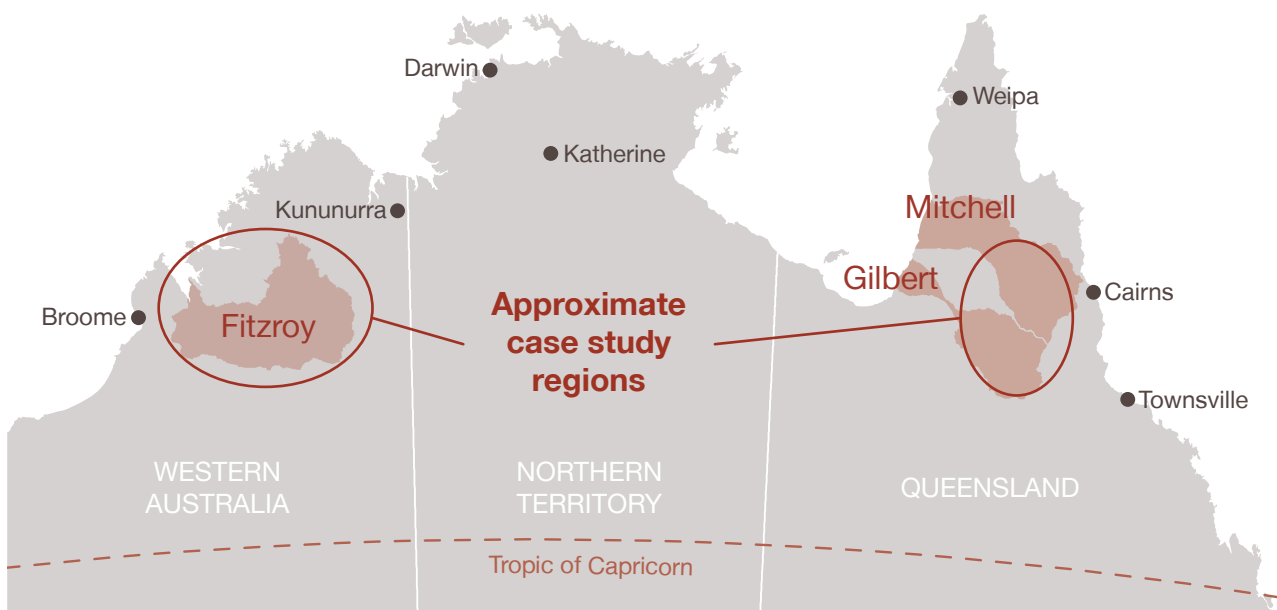




What's new?

Our activities and achievements so far in 2017 include

1. **We published a journal article** that highlights the importance and difficulty of, 'valuing' some of the complex social benefits generated by things such as Indigenous Land and Sea Management Programs (ILSMPs). The article can be requested from <https://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/49791>. The world forum on Natural Capital encouraged us to develop a blog based on that article: <https://naturalcapitalforum.com/news/article/the-crowding-out-of-complex-social-goods>
2. **We received data** from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) about government spending on ILSMPs across the north, **and used it** – in conjunction with data collected by Dr Ro Hill (leader for project 5.4) – **in three economic models** (for the Kimberley, the NT, and Far North Queensland) to assess the regional economic 'impact' of these programs. We have a journal article describing that analysis under review. We've also developed a stand-alone policy note (*Can Indigenous Land and Sea management programs promote regional development and help Close the Gap?*) based on the economic modelling article, available at <http://www.nespnorthern.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Project-5.3-policy-note-Dec-2017.pdf>
3. Combining insights from literature on the Theory of Change, Impact Evaluation and Wellbeing, **we developed a novel approach to assessing a wide range of social and economic impacts** of government and other programs. The approach asks intended beneficiaries to identify and rate factors that are important to their wellbeing. It also asks them to rate their satisfaction with those factors now, and before the program was implemented. Qualitative responses to questions about perceived causes of change are linked to quantitative data to draw inferences about the existence and/or importance of impact(s) and about people's perceptions of the extent to which the program contributed to change. We have submitted an article, based on this method, to a journal for review, and note that further testing and refinement of the method may find that it could be used in a wide range of settings.
4. **We have finished collecting individual interview data** that will provide insights about some of the social and economic benefits of the ILSMPs. This data will provide further opportunity to test and refine our 'impact evaluation' method in different contexts (and with different types of land management programs). Data collection activities involved:
 - a. Working with our Indigenous partner in Qld – Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation. **We have now completed 79 interviews** in and around Mareeba, Atherton, Kuranda, Cairns, Brisbane and Cherbourg.



Approximate location of the case study regions in the Kimberley (WA) and far north Queensland.



b. Working with our four partners in the Fitzroy River catchment – Bununba Dawangarri Aboriginal Corporation, Walalakoo Aboriginal Corporation, the Yi-Martuwarra Claimants/Claim Group, and the Gooniyandi Aboriginal Corporation. In August 2017, we visited 19 communities and two towns (Derby, Fitzroy Crossing), **completing 106 individual interviews, and two 'group' interviews.** Communities visited included: Bungardi, Darlingunaya and Junjuwa (Bunuba); Djugerari, Ngurtuwarta, Yakanarra, and Kadjina (Yi-Matawurra claimant group); Yiyilli, Ganinya, Mimbi, Bayulu, Ngalingkadjji and Muludja (Gooniyandi); Looma, Jarlmadangah, Balginjirr, Bidan, Pandanus Park (Nyikina-Mangala).

