowerment, and disengagement within the community. They keenly sought support for practical local efforts to better understand and address the trend of marginalization and dependence on external agency management. Similarly, in Ramingining, the elders felt a sense of powerlessness and shame to be onlookers for response efforts that they wished to be active participants of.

NAILSMA (Indigenous research and service provider, co-partner in the Northern Hub of the CRC and project manager) was in a position to offer administrative, logistical, mentoring and other support to Galiwin'ku's leadership. Yalu Maringithinyaraw is a local Yolngu organisation with research interests and capability that was the local host for the work.

ARPNet, an Indigenous research network of community based Aboriginal Research practitioners is hosted by RIEL at CDU. ARPNet researchers have worked together and developed an approach that emphasises putting the community first and have also adapted a set of PAR tools (the ARPNet Dilly bag) that they use. The Network trains, mentors and provides administrative support to a growing network of community-based Indigenous researchers, dedicated to relocating local research effort in local hands and improving the operation and outcomes of research for local communities and those that service them.

It's well recognised that strong similarities exist amongst communities across the NT and indeed the North, but that each place is unique. In this context, the projects at Galiwin'ku and Ramingining developed relatively independently but highlighted in their collective outcomes important messages for EM agency and others about navigating continuity and difference across Indigenous geographies in their policy making and operations.



It was broadly concluded that government and other agencies need to change the way they do business with Yolngu/Bininj by helping empower traditional owners and clan leaders and improve community engagement to produce more effective service delivery.

Concomitantly, NAILSMA, ARPNet and CDU sought to engage EM leadership across the North and in the BNHCRC community with the research developments as they unfolded in Galiwin'ku and Ramingining, and to inform the local researchers of the perspectives and logic driving EM organization in relevant jurisdictions. This parallel effort strengthened the strategic need to come together 'at the table' to work through practical, fundamental change in the way agencies and communities do business – a process anticipated as ongoing.

Recognising the resource-intensive nature of the work, connections were made with related projects to provide mutual support for project activities and partnerships. The overall objective of the project was to inform effective EM agency community partnership arrangements in remote communities based on enhanced understanding and empowerment of underlying community governance structures. Lessons learnt from the undertaking of this project were used to develop a 'protocols framework' to help inform the development of effective agency-community EM partnerships in remote community locations across northern Australia.

This research has identified a common set of core governance issues (see Findings below) and priorities needing to be acknowledged and addressed to improve implementation of emergency risk management arrangements in remote communities. This work has helped these remote communities, and hopefully others, find voice to more effectively engage in the emergency management conversation, and in partnership building at local and national levels. It has also shown that most agencies involved are open to, if not keenly interested in greater equity with communities in engagement but are uncertain and/or systemically blind to how they may initiate and progress real and effective change in remote EM. There is strong interest from the participating communities to continue their work and engage with other end-users in for example, enhanced local and regional-scale planning; the dissemination of quality, relevant and timely information; building partnership support for community level risk mitigation, disaster management and response. These projects provide a conceptual model and approach for scaling up the project of partnership building to other communities in the NT, WA and Qld, and a basis for understanding the costs and benefits involved in broadscale implementation. Project partners are seeking to progress current projects and offer their experience, skills, tools and relationships developed in these two community endeavors to other community groups seeking to improve the way they, EM and other agencies work together. Project partners believe this to be a good foundation for a regional and national framework approach for EM agency/community engagement and relationship building.



## BACKGROUND

Supporting Indigenous communities to prepare for emergencies is vital to the NT Emergency Services Sector. The majority of EM responses to natural disasters in the NT involve remote Indigenous communities, where resources and preparedness work are scarce in comparison to urban environments.

Aboriginal people make up 30% of the population in the Northern Territory with over 75% living remotely. Collectively their Land Trusts (exclusive Aboriginal freehold title) cover ~48% of the NT with access and rejuvenated rights and responsibilities to much of the rest under Native Title legislation. With low population densities and a broad range of hazards across many landscapes, local responses to emergencies are critical in supporting communities. On remote communities the non-Indigenous population is transient and much of the cyclone season coincides with school and Christmas holidays which, for many non-Indigenous residents is spent away from the community. Aboriginal residents ensure long-term stability to remote communities, acknowledging the reality of population movements and some urban drift. That notwithstanding, Aboriginal community members are often the least-well-resourced to prepare for, endure and recover from natural disasters and their skills and knowledge least-well recognised and incorporated into disaster risk reduction, response and community resilience discussion.

Strong and respectful relationships between community and emergency management organisations are vital to community resilience including:

- Acknowledgement and respect for customary ownership and obligation to land and sea estates.

- Good cross-cultural practice (including international standards such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, Free Prior and Informed Consent)

- Recognition of current and proposed landscape scale management, mitigating natural hazards.

- Acknowledgement of existing skills, knowledge, capacity and development of further skills and capabilities

- Recognition, respect and support for local and traditional governance systems

- The need to support livelihoods in EM practice.

- Equitable and effective partnerships

A community-led approach to building disaster resilience in the Northern Territory means communities drive the design, delivery and evaluation of their own interventions before, during and after emergencies. They operate in collaboration with emergency services agencies to learn from and inform local emergency management planning, and to seek sustainable livelihood options and support when additional resources are needed. This approach builds social connectedness, connects agencies to communities and places community and people at the centre of resilience building and emergency management.



In 2015 cyclones Lam and Nathan brought widespread destruction to the Arnhem Land communities of Galiwin'ku, Ramingining, Gapuwiyak and Milingimbi. In Galiwin'ku hundreds of people were displaced from their homes at a cost of approximately \$100 million, with re-construction continuing to this date. In the aftermath, research conducted by Yalu Maringithinyaraw Indigenous Corporation and the Aboriginal Research Practitioners Network (ARPNNet), Charles Darwin University (CDU) and NAILSMA, highlighted Yolngu and Bininj desire for recognition of their leadership, greater sense of control in emergency response and stronger relationships with emergency services organisations.

It is significant that the action research projects at Galiwin'ku and Ramingining, both supported by the BNHCRC, were initiated and developed independently from each other, used different research tools, developed different outputs and adopted different strategies for improving well-being (broadly understood) and resilience in natural hazard management. Yet, unsurprisingly for Yolngu and Bininj, issues and challenges in inter-cultural relations causing the underlying problems of inequality, disempowerment, erosion of local and cultural authority (see discussion below) are common to them. It is worth briefly discussing the importance of community uniqueness and similarity in this context.

### **BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT UNIQUENESS AND CONTINUITY**

Indigenous communities in any given region such as Arnhem Land are connected by a range of characteristics and factors that make them quite similar. Their populations and cultures stem predominantly from pre-colonial society where shared experiences in landscape, customary economy, ceremony and kinship prevail. Cultural and familial connectivity across vast landscapes engenders fairly common characteristics in contemporary communities and importantly carries numerous effective, seen and unseen skills and human assets into contemporary, for example emergency management, settings. Characteristics such as nuanced and multi-lingual communication, systems of responsibility and care through kin structures, highly developed local and traditional knowledge, strong authority structures and unique capacity for collaborative action, are features of community life. There are many other senses in which communities are similar also, such as; the kind of infrastructure, plant and machinery they have; the kind of social service provision; the existence of land management groups (rangers) in many places, reinvesting in cultural knowledge, increase familiarity of 'country' and its dynamics to new generations, investing in extensive training and passing-on / teaching cultural protocols.

A further common thread is of disempowerment, poverty and lack of effective engagement in broader political and economic society. As manifest in the policies and actions of government, Indigenous community people are characterized as a welfare concern. Indigenous people have been forced or enticed off their homelands into missions, buffalo camps and ration depots over the last century. This has grated against traditional systems and values, introduced destructive competition for resources and exacerbated perceptions of communities as dysfunctional by (poorly engaged) governments. This deficit perspective informs policy, like the NT Emergency Response (Intervention), and influences the nature of service delivery in communities. These and other



characteristics encourage the one-size-fits-all approach to service delivery and community engagement, assuming management and other cost efficiencies.

Each community is, however, unique – not despite commonalities, but largely because overall cultural strength is a function of place-based stories of creation and group integrity mutually supportive of others in the interdependent networks of kin and country. Ritual, language and authority are mainstays of this. Additionally, historical processes have affected communities in different ways; the brand of mission, State policy/legislative differences, land tenure, environment (e.g., island, coast or desert), resource availability (e.g., mines, major towns, tourism centres, communications infrastructure), key personalities etc. There are many ingredients of uniqueness.

The unique qualities of place cannot adequately be serviced by a blanket approach to service delivery. As this report indicates, the experiences of Galiwin'ku and Ramingining emergency management (EM) partnership projects, based on local perception of need and priority, are unique though none the less driven by concerns and characteristics common to both. This has been a natural and mutually supportive conversation between the two community projects that Yolngu/Bininj gain confidence and strength from – Galiwin'ku and Ramingining leaders know they don't act or speak alone. They feel connected and know what they have to offer is valuable and resonates with others further afield.



## RESEARCH APPROACH

The project builds substantially on previous experience and learnings from preceding scoping resilience and governance sub-project components undertaken as part of the early BNHCRC work. The strategy is focused initially on furthering current participating community and EM agency interests within the limits of this phase two round funding (2017-2020). Based on extensive consultations with EM agency and Indigenous community end users, the project was able to engage with remote Indigenous community experience from across northern Australia. There was recognition right from the start that the approach used among the Bininj by ARPNet and that used by NAILSMA and Yolngu researchers was unique. The approaches are described for each group in the sections below.

### APPROACH IN RAMINGINING WITH ARPNET

The project adopted a participatory action research approach. This means that although it started with an idea of what the project was about, community leaders decided the pace, the scope and the tools that were needed to achieve the broader aim of the project. Adopting an action research approach in Ramingining, meant that sometimes the project changed course when requests were made or when priorities changed. Thus, for example a discussion at Ramingining about what kind of leadership is needed for ER resulted in elders asking to get training on leadership for EM. Thus, they were able to push for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge and other local ideas and material in the BNHCRC handbook.

Consultations in Ramingining were facilitated by teams of experienced community-based Indigenous researchers led by Otto Bulmaniya Champion. The consultation strategy in respect of interviews was that the questions be simple enough for everyone to understand and relevant to produce meaningful and in-depth community discussion and feedback. The research teams worked hard to keep the conversation going in their respective communities over long enough time periods to ensure good exposure and opportunity to participate across the respective communities. The role of the community-based research teams was pivotal in targeting who in the community should and would be involved in the project.

From the start the team argued for:

- An open invitation where all consultations would be open to whoever was interested.
- broadening the focus beyond the rangers, towards a more inclusive program that included everyone.
- meetings and consultations at outstations where participation would be stronger, continuous and more consistent.
- a focus on everyone, irrespective of age, because reasonable response is community wide by nature, so involving everyone means everyone knows what they must do.



In Ramingining, the strategy was that the questions be simple enough for everyone to understand and relevant to produce meaningful and in-depth community discussion and feedback. During consultations, a broad schedule for the week was drawn up. The schedule was deliberately made flexible to allow for opportunism. For example, if there was a change to go hunting or collecting, the project discussed how decisions are made for a kangaroo drive and linked that to how decisions are made for ER. In another example, smoke in the distance could be used to discuss signs and responses to hazard. This made it possible to link everyday decision-making processes and structures to talk about ER structures and responses.

Visual tools for decision making were also used. We discussed how people would get information from one part of Ramingining to other parts and who was responsible for doing that. We also talked about the issue of access to EM resources and assets using the aerial photo to the left. Enthusiasm, for the map as a decision making tool made us commission a 3D map of Ramingining. However, we did not finalize the design of the tool or agree on where it should reside. Other tools included, focus group discussions, key interviews and diagramming.



RAMINGINING COMMUNITY

In these photos we are using diagramming to talk about community and the different agencies that come to work in the community. Picture 1 which is a pile of rocks was used to talk about the community – how the people and agencies see it. Clear that within the pile there are distinct divisions that are made resulting in not one but many communities. Unpacking what these sub-groups are is important for local leaders and for outside agencies if they want to be inclusive.



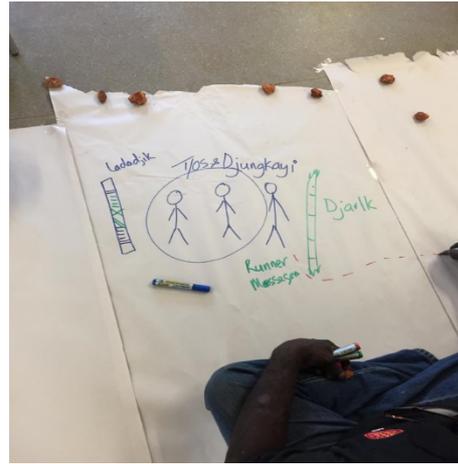
ARNPET PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOPS



ARNPET PAR WORKSHOP



ARPNET PAR WORKSHOP



ARPNET PAR WORKSHOP

The picture showing concentric circles was an interesting one as it got the group talking about various levels of organization/institution that are linked in with an organization that is found on the ground. These levels represent connections that are vital to maintaining good balance and relationships in the communities and most of the outer level organizations play out through inter community relationships or through ceremony and sorry business. Another use of the circles was the multiple levels of interest groups that are around an individual leader.