Emerging findings

1. **Indigenous land and sea management programs generate a range of benefits.** These benefits can be (simplistically) classified in two ways: first, according to whether the benefit accrues primarily to an individual or to the broader community; second, according to whether the benefit is relatively simple (e.g. food) or complex (cultural). The valuation tools developed by economists over the last 100 years are differentially suited to assessing particular types of goods and services. The most common methods are adept at highlighting the benefits of simple individual goods. Recent developments have also seen progress towards the valuation of complex individual goods. Much less well developed, however, are methods to estimate the benefits of complex social goods. We need



Conducting interviews in north Queensland, photo Ewamian Aboriginal Corporation.

to develop methods that are able to do so, or risk 'crowding out' these complex social goods (if only by neglect because we focus most attention on simple individual goods, the benefits of which are, in relative terms, easier to measure).

2. **Indigenous land and sea management programs make a significant contribution to regional economies** – with multipliers commonly exceeding that of other key regional industries such as agriculture and mining. Associated expenditures also make a significant contribution to the Australian Federal Government's goal of closing the gap, and have the potential to continue to do so, provided the proportion of money that is spent on Indigenous (compared to non-Indigenous) incomes does not fall below a threshold amount. Rather than finding evidence of a trade-off between socio-ecological and financial/economic goals, our results suggest that Indigenous land and sea management programs, known for their ecological importance, can also make a vitally important contribution to economic development in rural areas.
3. **'Knowing that country is being looked after' and 'Having legal right/access to the country' are important to the wellbeing** of our first group of interviewees (N=67 Ewamian people, data collected during the first half of 2017). Some of these people felt that Native Title determination, their declared Indigenous Protected Area and associated land management programs had a significant and positive impact on these 'important' factors. Evidently, ILSMPs have the potential to positively impact some of the things (beyond jobs and income) which are important to the wellbeing of Indigenous people.
4. We have yet to complete such a thorough analysis of the rest of the Ewamian data, or of the data collected in the Kimberley, but **early insights suggest** that
 - a. Factors that directly relate to ILSMPs (e.g. 'Knowing that country is being looked after', 'Having legal right/access to the country', 'Having (paid local) Jobs') are important to the wellbeing of people in all of our study areas
 - b. The lowest levels of satisfaction (and most significant declines in satisfaction during recent years) were associated with reduced numbers of jobs available locally, low incomes, poor or crowded housing, and 'social ills' (use of grog and gunja).



Multiple benefits and knowledge systems of ILSMPs

Project leader: Natalie Stoeckl, James Cook University

Project update, November 2017

- c. Some of the most significant, positive, changes reported during recent years had direct links to ILSMPs – specifically, having legal access to country, knowing that country is being looked after, having more (positive) role models in communities (with specific reference to rangers).

of this expenditure in northern Australia. It will also look at some of the characteristics of Indigenous corporations that are involved in land management activities across northern Australia. This project is partnering with communities in the upper Gilbert/Mitchell River catchments (Qld) and the Fitzroy Valley in the Kimberley (WA) to develop case studies.

Upcoming activities

Planned project activities over the next six months include

- **Further analysis of income and employment data** from businesses registered with the Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations. We will be specifically looking for spatial or temporal ‘patterns’ in the data, e.g. attempting to determine if business in locations with particular characteristics (proximity to market or to IPAs) perform better or worse than others; and/or if there is evidence to suggest that businesses which start by undertaking various land management activities, seem better able to diversify in subsequent years.
- **Visit our Qld and Kimberley partners** to report back on preliminary results and analysis undertaken to date, before further progressing related outputs.
- **Undertake workshops with key community ‘leaders’** (to be determined) that seek to understand the contribution of ILSMPs to the longer-term aspirations of communities, over time, and in relation to other activities, e.g. agricultural, tourism or other enterprises.

Thanks go to Sharon Prior, Tanya Casey, Megan Mosquito, Lyn Baily, Jenny Lacey, Ken Georgetown and Barry Fisher, for making their social networks available to us and for their assistance with the data collection in Qld. In the Kimberley, thanks go to the people who helped conduct interviews (Emile Boxer, Celia Boxer, Christine Boddington and Otto Christensen), and to our cultural brokers (Pampila Boxer, Lena Fraser, Mary Spinks, John Quilty, Thomas Dick, Helen Majo, Clarisha Watson, Thelma Sebastian). Also huge thanks to Laurel Sutcliffe for insights about working in the Kimberley (and for providing us with useful contacts), and Karen Dayman for her help organising things for the Kimberley trip.

Project summary

Investments in ILSMPs are growing, both internationally and in Australia. Whilst these programs aim to generate environmental benefits, they also generate many social, cultural and economic co-benefits. While we have some understanding of the monetary value of some of these co-benefits, we lack information about other less tangible co-benefits such as those relating to culture. Funding agencies such as governments, businesses and NGOs would like to know if their investments represent ‘value for money’. This project will provide quantified, comparable data about some of the co-benefits of different types of ILSMPs. It will use some broad-scale ‘desktop’ data relating to government expenditure on ILSMPs to assess the regional economic impact

Further information

Contact project leader, Natalie Stoeckl at natalie.stoeckl@jcu.edu.au

The project page can be found [on the Hub website](#), along with the [start-up factsheet](#).



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