This can be overwhelming if that leader is not supported. The ladder is being used to discuss the relationship that leaders have with the community and other leaders. We are talking about how some members of the community get left behind, and how some leaders get overwhelmed as they climb higher on the ladder.



ARPNET PAR WORKSHOP



ARPNET PAR WORKSHOP

The sticks were used to explain how when there is collaboration there is a stronger outcome (when community and agencies work together the relationship is like that of a bundle of sticks, its unbreakable). Oldman Bobby is using his hand to explain what kind of relationship agencies can and could be having with the community.



## APPROACH IN GALIWIN'KU WITH NAILSMA

The project in Galiwin'ku was initiated by Yolngu leaders resulting in a Yolngu led process throughout. Further developments are anticipated at Galiwin'ku and will be driven by the Yolngu leaders that organized around the current project.

Following several discussions between community leaders and NAILSMA staff, the first formal step of the project was to develop a Project Concept Paper around the following themes:

- Provide a vehicle for Galiwin'ku people to give voice to issues, concerns and opportunities around the underlying nature of resilience and vulnerability within their community and cultural estates,
- Specifically, voice views and experiences about the impact, management and aftermath of the cyclones,
- Inform a discussion and proposed process for improving protocols for engagement between TOs, communities and government agencies such as emergency services, department of health, Police and Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics.
- Inform local discussion and empowerment within Galiwinku to improve those factors that add to resilience and mitigate vulnerabilities.

The initial concept paper was developed collaboratively between community leaders and NAILSMA staff.

From here a range of questions and discussion topics were designed by the community researchers:

1. Tell us your story about cyclones Lam and Nathan?
2. What was the best help Yolngu got when cyclones Lam and Nathan came to Galiwin'ku?
3. What did Yolngu do to help each other when cyclones Lam and Nathan came to Galiwin'ku?
4. How did Yolngu systems like Yolngu Matha (language), Gurrutu (kin system), Community Leaders, Community groups and community networks help?
  - How well did agencies understand Yolngu systems?
  - What was the impact of this?
5. Did agency responses to the cyclones help you feel resilient (strong and ready) or vulnerable (how weak and not ready).
  - Which agencies were they?
  - What responses were they?
  - How do you feel about big events like this now?
6. How much do you know about the agencies that work at Galiwin'ku?
  - Would it be useful to map all the agencies that work at Galiwin'ku?



- How do we improve engagement between Yolngu and those agencies?
  - What is the best way for Yolngu to get information they understand before events like cyclones come to Galiwin'ku?
  - What should government agencies and Yolngu do to make you feel stronger and ready?
  - How do we build resilience and improve well-being after big events?
7. How important do you think the following events have been at Galiwin'ku?
    - Missions
    - Land Rights/Government
    - Intervention
    - Cyclones
  8. Are there other big and powerful events that concern you?
  9. How did those events or processes affect Yolngu?
    - At Galiwin'ku
    - On homelands outside of Galiwin'ku
    - When they go away from Galiwin'ku to cities or other countries
  10. Is there anything else that should change on a daily basis to make you feel stronger and make things feel better at Galiwin'ku?
  11. How does the history of Galiwin'ku affect your ability to cope with events like these?
  12. How does traditional and historical knowledge improve the capability of Yolngu to live in modern times, especially during big events?

The questions and topics reflected researchers' familiarity with community experience and could be / were adapted as the research process evolved.

In Galiwin'ku the questions were quite complex, creating a comprehensive and robust community discussion. Yolngu researchers, working in nuanced Yolngu Matha, could manage this complexity and ensure all participants were happy with their and others level of understanding and response.

The next step was to develop a project research plan and methodology, including:

- Creation of a Steering Committee and terms of reference
- Budget plan
- Logistics



Adoption of a Yolngu ethics guide and approval process - based on the existing Yolngu-developed guide for research undertaken at Galiwin'ku<sup>4</sup>.

A project brief and consent form for participants.

Conversation topics (in various forms) ready to take to participants for discussion.

A list of target groups and/or individuals to be approached to participate as respondents in the project.

A consultation strategy identifying the processes and tools to be employed for conducting discussion groups, talking to people and collecting data - such as written, audio, photographic and video recordings.

Methodology for translating the data into a format suitable for an English speaking audience – necessary because the research would be conducted in local language (Yolngu-matha), but the audience includes NAILSMA researchers, BNHCRC researchers and other relevant stakeholders and interest groups.

Other stakeholders and parties interested in this project were identified and consulted or noted for future consultation needs. This included agencies or groups that may have been interested in the project, helpful to it, or planning to undertake their own related research. Australian Red Cross and Aboriginal Resource Development Service for example, played important roles in supporting parts the Galiwin'ku traditional owners and clan leaders in parts of the initiative, adding strength to this project.

The project budget was developed to ensure the maximum benefit could be achieved by this research within the limit of funds that were available. NAILSMA's offer to support and administer the budget, provide logistical and other support were negotiated with Yolngu.

All research work was done in and around the community. Many discussions were planned and undertaken in households and times that suited respondents (eg after work or dinner, around quiet times from ceremony, after school and other child responsibilities etc). Discussions were often opportunistic and taking place in preferred locations such as under 'meeting trees' and public shelters. Data organisation, debriefings and planning sessions took place most evenings.

Inherent in the approach was the intended capacity to develop opportunities based on the first phase of research. The approach was always to treat the information and ideas discussed as cumulative, to feedback regularly and to maximise the use of that local input for addressing issues raised where Yolngu saw this as desirable. A key development stemming from the 'local ownership approach' was to consider and animate a Yolngu decision-making body (the DDA, discussed in Findings below). The participatory action research approach

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<sup>4</sup> Rather than focusing on University standards and processes for ethics (through an Human Research Ethics Committee) that are typically abstract for and incomprehensible to the local community, it was important to community leaders that a locally designed ethics process was used to guide the research, in line with the protocols, values and expectations of the Yolngu community.



had informed and enabled a strong and specific response towards greater Yolngu well-being, not anticipated at the start of the project – an outcome arguably not possible under mainstream research methods. Upon completion of the research phase of the project a comprehensive report was developed to capture and disseminate critical findings. This report was submitted to and published online by the BNHCRC in 2017.<sup>5</sup>

With the end of the BNHCRC project and without ongoing investment able to be secured in the timeframe available, the DDA leadership group is left largely inactive. Local recognition and support remains firm, but the overall project did not have time or money to develop formal relationships with EM and other agencies, as was planned, that would afford interest in new partnership and investment into the future.

This table describes some of the key characteristics of the PAR approach at Galiwin'ku and Ramingining.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Key practitioners</b>	<b>Research characteristics</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Key outputs,</b>
<b>Common characteristics across the two project areas (Galiwin'ku and Ramingining)</b>	Resident Indigenous community researchers	Use of PAR tools and techniques: semi-structured interviews, transect walks, venn diagrams, flow charts, mind mapping, collective diagrams.	Extensive face to face consultations: focus groups, individual, gender-specific and mixed, clan, household and Mala leader groups	BNHCRC project reports co-authored with community researchers
	NAILSMA, ARPNet and CDU providing background support and research	Sensitive to other community, family and individual needs/events and timeframes	Consistent, regular feedback to community in line with cultural protocols and best practice	Publications for community and external audiences
		Research designed, implemented and evaluated by local researchers and community leaders	Seek and engage with local initiatives where synergies exist	Consultation tools
		Held in local lingua-franca	Engage with local EM representatives	Communications outputs for community and external audiences
		Representation from all clan / bapurru groups	Identify prospective local partners for support and co-funding	
		Administration and logistical support provided to 'free up' researchers	Mentoring / training new researchers	
		Community leadership engaged in whole project	Collaborative community workshops to share and explore synergies	

<sup>5</sup> Dhamarrandji A M, Maypalama E, Burton D. (2017) Burrumalala (Strong Winds) Research Project – Galiwin'ku 2016. NAILSMA. Darwin, NT.



		Strengthening local capability and commitment		
<b>Characteristics specific to the Galiwin'ku project</b>	Experienced Yalu researchers mentoring novice Yolngu researchers	Research opportunity doubled as community healing process, post cyclones.	Adaptation of project by leadership to develop local authority structure (DDA) in response to research findings.	DDA material for community and external agencies
		Local ethics approval process sought and provided		
		Use and modification of familiar PAR workshop tools		
<b>Characteristics specific to the Ramingining project</b>	ARNPNet research practitioners from Ramingining	Focus on homelands / outstations in the Ramingining hinterland	Training and mentoring new researchers	Trained ARPNet researchers
		Use and updating of existing PAR tools from the ARPNet 'Dilly Bag'	Engaged in DBCR/AIRD leadership Training	
			Collaborated with other BNHCRC projects in training	
			Development of cyclone response checklist with issues and actions	



## SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

### BUILDING STRONGER CONNECTIONS AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES

#### Engagement in workshops and meetings

- a) Local meetings – In Ramingining meetings with the Mala (clan leaders) were held in the Australian Government Office to present project activities and results. Similarly, the Mala group met with Norforce and NTES. Regular meetings were held at Galiwin'ku amongst DDA members in facilities available at the time. Other meetings were held with the clinic, centerlink the East Arnhem Shire, the rangers and the school. Numerous other and smaller meetings were held in households and public meeting spaces.
- b) A high-level multi-stakeholder meeting with EM agencies, Indigenous Rangers and senior Indigenous leaders from the Top End, NT, north Queensland and northern Western Australia.
- c) Research forum meetings (BNHCRC research forums) where Bininj and Yolngu, ARPNet and NAILSMA have participated with other groups and stakeholders in national fora.
  - Existing NTES institutions set procedures that guide their actions, activities and interactions with the public. They do not have to respond to calls by communities to do things differently. So far response to possibilities of discussions with communities to explore different ways of strengthening the relationship have not been successful.
  - Communities on their part, say they are frustrated by the low level of cultural awareness amongst outside agencies. Agency staff continue to cherry pick who in the community they want to work with without realizing some of the unintended consequences of this behaviour. They do not realize that by operating like this they might be creating division within the community by pitting individuals they have chosen to work with against the people in the community they should be communicating with, including those holding the traditional knowledge and customary responsibilities for the hazard (for example, the holders of cyclone song lines).

Summaries of the Workshops are provided in progress reports. In addition, we provide here a summary of some of the takeaways from these meetings:

1. No indication that EM agencies will make room for Bininj to participate in the process.
2. Still ignoring the existing local governance structures, preferring to engage with an individual
3. Lack of awareness or unwillingness to engage appropriately is a big issue.
4. Lack of trust and commitment



5. Discontinuity of engagement, communication, responsibility and action within and amongst various government agencies
6. Tensions between and amongst various government policy settings that impact community well-being and resilience.
7. Pressure from a multitude of outside agency responsibilities stultifies local organisation and initiative – as with divide and rule scenarios

## **STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Bininj and Yolngu emphasized the need for revised governance model for EM that supports traditional authority, local skills and knowledge – a co-delivery model that responds to the unique circumstances of each place. Narratives from the research - post cyclones Lam and Nathan - indicate a fundamental desire for an improved engagement model in EM, emphasizing respect and equity for local culture, capability and opportunity.

### **Decision making pathway for Ramingining**

Who should agencies be engaging with in the communities? This is an important question, one where there is no clear answer as different communities will have different preferences. Under the current model, the agencies were engaging with the IEO and one other elder, now passed. By the admission of this elder, this was wrong and placed the burden of communicating messages on one individual. It also pit him against other elders in the community who felt he was not the right person for the role. It is not clear how the late Oldman ended up in the role, but it is important to caution against ignoring existing systems that are already in place. Of course, this means investing some time finding out about them and in some cases finding that even when one feels they have followed the process, these individuals may still be contested. Bininj leadership is complex. There are a series of responsibilities that individuals are required to fulfil. For any given estate, sacred site or totem for example, the Mingiringgi is 'the big boss', whose inheritance comes from their father's father. They must refer to their Djungkayi, 'the manager', whose authority stems from their mother's father, and their helpers, the Darlnyin, whose role comes from their mother's mother's association with that specific area or songline. These roles are all critical in taking a decision. The proposed decision making pathway identifies at least 5 people who should engage with agencies on EM.

### **Creation of a new governance structure in Galiwin'ku**

Community leaders have for many years been concerned at the erosion of their authority in Galiwin'ku. As described in the research 'Burrumalala – Strong winds' report of 2017, senior community members reached broad collective recognition of the events and processes denuding their cultural authority and effective management of their community. Erosive influences have included, the mission era, the Northern Territory Emergency Response (Intervention), the development of NT Shires and an increasing trend by governments to deliver services through uncoordinated and patriarchal means. They concluded that they needed to reinstate Yolngu authority based in Yolngu law to provide a forum through which



emergency management and other agencies can offer and deliver services more effectively.

The local research around resilience and community partnerships then fed and morphed into the development of the Dalkarra Djirrikay Authority (DDA) – Galiwin'ku clan leaders' response to practical issues and positive opportunities in EM and community governance.

### **Leadership training and capacity building of local leaders**

The Aboriginal Research Practitioners Network (ARPNNet) collaborated with the BNHCRC Training project led by Stephen Sutton to deliver 4 training courses to leaders in West and Central Arnhem.

Through DCBR and the School of Humanitarian Response & Disaster Management Studies, ARPNNet and NAILSMA facilitated the participation of Indigenous leaders in the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience leadership training program which was undertaken in Noonamah, outside of Darwin, in August 2019 and again in August 2020.

### **BUILDING STRONGER GOVERNANCE THROUGH SHARED LEARNING BETWEEN COMMUNITIES**

A meeting was held at NAILSMA with the project group from Galiwin'ku. The meeting included participants from DCBR, ARPNNet, NAILSMA, the Galiwin'ku DDA and Red Cross. The meeting was important to achieve the following:

- Review progress and outcomes from various projects and share learnings.
- Strengthen connections and ties between projects to avoid duplication and build on each other's results.
- Explore avenues and opportunities for collaborative work.
- Exchange and share resources.
- Exchange ideas with other providers such as Red Cross – who have an international footprint and experience in this space.



NAILSMA/ARPNET PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT MEETING PARTICIPANTS



## Ramingining meeting

A meeting was held for the research groups in Ramingining and Galiwinku to come together and share learnings. What the project had set out to do all those months ago was to assist bringing the two groups together to share stories and experiences with the work they had been doing in parallel around EM. The morning conversation was around Bininj research, emphasizing in several ways key values embedded in this ARPNet-type approach, such as cultural strength and credibility, standing together, understanding and talking together about the nature of community challenges etc. This kind of conversation resonated strongly with the Galiwin'ku group and the meeting, being reiterated with a range of examples throughout the day. The Galiwin'ku participants were keen to use their 'governance of the interface' (intersecting circle) diagram that was drawn for the RAF last year to describe their work. This worked very well emanating a very clear sense of ownership and pride amongst the meeting as to what they had collectively worked through . . . and a perhaps equally strong sense of unfinished business yet to be tackled. Participants had an obvious boost to their confidence when they realised their kin (from the other community) were 'on the same page', working in parallel. This aspect of the day was perhaps the most satisfying.

This project experience sharing platform was very influential for the groups and is intended to be reproduced should resources allow, with particular purpose being preparation for a planned 'round table' discussion with the NT Police Commissioner. Observations:

- seeing the other group working on the same themes seemed to inspire confidence in the journey - common appreciation of 'outsider' impact on community and family well-being - albeit acted on differently.
- common general appreciation of the challenges to better working relationships with EM agencies
- realising the different paths taken and their complementarity was also reassuring and interesting - ARPNet remaining the fulcrum and DDA becoming the centre of practical project and community governance aspirations.
- recognising the significance of the common Yolngu/Bininj research foundation to the work was an empowering element, notwithstanding some challenges around Yolngu research organisation and future support.

## Planning from the experience sharing platform:

- support ongoing communications between the two groups.
- need communications with all meeting participants to draft a plan for the round table and re-visit the idea of selecting a workable representative group to attend.
- further any ideas/plans for financial support for the respective and collaborating group(s) to keep going.
- develop a budget and secure money the round table with Commission Chalker anticipated for later in the year.



## CREATING TOOLS FIT FOR PURPOSE FOR USE IN EM

### The living handbook

What do we need to do to get everyone to work together? One of the big efforts of this project has been to ask countrymen (ie. vernacular for local Indigenous community members), what needs to be done to move everyone together in the right way. We have asked them if they know and have seen the Emergency plan. Most know it is there, but it is in a Police station, so they hesitate to go and look at it. So, although there is a plan, the degree of accessibility is low. We came up with an idea that would make the plan accessible to all—the living handbook, a collaborative planning tool available online, accessible on any device and to which all could make a contribution.

We asked the question, “If you were asked, what would you put into such a plan?”, with replies discussed in the paper by Sithole et al. (2018). We have produced a model e-plan for EM which we have called *Living Smart with Hazards* which can be accessed on-line and where all stakeholders can contribute. The schema presented represents a model EM plan that brings government and community together for ER.

### 3D map and planning and decision making tool

We have also produced an annotated 3D model of Ramingining to help with the visioning and planning response. A 3D model mounted on a table at the Mala will be used by the elders to discuss and plan response. It will be used based on the following:

- Designation of areas under a colour coding system, done by elders.

- Identification of contact persons for the rapid response team that will be given a simple handphone for use to communicate with and take photos/digital material needed for decision making.

- Mapping out of key locations/infrastructure in a different colour.

- Location of culturally/socially significant sites.

In this visual tool, it is clear where government comes in, and it is clear where countrymen come in when everybody is pulling together. This is an online handbook that everyone can access. It is under preparation, and due for completion in 2021.

## FOCUSED ADVOCACY FOR STRONGER ENGAGEMENT IN EM

We have participated in a number of key fora where some of the achievements of the project have been presented and shared with a wider audience. In some of these fora Bininj and Yolngu have participated and made presentations.

The project has actively sought and worked with partners, such as Red Cross and ARDS (Aboriginal Resource and Development Service), in the community setting and government agents in the global arena.



## BNHCRC Research Forums

Research teams from Ramingining and Galiwin'ku have been able to participate and present at the BNHCRC research forums. Their presentations have always generated much discussion with respect to the following;

- Role and type of engagement with remote Indigenous communities
- The importance of Indigenous knowledge vis a vis scientifically generated knowledge
- Levels of support available for Indigenous engagement
- Utilisation of research results

## DISSEMINATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

ARPNet and NAILSMA have actively participated in the AFAC conference and other conferences and presented research results various in the research fora:

Sithole B, Hunter Xenie, H with the ARPNet 2019. Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia. Presentation at the AFAC research forum 2019, Perth. (see paper in AJEM)

Interview with BNHCRC Researchers Hmalan Hunter Xenie and Steve Sutton.

<https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/resources/presentation-audio-video/5734>

Sutton S., Sithole B., Sutton I., Campbell, D., Cameron M., Campion O.B., Campion M., Brian R., 2017. Training as Research and Research as Training in remote north Australia.,

Sithole B., Hunter Xenie H., Sutton S., Sutton I., Campbell D., Yibarbuk D., Campion O., Brian C., Redford M., Campion J., Campion M., and Brian H., 2017. Time to get the balance right with them government mob – building resilience in BNH management through stronger community participation. AFAC 2017, Sydney Australia.

APRU

Sithole B with ARPNet 2019. Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia – Community led preparedness. Presented at the APRU Conference, 2019, ANU, Australia.

ADRC

The future in our own hands.

<https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/adrc-presents-knowledge-week-day-two/>



## FINDINGS

Governance over EM in remote communities remains weak, and there is a host of reasons for this, some more likely for some remote communities more than others. The need for reform of the existing arrangements is everywhere recognised, not just by agencies but also by the Bininj, Yolngu and other Community agents. Through connecting community researchers to EM and other agency leadership the project found that relevant government agencies are keen to improve engagement with Aboriginal community leaders but lack understanding of how best to achieve this or what benefits change in engagement their principles would produce. [Exemplary partnerships with Indigenous groups in EM service delivery exist in some parts of north Australia (eg, QFES support for Normanton rangers as first responders, Queensland; DFES support for WA Government dedicated Indigenous EM positions on the Dampier Peninsula, Western Australia) and reflect substantial respect and trust by relevant agencies in Indigenous groups to contribute valuable local knowledge, skill and authority].

The suite of findings from the research is broad, the details of which have been interpreted in many ways depending on the context of discussion. However, the main findings can be summarised under the following headings and are related to needs arising and next steps in a table below.

### THE UNBEARABLE HEAVINESS OF HELP

Galiwin'ku and Ramingining like other Indigenous communities, receives services from a multitude of providers, mostly but not limited to government. Service providers as a group are uncoordinated, operating to timeframes, operational imperatives and targets planned in abstraction from the community. The image of 50 or more service providers independently acting to prescribed agendas creates immense pressure on the cultural and human resources in the community to receive and organize these services to greatest effect. Though a parallel authority structure to the non-Indigenous nation exists (albeit fragmented and eroded through colonial pressure) it is not acknowledged, respected or utilized. Emergency management agencies are some of the myriad of culture blind agencies seeking more effective delivery of their services. The multiple layering of assumed authority from external agencies has long been suffocating Yolngu/Bininj ability to present and provide order and opportunity in their community in their own terms. For Galiwin'ku, this is a big issue.

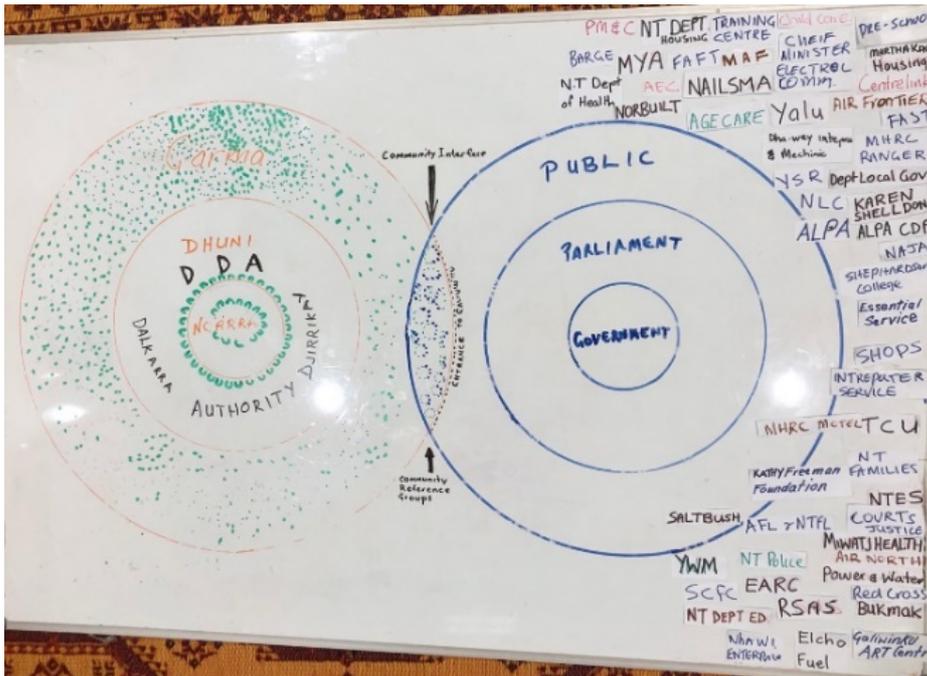


DIAGRAM SHOWING DDA STRATEGY FOR IMPROVED ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Whilst several traditional-style authority structures exist at Galiwin'ku, these and the myriad of smaller reference or advisory groups set up to assist service providers are not independent of non-Indigenous service delivery agendas and are disconnected from each other. Through unveiling and highlighting issues around surrogate authority, the leadership group resolved to (re)create an independent and credible voice for Yolngu authority. They began a re-empowerment process and formed a formal group holding traditional authority, called the Dalkarra and Djirrikay Authority (DDA) from the unmasking and empowering effects of the research their kin had begun. The DDA then seeks a measure of order in agency engagement by creating an interface with the community in which agencies and their relevant Reference Groups engage. These Reference Groups are connected back to, informed by and provide information to Yolngu clan leaders (the DDA). In this model, tools for good cross-cultural communication and operation, protocols for engagement and mutual understanding about service delivery and outcomes can be reached.

### DECISION MAKING SHOULD INVOLVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE/ ORGANISATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY<sup>6</sup>

This is a fundamental pillar for good engagement with all outside agencies. Knowing how to identify and engage with the 'right people' is not obvious to most service agencies however, there is a network of decision makers in place,

<sup>6</sup> Sithole B., Campbell D., Sutton S., Sutton I., with Campion O., Campion M., Brown C., Daniels G., Daniels A., Brian C, Campion J., Yibarbuk, D, Phillips E., Daniels G., Daniels D., Daniels P., Daniels K., Campion M., Hedley B., Radford M., Campion A., Campion S., Hunter -Xenie H; and Pickering S. (accepted for publication). Blackfella way, our way of managing fires and disasters bin ignored but im still here - Indigenous governance structures for fire emergency management to be published in ed H. James et al the APRU series Vol 1 Palgrave. Presented at AFAC 2017. Sydney, Australia



organized firstly around bapurru or clan groups. There are well developed protocols for decision making in communities that should be recognized. For example, individual family and clan leaders have people and areas they are responsible for and must work with others to address community wide or landscape scale concerns. It is important to understand this and seek to empower this system and its representatives to get more effective participation and decision-making for emergency response.



ELDERS FROM CENTRAL AND WEST ARNHEM INVOLVED IN THE ARPNET LED PROJECT



The DDA, made up of senior men and women, began as the reference group through which the early research was discussed and then became the authoritative group as a direct response to research findings. The DDA developed its ideas, local credibility and functionality with a goal to re-invigorate the centre of Yolngu authority with which EM and other agencies would develop practical partnerships for delivery of their

services. The BNHCRC sponsored project was the main vehicle for DDA development but, as acknowledged by all, longer term and self-generated support would be needed to progress this 'game changing' initiative.

**ADEQUATE COMMITMENT AND FUNDING IS REQUIRED TO HAVE REALISTIC AND EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

Agencies need to adequately resource the engagement process on the ground. There needs to be a recognition that engagement costs time and money. The

current business as usual model puts the responsibility of engagement with service agencies and grossly undervalues the resources and local knowledge required to engage well. Engaging 'with the minimum' should not be accepted as good enough. The imperatives must be in place to create conditions necessary for agencies to engage with the right people or right organization to the right degree.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING CULTURAL LITERACY AMONG THE AGENCY STAFF IS CRUCIAL PREREQUISITE TO ACHIEVING EFFECTING GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES**

Bininj and Yolngu emphasize the need for outside agencies to undertake cultural orientation and accept guidance from community leaders under the authority of traditional laws and protocols. Countrymen<sup>7</sup> argue that all agencies offering services to the community should enable local Indigenous knowledge and systems to create favorable conditions for effective engagement. This may include practical support for the communities to hold essential ceremonies as required by their obligations to kin and country<sup>8</sup>.

Ramingining leaders developed around a five-day cultural course<sup>9</sup> to be delivered by elders on country to agency staff. This critical reinvestment in cultural knowledge, work and education is foundational for stronger Yolngu/Bininj identity and functional partnerships with service agencies. Current requirements/emphasis on conditions of western employment/unemployment and school attendance limit the value of and participation by community members in important activities on country. This is a pertinent comment regarding current cultural un-awareness of agency staff and the need for and relevance of cultural awareness training in these remote Indigenous contexts.

In Galiwin'ku, of the critical findings, poor communication between service providers and community residents became the main focus of community leaders. They determined that this is a strong contributing factor in Yolngu



DALKARRA DJIRRIKAY GROUP MEETING



DALKARRA DJIRRIKAY GROUP MEETING

<sup>7</sup> A colloquial term for women and men used by Indigenous people to generically recognize Indigenous identity and familiarity.

<sup>8</sup> Buergett P., Sithole B, Sangha K, et al (2017). Resilience: Integrating Indigenous worldviews, knowledges, sensitivities and practices in building adaptive capacities, In D. Paton & D. Johnston (Eds., Disaster resilience: An integrated approach (2nd ed.). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.

<sup>9</sup> Outline of the course has been developed based on discussions with the elders and will be finalized in March 2020



disengagement, marginalization, disempowerment and disadvantage, that Yolngu and Balanda can improve in better partnership building. In order to be able to address these key issues of engagement, a set of engagement protocols was developed focusing on the acute need for improvement in community governance and local decision making and inclusion in service provider activities in Galiwin'ku.

The Engagement Protocols that were developed at Galiwin'ku highlight the need for all agencies that operate at Galiwin'ku to acknowledge and respect the traditional Yolngu governance system and the authority of that system under both Yolngu and Australian law. The protocols then, are a element of the broader need for cultural literacy which, as with Ramingining leader's intent, would include cross-cultural training.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF HARNESSING EXISTING LOCAL CAPABILITY IS EMPHASISED AS A CRITICAL PART OF ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN A MEANINGFUL WAY**

There's a recognition that the unique skills and knowledge of local people in communities are not being acknowledged or utilized adequately in ER. The communities want local capability recognized and integrated into all emergency response plans and activities. The potential exists to invest in local ER teams and groups strategically located in Arnhem land communities to address concerns, including for the provision of cultural literacy for non-Indigenous partners. This raises questions regarding the viability and cost effectiveness of the current volunteer model for ER. Although this discussion is starting among Bininj and Yolngu, there is a feeling that payment for environmental service arrangements would be ideal for this kind of arrangement and have demonstrable benefits in terms of timing and costs of response.

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF APPROPRIATE TRAINING MATERIALS AND A TRAINING MODEL IS CRUCIAL TO BUILD CAPACITY AMONG BININJ AND YOLNGU WHO SEE THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO BRING THE TWO KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS TOGETHER**

The development of appropriate training materials must incorporate local knowledge and practices and build local capacity as done with the BNHCRC Training Project. The Training Project collaboration<sup>10</sup> demonstrated a new model for training delivery and focus that underlined the importance of working together to develop materials fit for purpose.

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SIMPLE AND ACCESSIBLE TOOLS BY COMMUNITY LEADERS IS AN ESSENTIAL STEP TOWARDS STRENGTHENING PERFORMANCE OF GOVERNANCE FOR EM**

The need to develop simple tools that can be used in the community to aid in the response is crucial to getting things done, specifically in relation to the

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<sup>10</sup> Operational leadership - A field guide. Produced in collaboration with the BNHCRC Training project.



operational manual for Emergency Management. Bininj have developed a local rapid assessment tool for natural hazards based on a 3D model of Ramingining which was developed to aid emergency management planning and assessment. The tool uses a network of trained community-based individuals to provide quick information about hazard impact as soon as possible that will inform EM agencies and help organize Bininj responders and families to immediate needs and action.

**THE NEED TO SUPPORT BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND EQUIPMENT TO ENABLE BININJ AND YOLNGU TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY AND INTERACT WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS IS EVERYWHERE EMPHASISED AND URGENT**

EM is an inter-agency effort and yet there is no space in the community designated for countrymen to meet and discuss EM outside the formal arrangements. Agencies in remote communities are hesitant to allow countrymen to meet on their premises and some impose inhibitive conditions, making it impossible for countrymen to meet there. Up to now they have relied on the good manners of local champions in the community, but this status of affairs eats up project budgets, undermining consultation and engagement efforts.



## KEY MILESTONES

All progress reports we submitted on time. Because of COVID, the project was pushed back to December 2020. ARPNet prepared an interim report. We made contributions to an interim annual report submitted in June 2020.

**TABLE 1: KEY MILESTONES**

Milestone	Deliverable	Description – ARPNet	Description - NAILSMA
1.2.1	Ethics application	Application process to meet Ethics requirements at CDU, with Covid extension. Community members granted permission for photos and recorded information. A process of local project approval was undertaken with community elders.	
1.3.1	Posters and conference presentations, papers 2017	<p>Sithole B., Sutton S., Pickering S., Hunter-Xenie H., Sutton I, Campbell. D., Yibarbuk D., Campion O., Brian C., Redford M., Campion J., Campion M., and Brian H. 2017. Time to get the balance right with them government mob – building resilience in BNH management through stronger community participation. AFAC 2017.</p> <p>Sithole B., Hunter Xenie H., Sutton S., Sutton I., Campbell D., Yibarbuk D., Campion O., Brian C., Redford M., Campion J., Campion M., and Brian H., 2017 Time to get the balance right with them government mob – building resilience in BNH management through stronger community participation. AFAC 2017, Sydney Australia.</p> <p>Sutton S., Sithole B., Sutton I., Campbell, D., Cameron M., Campion O.B., Campion M., Brian R., 2017. Training as Research and Research as Training in remote north Australia.</p> <p>Buergelt P., Sithole B, Sangha K, et al 2017. Resilience: Integrating Indigenous worldviews, knowledges, sensitivities and practices in building adaptive capacities, In D. Paton &amp; D. Johnston (Eds., Disaster resilience: An integrated approach (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.</p> <p>Sithole B, and Hunter-Xenie H, Yibarbuk D, Daniels C, Daniels G, Campion O. B, Namarnyilk S, Narorroga E, Dann O, Dirdi K, Nayilibibj G, Phillips E, Daniels K, Daniels A, Daniels G, Turner H, Daniels C.A, Daniels T, Thomas P, Thomas D, Rami T, Brown C. (2017). Living with Widditjth - Protocols for building community resilience., In D. Paton &amp; D. Johnston (Eds., Disaster resilience: An integrated approach (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas</p>	<p>Presentation, Russell-Smith. J., James. G., Sithole. B., Sangha. K., Costanza. B., van Wesel. K. Building community resilience in Northern Australia: Scoping remote community resilience, building better governance, finding new opportunities to grow resilience. RAF. Perth 2017.</p>
1.3.2	Training community	Community based researchers in Ramingining received some training on how to conduct some of the	Mentoring and training continued during this phase at



	based Aboriginal researchers	<p>activities. The tools used were taken from the ARPNet Dilly bag.</p> <p>Collaboration with the BNHCRC Training project means we were able to participate in the development of suitable materials for leadership training</p>	Galiwin'ku. Mentoring for researchers came from both the NAILSMA facilitator and members of the Dalkarra Dirrikay Authority (DDA) on site at Galiwin'ku
1.4.1	Field Plan	Field activities were divided into weeklong visits on country at outstations selected by the Elders. We also spent weeklong visits in Ramingining. The community based researchers were able to continue conversations and activities on an agreed schedule with support from an Indigenous coordinator.	Field activities were planned ahead, but left flexible to allow for the use of local research by the burgeoning DDA. All consultations were community based.
2.1.2	Posters and conference presentations, papers 2018	<p><i>Poster:</i> Sutton S., Sithole B., Sutton I., Campbell D., Cameron M., Campion O., Campion M., Brian R., (2018) Training as Research and Research as Training in remote north Australia. Presented at AFAC (2018).</p> <p><i>Book Chapter:</i> Sithole B., Hunter-Xenie H., Yibarbuk D., Daniels C., Daniels, G., Campion B.O., Box 6.4 Living with Widdijith – protocols for building community resilience Box 6.4, Chapter 6. In Russell-Smith, J., Pedersen, H., James, G., Sangha, K.K. (Editors) 2018. <i>Sustainable land sector development in northern Australia: Indigenous rights, aspirations and cultural responsibilities.</i>, CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida USA Pg 158-160</p>	James, G. Changing lives in a changing world—recognising and respecting foundations of Indigenous community resilience. Poster presented at BNHCRC / AFAC Annual Conference, Perth 2018.
2.4.1	Post cyclone response framework	<p>Although the proposal documents label this a post cyclone framework, the title changed as the work progressed. In the paper we refer to it as a hazard smart framework and now as a living handbook.</p> <p><i>Presentation:</i> Sithole B, Hunter Xenie, H with the ARPNet 2019. Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia. Presentation at the AFAC research forum 2019, Perth. (see paper in AJEM)</p> <p><i>Interviews:</i> Interview with Hmalan Hunter Xenie and Steve Sutton.  <a href="https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/resources/presentation-audio-video/5734">https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/resources/presentation-audio-video/5734</a></p>	As with the Ramingining experience the 'post cyclone framework' being discussed and developed at Galiwin'ku had a strong community governance and resilience emphasis, because Yolngu felt it necessary to address the fundamental issues around poor government engagement with their leaders. A more coherent and proactive leadership group was deemed necessary.
3.1.1.	Knowledge sharing with the Galiwin'ku project	<p>Ramingining attended a workshop hosted by NAILSMA at CDU for the Galiwinku project.</p> <p>(This activity was postponed several times because of the passing of several key Elders in the project)</p>	



3.1.3	Posters and presentations at AFAC 2019	<p><i>Poster:</i> Sutton S, Sithole B, Hunter-Xenie H., and Campion B. O. 2019. To change a culture, you must understand it. Presented at AFAC 2019.</p> <p>Sithole B, Hunter Xenie, H with the ARPNet 2019. Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia. Presentation at the AFAC research forum 2019, Perth. (see paper in AJEM)</p> <p><i>Presentation:</i> Sithole B with ARPNet 2019. Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia – Community led preparedness. Presented at the APRU Conference, 2019, ANU, Australia.</p>	Creation of poster with Galiwin'ku project members unable to happen at this milestone due to key participant passing away and the community in mourning.
3.2.1 / 3.2.2 / 3.3.1	Leadership model and decision making pathway. Community workshop(s) and draft EM partnering protocol framework	<p><i>Poster:</i> Sithole B, Campion B.M., Brian C., Bununggu J, and Sutton S with ARPNet team. 2020. Unmasking the hidden structures within – A pathway for effective community level decision-making for emergency response in central Arnhem land. AFAC 2020.</p> <p><i>Pamphlet:</i> Sithole and ARPNet. Protocols for effective engagement for ER in Ramingining. 2020</p> <p><i>Book Chapter:</i> Sithole B., Campbell D., Sutton S., Sutton I., with Campion O., Campion M., Brown C., Daniels G., Daniels A., Brian C, Campion J., Yibarbuk, D, Phillips E., Daniels G., Daniels D., Daniels P., Daniels K., Campion M., Hedley B., Radford M., Campion A., Campion S., Hunter -Xenie H; and Pickering S. (accepted for publication). Blackfella way, our way of managing fires and disasters bin ignored but im still here - Indigenous governance structures for fire emergency management to be published in ed H. James et al the APRU series Vol 1 Palgrave. Presented at AFAC 2017. Sydney, Australia. <b>In press</b></p>	<p>Partner protocol framework drafted and disseminated to BHNCRC, End Users and community decision makers.</p> <p>Feedback received from community leaders at this stage.</p>
3.3.2	Knowledge sharing with the Galiwin'ku project	<p>Posters and paper 2020</p> <p><i>Poster:</i> Sithole B, Campion B.M., Brian C., Bununggu J, and Sutton S with ARPNet team. 2020. Unmasking the hidden structures within – A pathway for effective community level decision-making for emergency response in central Arnhem land. AFAC 2020.</p> <p>AIDR conference presentation: <i>The future in our own hands: effective pathways for disaster risk reduction in remote communities in Northern Australia.</i> Dr. Bev Sithole, Aboriginal Research Practitioner's Network. August 2020.</p> <p><a href="https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/adrc-presents-knowledge-week-day-two/">https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/adrc-presents-knowledge-week-day-two/</a></p> <p>ANU/DSRI Panel: Panelist at the ANU/DRSI panel on Disasters as transformative opportunities.</p> <p><a href="https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/drsi-special-event-disasters-as-transformative-opportunities-tickets-113852439712">https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/drsi-special-event-disasters-as-transformative-opportunities-tickets-113852439712</a></p> <p>Abstract AFAC 2020 submitted.</p>	<p>Protocols for the two groups were discussed at the Utilisation Workshop held in Darwin in November 2020. Given COVID 19, this was the first opportunity to discuss these protocols outside of the community settings and so was understandable preliminary and limited in terms of feedback. This forum was represented by senior staff from QFES, NTES and DFES. Their overall response to discussion of protocols was very positive and included discussion about long term sustainable change to EM and community partnerships. Examples of investment by QFES and DFES were provided. More engagement with this is</p>



			required across the board to elicit change.
3.4.1	EM Partnering Protocol Framework draft disseminated	The protocol frameworks for Galiwin'ku and Ramingining projects have been drafted and disseminated and feedback sought. Positive feedback was received by the Australian Government's Indigenous Liaison officer at Ramingining. No formal feedback was received for the Galiwin'ku draft framework. Galiwin'ku leaders will seek to have their protocols adhered to through their Dalkarra Djirrikay Authority but the opportunity to negotiate and agree on formal protocols and guidelines with NTES and others was hampered by the COVID pandemic. It is uncertain as to whether the Galiwin'ku initiative will be able to gain continued support beyond this project to see that critical step to fruition.	
3.4.2	Paper for publication	Russell -Smith et al (Under prep) Engaging remote Indigenous communities in natural hazards management in northern Australia—challenges, opportunities, solutions. For Ambio	
3.4.3	Input into final report	Synthesis report summarizing key findings and outcomes from all project deliverables - This report.	
3.4.4	Annual Report	Complete and submitted	



## UTILISATION AND IMPACT

### SUMMARY

Project outputs, their utilisation and impact are recorded separately for Galiwin'ku and Ramingining based projects. The development of outputs such as tools and local governance structures are of necessity, in these projects, products of local community research, aspiration and ownership. They are all in their infancy and the communities themselves are the target end-users as (potential) partners with formal end-users (ie, Ken Baulch of BFNT) and others (NTES, Red Cross, Police, NT health et al). The exception to this is the significant collective output of research approach.

### PART 1. COLLECTIVE OUTPUTS

#### Output 1: Locally adaptable and reflexive Participatory Action Research Approach

##### Description

From the beginning of these BNHCRC supported projects, a sense of ownership and hope for significant change has driven Yolngu/Bininj leaders forward. The projects adopted approaches that allowed the communities to identify problems with current engagement and then to develop homegrown tools to address these. Two distinct methodological approaches have been developed during this project emphasizing the importance of locally led research, ownership of research outputs, wide consultative processes, long time frame for engagement and the involvement of indigenous people to lead these processes. Out of these two distinct PAR models has come tangible actions that can be implemented. Although perceived as more costly, the value of this approach is in the level of engagement seen as well as the unforeseen benefits resulting from it. For the Ramingining project, learnings from this project bolster an already growing body of work and examples of PAR in northern Australia where the community continue to adapt and develop appropriate tools to engage with agencies and knowledge production,

For example, the production of an engagement protocols brochure allowing Bininj to state clearly in a local voice how agencies should engage was a big part of engendering faith in the project - The Indigenous Engagement Officer at Ramingining (a position created under the Northern Territory 'Intervention' by the Australian Government) was excited to see the protocols and resolved to discuss them at the Mala (clan leaders) meeting and adopt them. Local uptake like this means the protocols are potentially being entertained more broadly than in EM. A really good outcome that bodes well for wider use by the community.



## Output 2: ARPNet/NAILSMA: Community to community sharing and learning platform

### Description

A workshop was held on July 30 2020 for the research groups in Ramingining and Galiwinku to come together and share learnings. What the project had set out to do all those months ago was to assist bringing the two groups together to share stories and experiences with the work they'd been doing in parallel around EM. The morning conversation was around Bininj research, emphasising in several ways key values embedded in this ARPNet style PAR approach, such as cultural strength and credibility, standing together, understanding and talking together about the nature of community challenges etc. This kind of conversation resonated strongly with the Galiwin'ku group and the meeting, being reiterated with a range of examples throughout the day. The Galiwin'ku participants were keen to use their 'governance of the interface' (intersecting circle) diagram (see Findings above) that was drawn for the RAF last year to describe their work. This worked very well emanating a very clear sense of ownership and pride amongst the meeting as to what they had collectively worked through . . . and a perhaps equally strong sense of unfinished business yet to be tackled. Participants had an obvious boost to their confidence when they realised their kin (from the other community) were 'on the same page', working in parallel. This aspect of the day was perhaps the most satisfying.

### Extent of use

This project experience sharing platform was very influential for the groups and is intended to be reproduced should resources allow, with particular purpose being preparation for a planned 'round table' discussion with the NT Police Commissioner. Observations:

seeing the other group working on the same themes seemed to inspire confidence in the journey - common appreciation of 'outsider' impact on community and family well-being - albeit acted on differently.

common general appreciation of the challenges to better working relationships with EM agencies

recognising the significance of the common Bininj research foundation to the work was an empowering element, notwithstanding some challenges around Yolngu research organisation and future support.

Planning from the experience sharing platform:

- support ongoing communications between the two groups.
- need communications with all meeting participants to draft a plan for the round table and re-visit the idea of selecting a workable representative group to attend.
- further any ideas/plans for financial support for the respective and collaborating group(s) to keep going.
- develop a budget and secure money the round table with the NT Commissioner of Police Chalker anticipated for later in the year.



### Utilisation potential

The meeting at Ramingining was an emphatic success. There is clear possibility to replicate the process and initiate conversations in other remote communities.

Though entirely Yolngu/Bininj managed, the meeting allowed and sought input from others about relevant activities and development in the EM space going on elsewhere. The meeting was keen to hear briefly about the Qld Gulf experience with QFES supporting some ranger group's First Response capability, the conversations going on in the background with EM leaders across the north and in particular about initial correspondence made with the NT Commissioner for Police, Jamie Chalker, to set up a conversation directly with them. Given the manifest interest in working together in the future (however that may look) the meeting felt they'd like to take their experiences and perspective to the Commissioner face to face and that they thought about 'picking a team' to do that. The idea of meeting Jamie Chalker and other EM leaders was met with enthusiasm and the notion of somehow selecting a workable representative group from amongst the two communities was also seen as a good idea.

### Utilisation impact

Platforms for communities to share experience and knowledge on EM are powerful and can be focal points for regionwide EM actions.

potential to extend the platform to other communities and jurisdictions.

### Utilisation and impact evidence

Everyone in the large group contributed, including some strong and enthusiastic senior women. The groups represented a good spread of bapurru (clan groups), which is testament to people working together putting differences aside and to the perceived importance of the challenge - leaving any conflict at the door was work gratefully and unanimously recognised on the day. There is no evidence yet for the impact of this or this type of inter-community collaboration in the EM space on EM outcomes.

## PART 2. GALIWIN'KU OUTPUTS

### Output 1: EM partnering protocols

#### Output description

Draft Engagement Protocols between Emergency Services Agencies and the Galiwin'ku community.

The DDA seeks a Memorandum of Understanding between with Service Providers that acknowledges the relevance and authority of the DDA at Galiwin'ku. The MOU seeks that:

1. Service Providers will follow agreed Communication Protocols to pro-actively support effective communication.



- All meetings at Galiwin'ku where there are a greater number of Yolngu present will be conducted in Djambarrpuyngu and SPs will use and pay for local interpreters to ensure good communication.
  - All written communication from SPs will be easily accessible, that is, written in plain, easy to read English.
2. Service Provider managers and staff undertake cultural orientation designed and administered by the DDA at Galiwin'ku.
  3. Service Providers understand and accept that Yolngu are guided by and are often required to comply with Traditional laws and protocols and so must always operate respectfully and in accordance with this understanding.
  4. Service Providers negotiate with the DDA when developing agreements to include practical measures of support for Yolngu in a partnership delivery of services, so the Yolngu community and SPs can effectively prosecute an agreed agenda and build trust. Some examples of practical support measures are:
    - Follow agreed communication protocols.
    - Consider conducting meetings out of hours to avoid conflict with local employers.
    - Funding and support of an effective engagement process (local wages for committee members, meals for out of hours meetings, transport to and from meetings for participants, meeting resources and materials, qualified facilitation etc)
  5. Dedicated support from the Service Providers to the community prioritising utilization, development and sustainability of Yolngu capability for EM preparation, response and recovery, focused both at Galiwin'ku and potentially on their collaboration in the broader region. Such support would be negotiated to include gender equity and practical mechanisms for Yolngu engagement in planning, training and employment relevant to ES plans, networks and activities at Galiwin'ku.
  6. Free Prior Informed Yolngu decision making
  7. Considers a 5 year EM and DDA partnership development plan with review milestones.

### Extent of use

The aim is for these protocols (when a working precedent is established after the 'round table' meeting with NTES, BFNT, DCBR and others) to apply to all service providers active in Galiwin'ku, including EM agencies. To date, these protocols have been applied in part to a DDA project with the NT Police and ARDS addressing issues around youth justice. The protocols will be an important subject at the anticipated round table discussion with the NT Police Commissioners and others later in 2020.

## Utilisation potential

Once agencies start to follow the protocols the confusion and conflicts will be reduced and the community management and service delivery space will be more cooperative, effective and empowering. The potential benefits from formal and active uptake of the set of protocols when finally agreed amongst the parties are enormous – covering practical service delivery, improved local capability, improved social capital and well-being, and underpinning a broad movement to address community governance issues.

## Utilisation and impact evidence

The acceptance of draft protocols in the NT Police – DDA – ARDS project has been (anecdotally at least) highly successful with a DDA created Yolngu reference group dedicated to the youth justice agenda. Further impact is expected with their formalisation and adoption.

Several agencies, at Galiwin'ku and based elsewhere have, expressed interest and support in the adoption of Yolngu generated and management protocols, though there is yet no evidence of their uptake or impact.

## Output 2: Strong Yolngu governance institution for strong partnerships and communications outputs

### Output description

Over the course of this BNHCRC project Yolngu researchers and broader community leadership at Galiwin'ku realized that challenges for more effective preparation, response and recovery relating to natural hazards ran much deeper than with just the hazard itself. The erosion of respect for Yolngu cultural governance and overall capabilities was a manifest problem needing to be addressed if EM and other agency interactions with Galiwin'ku community are to improve and improve Yolngu well-being.

Yolngu leaders from all the bapurre (clan groups) at Galiwin'ku worked on a contemporary and inclusive model for local authority, integrally connected with

The infographic is divided into several sections. At the top left, a purple box contains the text 'Dalkarra Djirrikay Authority (DDA)'. To its right is a photograph of a group of people sitting around a table in an outdoor setting. Below the purple box is another photograph showing a group of people sitting on chairs in a room, possibly during a meeting. The bottom section is a dark blue box with white text. It starts with the heading 'Who are DDA?' followed by the text: 'The Dalkarra Djirrikay Authority (DDA) are representatives of the Traditional Owners and Clan Leaders from all clans at Galiwin'ku.' Below this is the heading 'What does the DDA do?' followed by: 'The DDA is committed to having a positive influence on the community agenda and improving community leadership and decision making by reinvigorating Traditional law and governance systems at Galiwin'ku.' The next line reads: 'The DDA provides a trusted Yolngu authority at Galiwin'ku to support all Service Providers in the delivery of services to the Yolngu community.' At the bottom, it says 'DDA Vision' followed by 'Peace, Justice and Good Governance at Galiwin'ku.'



Yolngu law and culture. The Dalkarra Djirrikay Authority has emerged as a key tenet of Galiwin'ku community governance – a representative group of leaders managing the important space at the interface of the community with outside service providers and other agencies. The DDA is in its infancy and highly vulnerable to financial deprivation and non-Yolngu agency lack of respect and patronage.

The DDA is described in this simple brochure.

### Extent of use

This preliminary local communique has been distributed and discussed widely in the community and with several local agencies. The brochure was presented with other project materials by the DDA at the BNHCRC research forum in Darwin, March 2019.

### Utilisation potential

There is huge potential for this model to work at Galiwin'ku. We note that versions of it incorporating some of its principles are in place at Wadeye, Ngukurr and Ramingining where Indigenous governance structures are recognised to a greater extent. Communication outputs like this (and others ongoing) are critical for both community scrutiny and maintaining support for the DDA.

### Utilisation impact

The potential for the development of similar structures in other communities is enormous and potentially transformative. At the Ramingining workshop with Galiwin'ku and Ramingining researchers/leaders the experience sharing and combined intent to build on this work were inspiring. There is a clear and growing sense that this model could be highly useful for scaling up Indigenous co-management of service delivery to their communities, particularly relating to emergency management.

### Utilisation and impact evidence

Not yet available.

## Output 3: Workshop with end-users (November 2020)

### Output description

End User workshop was planned for March 2020 to enable face to face discussions between Galiwin'ku and Ramingining leaders and EM End Users. The intent was to introduce the protocols, sustainability ideas, communications and other material developed by the research groups in these communities and establish a process of negotiating better partnership understanding and arrangements based around this work. The process would have developed over the rest of 2020 to include substantial feedback from EM leaders, however this inaugurating workshop had to be postponed because of COVID 19 restrictions. It was eventually held in November 2020. [An attempt had been made in the meantime to find other platforms to host the meeting, but connectivity issues in



remote areas and availability of State and Territory EM leaders made this unfeasible].

This 'utilisation' workshop (10/11/20 at Charles Darwin University in Darwin) attracted senior Indigenous land managers from North Qld and NT, senior QFES, NTES and DFES staff, senior Australian Red Cross, NAILSMA, ARPNet and CDU representation. NT project methods, outputs and outcomes were discussed, including protocols, investment ideas, communications material, training, local governance and capability. Informal feedback about the workshop held it to be very valuable in understanding the perspective of Indigenous leaders in the EM space, useful in 'kicking off' a cross-cultural conversation about developing partnerships and important for sharing the experiences and learnings of others across the northern jurisdictions.

The CRC project was at this point all but ended and so also is the capacity for community leaders to follow on with this engagement work without those resources. Community leaders, ARPNet and NAILSMA members are keen to find further funds to keep up the momentum at this seemingly pivotal stage, though no immediate opportunities to support ongoing work by community members on their own behalf are currently forthcoming.

### Extent of use

The utilisation workshop was used very effectively to focus important discussions amongst senior Indigenous leaders working in the EM space and EM leaders from across north Australia. The workshop (albeit delayed from early 2020) was pivotal in bringing together influential leaders capable of initiating positive change to government engagement with Indigenous communities.

### Utilisation potential

Indications are that the potential value of this workshop/conversation could have far reaching effects for the NT participating communities and government, and for scaling up the process within and beyond the NT.

### Utilisation impact

Informal impacts include empowered community leaders, better informed participating EM leaders and a foundation for improving partnerships in EM that can be built on with renewed support. No progress from this positive but preliminary stage is possible without further financial commitment.

### Utilisation and impact evidence

Given both the effect of COVID and the end of the CRC project there is yet no evidence of: improved EM partnerships; improved, sustainable community governance arrangements; more effective EM at community level or influence of such changes in other communities or regions . . . the multiple foci of this work.



## PART 3. ARPNET OUTPUTS

### Output 1a: Living smart with hazards – an online community planning response tool/handbook

#### Output description

We asked the Bininj respondents what they would they put into a response plan? We received some replies (see Sithole et al 2018). We have produced a model plan for ER which we have called *Living Smart With Hazards*. The schema presents a model ER plan that brings government and community together for ER. It shows that the community and ER agencies could walk together side by side for stronger ER.

#### Extent of use

The plan is not yet finalized although the components have been defined and explained (see paper published in AJEM). Due to COVID 19 restrictions finalizing the completion of the plan is delayed.

#### Utilisation potential

This could be used as a complement to the existing Ramingining EM plan. There is clear possibility to replicate the process and the framework with other remote communities.

#### Utilisation impact

More community involvement in EM with potential gains for the government in terms of improved performance and buy in from communities, Including the potential to scale up model to other communities and jurisdictions.

#### Utilisation and impact evidence

Not yet able to provide evidence until plan is completed.

### Output 1b: Model of pathways to collaborative leadership and decision making

#### Output description

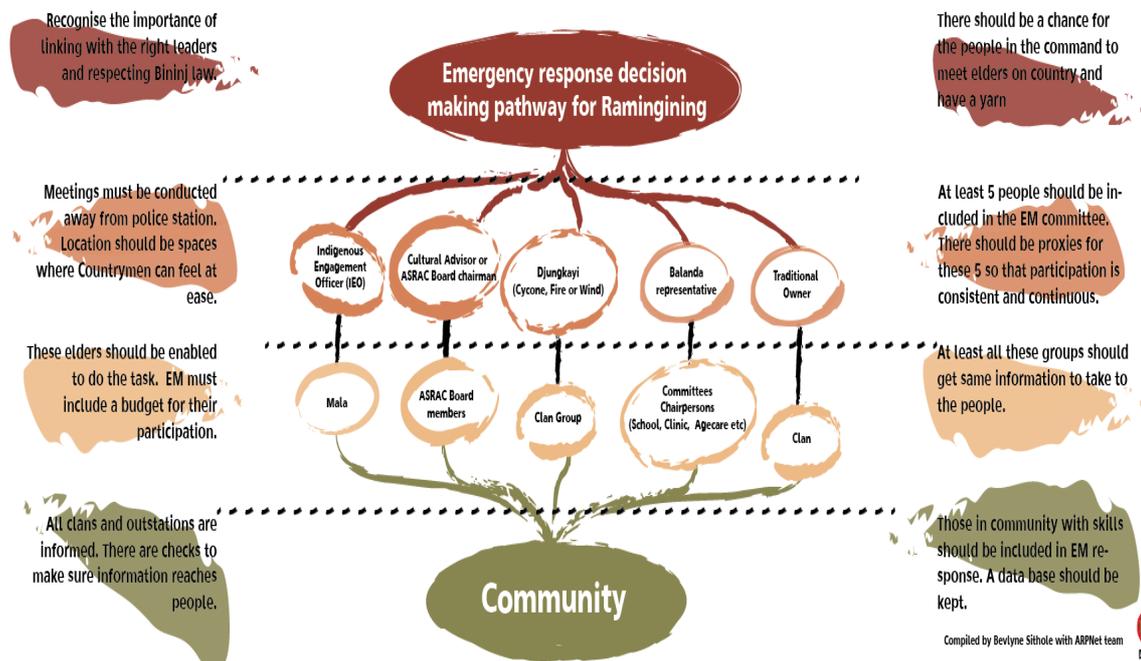
Agencies are right to ask communities these questions – “how do you want us to work with you? . . . How do we connect with your structures?” The reality is that few agencies out there ever ask this type of question or are ready for the answer



when it comes. This poster (see below) presents the answer for this question from the community elders around Ramingining. The important thing is that their answer is clear on who and how they need to be connected to the current system of decision making.

Who should agencies be engaging with in communities? This is an important question, one where there are no clear answers as different communities will have different preferences. Under the current model, EM agencies were engaging with the Indigenous Engagement Officer (IEO) and one other elder (now passed). By the admission of this elder, this was wrong and placed the burden of communicating messages on one individual. It also frustrated elders in the community who perhaps felt he was not right for the role ... It is not clear how the late elder ended up in the role, but it is important to caution against ignoring existing systems that are already in place. Of course, this means investing some time finding out about them and in some cases finding that even when one feels they have followed the process, these individuals may still be contentious.

There can also be alternative decision-making pathways proposed. In the consultations we found that the command center is understood to be the heart of the operation, but this command group needs to be clear on who in the community is their link and through what pathways do they operate.



[It is suggested that in the case of Ramingining the IEO remains as a command centre figure, given their access to the Mala leader group, and the board of the Arafura Swamp Ranger Aboriginal Corporation (ASRAC) – the ASRAC board is representative of the key clans found in Ramingining. There is also recognition, that the Balanda (non-Indigenous residents) in the community need a representative that links with the multiple committees found in the community.]

Elemental hazards, such as fire and cyclones are, like virtually all other physical elements (animate and inanimate) connected metaphysically to one clan or



another as family. These ancestral elements feature in ceremonies which are 'managed' by djunkayi or ceremonial managers. These djukayi are essential participants even in relevant community level hazard management. They represent the 'owners' and are crucial for inter-clan relationships. Ramingining leaders are determined that the five current djunkayi, relevant to natural hazards must also be connected to the command center, ensuring proper protocol and authority to act.

TOs or their appointed representatives must travel with the police when emergency announcements are being made in the community or be given resources to make sure they are able to perform roles such as communication, easily. Too often agencies assume, that passing on a message to one person means that person transmits the message effectively. This is not always the case.

Government needs to make enough 'room' for Bininj to participate. Making room means engaging with more Bininj. It also means setting aside resources to support their participation. Based on this the decision- making pathway/model:

Brings together the Bininj and balanda system for EM.

Identifies at least 5 Bininj who should be involved to ensure everyone is represented and all the right people are included.

### Extent of use

The decision making model is clear on the level of Bininj involvement needed in EM. Communities will also argue for a broader based participation for EM decision making in the interfaces planned with EM agencies.

### Utilisation potential

This could be adopted as the model to follow not just by Ramingining community but by other communities too.

There is clear possibility to replicate the process and adapt the model for use in other remote communities.

### Utilisation impact

The model developed here is useful and directly addresses a question that some EM agencies have asked. Communities hope the agencies listen and adopt their recommendation.

There is also potential to scale up this model to offer other communities and jurisdictions.

### Utilisation and impact evidence

Not yet able to provide evidence of use until the model has been presented to the agencies.

## Output 2: Producing Protocols for effective engagement in EM

### Output description

For communities to work with agencies, what needs to happen? We focused on not listing all the problems that communities are experiencing with outside agencies. For each issue or problem, we asked community to say what and how things should happen. Out of these conversations we came up with a list of protocols that communities believe will be a good guide to stronger engagement with remote communities (see below).

In the absence of knowledge and awareness of existing structures and protocols EM agencies have relied on created structures (committees or reference groups) that lack legitimacy locally and are there for the convenience of the Balanda (non-Indigenous people).

These structures have created a negative dynamic in the community that has seen the following:

**BUILDING STRONG EMERGENCY RESPONSE (ER) INSTITUTIONS IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA**

Protocols for effective engagement in Ramingining

Building strong institutions for emergency response in remote communities involves sitting together with the right people. It involves working continuously with the knowledge holders and bringing together both ways of knowing - Balanda knowledge and Bininj knowledge. It also involves whole community engagement and continuously building community skills not just targeting particular groups. It includes an acknowledgement that Balanda way is different from Bininj way but through 'yarning'/talking we can move forward and be stronger together for the future. Balanda need to move away from ticking boxes, we need to sit down and work together to come up with a plan where we are all players - where there are bits that countryman are good at and can do and bits that the Balanda are good at and can do. We can all do our part. But to do this, agencies need to cost engagement properly so that there is time and resources to do engagement more effectively.

**Know the hazard and identify the right people (holders of the key) for that hazard.**

For example, that cyclone belongs to the Dupepungu clan and they have a kinship relationship with the cyclone.

Each hazard has a different configuration of people who hold knowledge and have the acknowledged responsibility for responding to that hazard. There are recognised ways of communicating about the hazard among those that hold the knowledge and responsibility. In each community there will be individuals or clan groups identified with a hazard. This is an important group to engage with. Check in each community to find out who these people are. Involving them will mean that more people in the community will hear about warnings and what to do. We must value inclusion as a strength not a problem.

**Know what constitutes the community (and what sub groups are in it) you are working with.**

Know what the constituent elements of the community are and how leadership is connected. This can be clan groups, outstation communities or visitors to the community. Most communities are able to give clear directions to the way the community is constituted. If this is not available, the community elders are often able to identify sub groups within the general community. Though this version is unofficial, it is probably more accepted therefore not contested. This does not always provide enough information about the layers of leadership. This means there is not one but many leaders and each or all per group needs to be engaged.

Emergency Response governance structure and our role: they not connected proper way yet

- Outside agencies relying on convenience rather than real representation
- The privileging of individuals by placing them in decision making and leadership roles that they have no right to be in or desire to play. As well as burdening these individuals, it's alienated them from the people they are meant to be informing.
- Ignorance of community dynamics, interclan/family dynamics means that outside agencies persist with a model where they think an individual can represent/or access all.
- Outside agencies have ignored for too long the lack of alignment between their business and Bininj business on country. We need to move the two towards each other.
- Agencies are unaware of the burden of meetings and the burnout resulting therefrom especially for individuals who sit on multiple committees.

### Extent of use

The protocols have been distributed in the community. There is excitement about the protocols and the Mala has expressed interest to share with all agencies coming into Ramingining.

The protocols have been shared with the community of Galiwin'ku through the elders that came for a sharing meeting.



### Utilisation potential

This could be used as a complement of the existing protocols or be adopted as the protocols to follow not just by Ramingining community but by other communities too.

There is clear possibility to replicate the process and adapt the protocols for use in other remote communities.

### Utilisation impact

Both for agencies and the community the protocols clearly instruct what needs to happen for effective engagement.

potential to scale up model to other communities and jurisdictions.

### Utilisation and impact evidence

Not yet able to provide evidence until the protocols have been checked and endorsed by the wider community.



## NEXT STEPS

### STRONGER ENGAGEMENT WITH EM AGENCIES

Though the material nature of engagement may differ between projects, both groups agree that:

- The groups get opportunities and funding to hold consultations with other clans in remote areas in Arnhem Land and in Northern Australia to share their lessons and ideas about Emergency management.
- The groups get funding to support joint representation by the two Yolngu/Bininj groups in conversations with EM agencies – possibly including other related regional community members.
- EM agencies commit to locally guided engagement and consider and adopt the protocols developed in the project.
- EM agencies realistically cost engagement and provide adequate funding for planned and agreed participants, EM activities, skills and structures.
- EM agencies support the development of simple and effective messaging for EM in communities that will make information flows more consistent and understood. One suggestion was to colour code messaging as they do with warning letters from Centrelink.
- EM agencies send their staff for cultural courses on country.

### Access to useful visual tools

Although these tools have been drafted, we are seeking additional funding to finalize, translate and distribute them.

- Model of an inclusive decision-making pathway for emergency management (Poster)
- Community Emergency Response Plan – a Living handbook (Under preparation, we will need additional funding to teach key agencies and community members how to update the plan)
- Rapid Assessment and planning tool using 3D model map of Ramingining (needs to be mounted and finalized)
- 3 day training on country cultural training course outline (still needs to be prepared with countrymen)

### Issues to do with sustainability

Both projects have invested a lot of time, energy and local credibility in this work for the respective communities. A litany of unsupported and failed 'game changers' in the past means that every time a good initiative fails it becomes harder to convince people to get on-board with the next good idea.

From the outset Yolngu/Bininj leaders had a strong local purpose to which they applied the BNHCRC support. Their ownership and hope for significant change has sustained the local leadership. They have put a huge amount of work into



maintaining credibility in a process and goals that some community members initially had significant doubts about or alternative plans. The reputation and emotional risks have been high because of the unique level of local ownership of these projects.

Making the effort and the hoped-for outcomes sustainable in the face of business-as-usual and pragmatic government and other service providers is an equally big a challenge. Sustainability requires financial investment, which would likely be offset by better efficiencies and stronger outcomes, however it also requires a change in the precepts and 'culture' of the way EM and communities behave, relate to and work with each other. The BNHCRC's supportive effort has provided some reassurance and allowed time for some agencies to appreciate and begin to key into the local developments (for example, the NTG Department of Chief Minister funding, and Police department working with the Youth Justice reference group at Galiwin'ku). With the BNHCRC project support winding up it is critical to develop alternative and organic means for sustainability to meet and grow the opportunity that Yolngu/Bininj leaders have created.

### Areas of further research and effort

Cost the ARPNet derived community response-based plan for Ramingining and study its effectiveness with the possibility of upscaling the plan if it works well. May be useful to look at the current plan and this new plan to see how they compare on several important issues.

Study the real cost of effective collaboration/engagement. It seems to me that agencies are reluctant to engage because of the perceived costs of engagement. Are these costs real or imagined?

Develop a targeted training program that is focused on building capacity for the on ground, in community response.

Compare and contrast community focused response versus homeland focus response. Communities feel if they got a little bit of support, they would be much happier, safer in homelands than in the community. Is this true, what are they talking about here?

EM agencies realistically cost engagement and provide adequate funding for planned and agreed participants, EM activities, skills and structures.

EM agencies support the development of simple and effective messaging for EM in communities that will make information flows more consistent and understood. One suggestion (Ramingining) was to colour code messaging as they do with warning letters from Centrelink.

EM agencies send their staff for cultural courses on country (Ramingining).

### Ongoing/permanent effort

It is time agencies demonstrated real commitment to community engagement and create conducive spaces for communities to engage. Such a shift requires substantial investment in time and money, but it is the only way to engage in a real and effective way (See Sithole et al 2020). The benefits of co-delivery are demonstrably significant.



Transformational change in the ways governments and other service providers do business with communities is seen by participants of both community projects as a necessarily permanent state of affairs and this presents a substantial opportunity with willing partners. The imperative to shift from delivery to co-delivery is apparent, and the means to achieve this shift are being defined by community leaders at Ramingining and Galiwin'ku.

Both Galiwin'ku and Ramingining are in position to be invested in as a combined or as individual test case(s). The Ramingining group is already proposing that engagement be tried in the ways described in the project, properly documented and everything costed with a view to looking at the viability of this kind of model as well as potential replicability of appropriate characteristics of the approach elsewhere.

### Scaling-up with other communities

There is a strong desire from the leaders at Galiwin'ku and Ramingining to share what they have learned and created with other communities in the Top End and further afield. Networks of kin and cultural responsibility extend large distances to other communities and it makes sense to extend the benefits (and challenges) of this action research. Ngukurr and Gunbalanya were involved in community resilience work under a precursory BNHCRC project and similarly, used their PAR approach for that. Interest has already been expressed by these and other community leaders, for example in the Roper Gulf region and neighbouring Arnhem Land, to engage in this kind of work locally. The resonance and good will extend beyond NT borders, to others remote settings, also keen to overhaul engagement with governments and others. As suggested earlier, remote Indigenous communities share many challenges, including in the EM space for which these projects offer significant insight and confidence.

An engagement framework which acknowledges the similarities and respects the uniqueness of individual locations and peoples can be explored and used as a foundation for empowering equitable and effective partnership building in other jurisdictions.

The re-engagement between community and EM agencies at Galiwin'ku and Ramingining has some way to play out before it becomes part of a strategy that can be offered with any confidence to other communities. Yolngu and Bininj researchers involved in these projects see the projects as first and foremost about their respective places, about their families and their communities. They also see and aspire to carry the initiative further afield, in Arnhem Land and possibly interstate. In this endeavor, a framework approach like the one they have instigated would help other communities get their local story around EM resolved and broader need for improved cultural and social resilience addressed.

The importance of scaling-up has been a pillar of the NAILSMA and Charles Darwin University strategic approach and of importance to the BNHCRC and EM agencies alike, though resources have not yet been captured to set plans for cross-jurisdictional scaling in train.

### Table 2: Next steps summary



Findings	Need	Priority	Action/Step	Responsibility
<b>There is an overcrowding of service providers without effective guidance or coordination and communication with Aboriginal leaders is poor.</b>	Mutual acknowledgement that improved communication between agencies and community will lead to increased engagement of community residents to promote better service delivery.	High	Increased engagement by agencies with acknowledged community leadership and advocacy for greater involvement of community leaders in community governance and decision making processes.	This effort needs to be initiated and supported by leadership from both agency and community at the same time. To improve the likelihood of success, this effort will likely require the expertise of agencies like ARPNet and NAILSMA to navigate, facilitate and support the process.
	Raise awareness among agency leaders and Aboriginal community leaders that the issues raised by this project will continue to burden and restrict the capability in service delivery until they are addressed.	High	Communicate the issues raised by this project widely. Actively encourage a meaningful conversation at the highest levels about the best ways to approach these issues.	This effort needs to be initiated and supported by leadership from both agency and community at the same time. To improve the likelihood of success, this effort will likely require the expertise of agencies like ARPNet and NAILSMA to navigate, facilitate and support the process.
<b>It is essential to the resilience of communities that the 'right people' and organisations are engaged with properly.</b>	Acknowledgement from key stakeholders that it is essential to identify and engage the expert services of suitable agents to navigate, facilitate and support the communication and engagement processes.	High	Community and agency reps begin discussion about practical details in moving forward. Source funding to progress the communication and engagement process that this project has identified as the critical next step. Build local capability including Leadership and administration training Acquisition of essential infrastructure and resources  The development of essential tools.	The responsibility to move to a longer term practical process where the 'how to' questions are addressed in detail rests with the partnership between community leadership and agency leadership.
<b>Lack of consistent support, short-term funding and commitment hamper the</b>	Ongoing forum for sharing experience, gaining support and Cross-pollinating successful leadership ideas. This should occur amongst leaders across North	Mod.	Identify opportunities to share the lessons learnt from this project with other remote communities in Northern Australia and with other government and associated agencies.	The utilization workshop held at CDU in November 2020 strongly indicated the need by, and interest of, community leaders and EM agency leaders alike, to broaden the discussion and sharing opportunities across jurisdictions.



<b>incremental process of partnership building - the 'long game'</b>	Australian Indigenous communities and relevant government agencies across jurisdictions.			The responsibility lies with these stakeholder groups.
<b>EM and other agencies cannot develop effective tools for partnership building, resilience or EM action with Bininj/Yolngu without Bininj help and leaderships</b>	Effective engagement tools to guide partnership building and practical response.	High	Further develop and complete tools for hazard preparation, post cyclone response, direct involvement of community leadership and workers.  Communicate in forms accessible to Yolngu, Bininj, govt and others using long term delivery platforms and strategies.	Creation of tools by appointed group, for example ARPNet and supported by relevant community and agency interests.
<b>Land and sea ranger groups have much to offer EM but are marginalized and not a significant part of EM planning, preparation, response or reconstruction.</b>	Specific discussion and planning around the direct involvement of local and regional ranger groups in EM.	High	Community leaders begin or continue engagement with ranger group leaders and administrators about potential roles, responsibilities and requirements for ranger engagement in EM related activities. EM agencies to be brought into this conversation if/when the local leadership agree on its desirability. Where ranger groups are administered by external orgs. (eg NLC) those orgs. must be key participants in the discussion/planning as well.	Initial responsibility is with community and ranger group leaders. EM agencies and outside administrators (NLC where applicable) will carry responsibility if and when the involvement of rangers is desirable and feasible. Other communities may take on similar initiatives if they choose to take this or similar path.
	Explore resources to continue the initiative, recognizing that without further resourced action, the relative dysfunction of the status quo will remain.	High	Continue conversation with the CRC in anticipation of reinvestment from the new CRC in 2021/22. Work with Northern Territory govt on 'community decision making' program.  Continue discussion with NTES to start new partnership building and investment in earnest. Seek	Existing project facilitators (NAILSMA, ARPNET), engaged community leaders at Galiwin'ku and Ramingining, engaged EM agency leaders (BFNT, NTES et al) all have some responsibility to continue this work and help source, or provide, support to the community initiatives



			other partners interested in supporting resilience and improved governance around EM.	
<b>Yolngu/Bininj do not have dedicated infrastructure (eg research, training, planning facility) to maximise their value to EM</b>	Provide necessary infrastructure for community leaders to have a recognised, permanent place to meet and do business.	High	Review and consider options for leadership venue and the functions it should accommodate. Seek resources to fix, build, renovate appropriate site and set up the venue.	Galiwin’ku and Ramingining leadership groups their supporters and investing partners

### Community advice on investment needs and opportunities

This BHCRC supported PAR at Galiwin-ku and Ramingining has on all accounts been enormously beneficial. Financial, administrative and logistical support through project partners has enables Yolngu/Bininj to look deeply into their communities and reach beyond them to connect with each other and with significant players in the EM sector. This has been a unique experience for all. The project program and support has run out. These communities as prime end users are left hanging in the all-to-common precarity of no knowing whether further support will keep this initiative going. Their projects were undertaken without dedicated vehicles, workspaces or other resources that may have engendered more confidence in being able to finish the job well.

Discussion about future investment were partly in response to the precarity of outside help and partly about planning for greater capability and independence in future. The following table reflects the advice given about investment needs and opportunities.

Human time and effort to progress local and collaborative work, including meetings, workshops, planning sessions etc.
Material and production costs for comms and other tools
Infrastructure dedicated to Yolngu/Bininj multi-function work needs (training, workshopping, data, information and other keeping place, leadership hub)
Training, capability building and education (local and agency focused)
Scaling up capability
Local leadership center/DDA vehicle/ community vehicle for Ramingining team
Ranger group capability building/clan based learning
Future research capability



This project was hoping to engage with another BNHCRC project on Scenario Planning to do a cost benefit analysis of the economy around the business-as-usual approach to EM in communities compared with that where some of the responsibilities are handed to Yolngu and Bininj to manage. Early conclusions suggest that this would reduce time and cost commitment from EM agencies in remote areas for such things as:

- Community consultation and planning
- General communications and warnings etc
- Local organisation of resources
- Early, rapid assessment
- Clean up and access clearing
- Capability building and training for the long term
- Accessing specific tools and information about locals to aid in planning and response
- Vehicle and accommodation hire
- Post traumatic stress services

This work needs to be done to paint a clearer picture of the additional cost if any, over the short and long term of investing in Indigenous leadership and EM capability in the communities.



## PUBLICATIONS LIST

### PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

- 1 James G., James B., Morrison J., and Paton D. *Resilient Communities and Reliable Prosperity*. In Russell-Smith J., James G., Pedersen H. and Sangha K. (eds.) (2019). Sustainable Land Sector development in Northern Australia: Indigenous rights, aspirations, and cultural responsibilities. CRC Press, Boca Raton, Fl. USA.
- 2 Sithole B., Campbell D., Sutton S., Sutton I., with Campion O., Campion M., Brown C., Daniels G., Daniels A., Brian C, Campion J., Yibarbuk, D, Phillips E., Daniels G., Daniels D., Daniels P., Daniels K., Campion M., Hedley B., Radford M., Campion A., Campion S., Hunter -Xenie H; and Pickering S. (accepted for publication). Blackfella way, our way of managing fires and disasters bin ignored but im still here - Indigenous governance structures for fire emergency management to be published in ed H. James et al the APRU series Vol 1 Palgrave. Presented at AFAC 2017. Sydney, Australia (New series editor to be announced).
- 3 Sithole B. (2018) Lost and found among the Aboriginal people of Arnhem Land, Australia. Issue on Education, Journal for Research and Debate. 3
- 4 Sithole B. Campion O. B., and Hunter-Xenie H (2018). Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia – community led response to disaster preparedness. AJEM Volume 31, No. 4, October 2016 ISSN: 1324 1540.
- 5 Sithole B., Hunter-Xenie H., Yibarbuk D., Daniels C., Daniels, G., Campion B.O., Box 6.4 Living with Widditjth – protocols for building community resilience Box 6.4, Chapter 6. In Russell-Smith, J., James, G., Pedersen, H. and Sangha, K.K. (Editors) 2019. *Sustainable land sector development in northern Australia: Indigenous rights, aspirations and cultural responsibilities.*, CRC Press, Boca Raton, Florida USA Pg. 158-160.
- 6 Sangha K., Sithole B., Hunter -Xenie H., Daniels C., Yibarbuk D., James G., Chritsie M., Gould J., Edwards A., and Russel Smith J. (2017). Empowering Indigenous Communities in Natural disaster-prone Northern Australia. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* November 2017, Vol. 35, No. 3, pp. 137-153.
- 7 Sithole B. Campion O. B., and Hunter-Xenie H (2017). Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia – community led response to disaster preparedness. AJEM Volume 31, No. 4, October 2016 ISSN: 1324 1540.
- 8 Sangha, K.K., Sithole, B., Hunter-Xenie, H., Daniels, C., Yibarbuk, D., James, G., Michael, C., Gould, J., Edwards, A., Russell-Smith, J. 2017. Empowering remote Indigenous communities in northern Australia. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters* 35, 137-153.
- 9 Buergelt P., Sithole B, Sangha K, et al 2017. Resilience: Integrating Indigenous worldviews, knowledges, sensitivities and practices in building adaptive capacities, In D. Paton & D. Johnston (Eds., *Disaster resilience: An integrated approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.
- 10 Sithole B, and Hunter-Xenie H, Yibarbuk D, Daniels C, Daniels G, Campion O. B, Namarnyilk S, Narorroga E, Dann O, Dirdi K, Nayilibibj G, Phillips E, Daniels K, Daniels A, Daniels G, Turner H, Daniels C.A, Daniels T, Thomas P, Thomas D, Rami T, Brown C. (2017). Living with Widditjth - Protocols for building community resilience., In D. Paton & D. Johnston (Eds., *Disaster resilience: An integrated approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas.

### OTHER – MATERIAL

- 11 Campbell M, Garrawiritja J. (2019) Public use brochure about the Dalkarra and Djirrikay Authority for use by the Yolngu community. DDA, Galiwin'ku, NT.
- 12 Campbell M, Garrawiritja J. (2019) Public use brochure about the Dalkarra and Djirrikay Authority for use by non-Yolngu service providers. DDA, Galiwin'ku, NT.
- 13 Dhamarandji A M, Maypalama E, Burton D. (2017) Burrumalala (Strong Winds) Research Project – Galiwin'ku 2016. NAILSMA. Darwin, NT.
- 14 Sithole B with ARPNet team protocols for effective engagement in Ramingining, ARPNet at RIEL, Charles Darwin University.
- 15 Sithole B with ARPNET team Emergency response Decision making pathway for Ramingining, an online handbook. ARPNet at CDU.

### OTHER – CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 16 Gondarra T. 2019. Government and Governance in Yolngu Society. BNHCRC Research Advisory Forum. Darwin. November, 2020.
- 17 Sithole B and ARPNet 2020. The future in our own hands - effective pathways for disaster risk reduction in remote communities in Northern Australia. Australian Disaster Risk Conference. 25 August 2020.
- 18 Sithole et al 2020. Are disasters really transformative opportunities in remote and poor communities in Arnhem land and southern Africa. Panelists for the DRSI panel. ANU. 12 August 2020 {<https://anu.zoom.us/j/95799645003>}.
- 19 B. Sithole., O. Campion., D. Burton., S. Sutton., G. James., and H. Hunter-Xenie. Moving together to move forward: Lessons in effective on-ground engagement in emergency management from Arnhem land, Australia. Abstract submitted for the AFAC research forum 2020. (Conference was postponed to 2021).



- 20 Sithole B with ARPNet 2019. Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia – Community led preparedness. Presented at the APRU Conference, 2019, ANU, Australia.
- 21 Sithole B, Hunter-Xenie, H, with the ARPNet 2019. Hazard smart remote communities in Northern Australia. Presentation at the AFAC research forum 2019, Perth. (see paper in AJEM)
- 22 Gondarra T. 2019. Government and Governance in Yolngu Society. BNHCRC Research Advisory Forum. Darwin 2019.
- 23 Russell-Smith J., James G., van-Wezel K. 2018. Building Community Resilience in Northern Australia: Scoping remote community resilience, building better governance, finding new opportunities to grow resilience. BNHCRC Research Advisory Forum. April 2018.
- 24 Sutton S., Sithole B., Sutton I., Campbell, D., Cameron M., Campion O.B., Campion M., Brian R., 2017. Training as Research and Research as Training in remote north Australia.,
- 25 Sithole B., Hunter Xenie H., Sutton S., Sutton I., Campbell D., Yibarbuk D., Campion O., Brian C., Redford M., Campion J., Campion M., and Brian H., 2017 Time to get the balance right with them government mob – building resilience in BNH management through stronger community participation. AFAC 2017, Sydney Australia.

## PROJECT RELATED INTERVIEWS

- 26 Interview with BNHCRC Researchers Hmalan Hunter Xenie and Steve Sutton. <https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/resources/presentation-audio-video/5734>.

## CONFERENCE POSTERS

- 27 Sithole B, Campion B.M., Brian C., Bununggu J, and Sutton S with ARPnet team. 2020. Unmasking the hidden structures within – A pathway for effective community level decision-making for emergency response in central Arnhem land. AFAC 2020.
- 28 Sutton S, Sithole B. Hunter-Xenie H., and Campion B. O. 2019. To change a culture, you have to understand it. Presented at AFAC 2019.
- 29 Sutton S., Sithole B., Sutton I., Campbell D., Cameron M., Campion O., Campion M., Brian R., (2018) Training as Research and Research as Training in remote north Australia. Presented at AFAC (2018).
- 30 James G. Changing Lives in a Changing World – recognising and respecting foundations of Indigenous community resilience. Presented at AFAC. 2018.
- 31 Sithole B., Sutton S., Pickering S., Hunter-Xenie H., Sutton I, Campbell. D., Yibarbuk D., Campion O., Brian C., Redford M., Campion J., Campion M., and Brian H. 2017. Time to get the balance right with them government mob – building resilience in BNH management through stronger community participation. AFAC 2017.



## TEAM MEMBERS

### RAMINGINING TEAM MEMBERS

The research team comprises of community based Aboriginal researchers from the Aboriginal research Practitioners Network or ARPNet. ARPNet is a community-based research group with Aboriginal researchers in Ngukurr, Ramingining, Maningrida, Gunbalunya, Darwin, Broome and Toorak. ARPNet trains, develops appropriate tools for and equips Aboriginal researchers to undertake nuanced work in local language and are very highly regarded for their expertise and exceptional achievements in contracted local research.

The community based researchers worked with the support of Bev Sithole as project leader and received logistics and field support from Hmalan Hunter-Xenie. Otto Bulmaniya Champion was the community research leader and his team included Christine Brown, Tolbert Dharramaba, Joy Burruna, Joy Borruwa and Hmalan Hunter-Xénié, with contributions from Brian C, Brian H, J Champion, R Bunnunggu, M Champion, M Redford, R Brian. and M Cameron.

### GALIWIN'KU TEAM MEMBERS

Community based researchers and project facilitators:

Early research was hosted by Yalu Marnggithinyaraw Corp. at Galiwin'ku. Yalu affiliated researchers included Susan Dhualatji, Valery Bulkunu, Elaine Maypilama, Joanne Garngulpuy, Christine Motatj, Evonne Mitjarrandi, Maratja Dhamarrandji.

Later research and facilitation was undertaken on behalf of clan leaders and their Dalkarra Djirrikay Authority (DDA). This work was facilitated by Maratja Dhamarrandji, Ted Gondarra, James Garrawiritja, Elaine Maypilama, Dorothy Yungirrnga and Susan Dhualatji.

Senior Yolngu responsible for project oversight and the development of the DDA included; James Gumbula (deceased), Richard Gandhawuy, Danny Dangatanga, Geoffrey Gurwanawuy, Trevor Gurruwiwi, Oscar Datjarranga, James Bayung, Timothy Buthimang, Dick Munungurr, Glen Gurruwiwi, Jacko Wanambi, Shane Dhawa, Bruce Laylayi, Doris Yethun, Rosanne Djandi, Rosemary Gundjarangbuy, Margaret Gudumurrkuwuy, Melissa Campbell, Joan Malku, Megan Yunupingu, Helen Nyomba.

NAILSMA personnel included Glenn James as project manager, Danny Burton facilitating and Janely Seah providing financial management.

Red Cross contributors: Critical support and contributions to the project were made by staff at Red Cross based at Galiwin'ku.



## CONCLUDING REFLECTION

Currently the relationship between agencies and Bininj is best described in this little story where a representative of each group goes on a journey together.

Bininj are in the vehicle and don't know where they are going, just that they are on a journey, while the agency representative is in the driving seat and is not really sure of the directions that he has been given to follow. He trusts his map and his skill and does not think to ask Bininj beside him if he knows the way. As they continue on their journey, they drive through many river crossings, some they cross well, others not so well. Bininj can see the agency person is struggling but just watches as they go along because he believes that the agency person would not take advice any way. As they go, they hear a funny sound then the vehicle comes to a stop. The agency man looks around, and cannot fix the motor car, then he stands on the hood and gets on his sat phone and calls someone far away. He still does not think to ask Bininj if they have a solution to the problem, and Bininj reckon, if they don't ask, they would not let bush mechanic tinker with the car anyway. They sit by the side of the road together and wait for long time for help to come. (Senior Bininj project participant. 2020)

It is time for agencies to acknowledge that they are on this journey together with Bininj, and that Bininj may actually bring something valuable to the table. For now, the agencies hold all the cards, and until and when they are ready to really engage, communities will remain silent passengers in EM.