Disaster Resilience and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities in Darwin and Palmerston

Stage 2 Report:
Indigenous Researcher Development

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Executive Summary

In June 2015, the Australian Red Cross commissioned the Northern Institute of Charles Darwin University to carry out a series of consultations focused on the experiences of Indigenous communities in Darwin and Palmerston during emergencies.

This research was carried out in two stages. Stage 1 involved a number of consultations, the aim of which was to explore the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Darwin when a cyclone, bushfire or severe weather event strikes and in its aftermath, and to identify determinants of vulnerability from the perspective of these communities.

Stage 2 of this research has focused on Indigenous researcher development, and ways in which Indigenous researchers participating in projects such as this one, may be recognised for their contributions, and supported in their professional development, within and beyond the life of the project.

The basis of this work has been a series of discussions with project researchers, reflecting on their involvement in this project, and what worked and what didn’t. We have also worked together to produce a number of online profiles which showcase these (and other) Indigenous researchers, recording and displaying previous work that they have carried out, and detailing kinds of research work that they may be interested in pursuing in the future.

Throughout both stages of this research project, the Indigenous researchers involved have clearly articulated that both research and emergency management work offer promising employment opportunities for Indigenous people in urban and remote communities.

Drawing on this Stage 2 work, the following pages outline means for supporting community based Indigenous researchers in the course of their work with government, nongovernment and university organisations, and for appropriately attending to the professional development of these workers in the conduct of research work.

We hope that these suggestions and insights will be of benefit to organisations working with Indigenous researchers and volunteers, and will support the possibility of mutual benefit and learning in the course of these collaborations.
Key Learnings

- The involvement of Aboriginal knowledge and agreement making authorities and their communities in the design and undertaking of research improves the quality and the outcomes of the research. Fostering the development and visibility of Indigenous researchers on their own terms is a critical part of that process.

- Aboriginal knowledge-making and agreement-making processes have distinctive protocols and methods. These differ considerably from mainstream Western research protocols, and as such are not always well recognised within the academy or remunerated in project work.

- There is no one-size-fits-all approach to recognising and profiling professional research capacity. Aboriginal knowledge authorities operate within particular roles, responsibilities and accountabilities when going about their research work. Documenting these roles and responsibilities can be a collaborative process.

- Indigenous researcher development does not involve training Indigenous researchers in western research methods, but negotiating methods which take seriously both Western and Aboriginal practices of knowledge and agreement making.

- When engaging Indigenous researchers, it is important to recognise, and appropriately remunerate, differing levels of seniority and cultural authority. In particular, the elders who guide and authorize the research practices.

- Reciprocity in research relationships is a key aspect of Indigenous led research practice. Knowledge and opinion have value in Aboriginal communities. This extends to how participants may be thanks for their contribution, as well as ways in which researchers themselves may feel supported through the act of working with and for indigenous people and communities.

- Providing feedback on research results, and following through on research recommendations, is seen as an important feature of research carried out in Indigenous communities. When feedback and substantive change do not eventuate from a research process, people may feel let down or disregarded.

- Intergenerational capacity building is a key priority identified by Indigenous researchers and research organisations. Supporting young Indigenous people to participate in research and service delivery opens up new possibilities for employment within remote and urban Indigenous communities.

- Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this collaborative design work involves developing robust practices for research project management – including particularly the financial aspects – invoicing, payments and taxation but also contract work.
1. Introduction

GroundUp

The Contemporary Indigenous Knowledge and Governance Group within the Northern Institute at Charles Darwin University has significant experience working in Aboriginal communities in Darwin and remote regions of Northern Australia. Our work involves the coordination of collaborative research, teaching and service delivery with Northern Territory Aboriginal knowledge authorities.

We have named our particular research approach 'GroundUp' because of our commitment to working collaboratively on the ground, taking seriously the knowledge and governance of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. As such, our research involves participating in the collective life of particular places, and doing so in collaboration with local researchers and consultants who belong to that place or organisation.

Our project work in communities includes working to constitute new site-specific research groups supporting the work of particular research projects, and the development of Indigenous services products. We take seriously the knowledge and governance practices of Aboriginal people, wherever they are. Our work includes developing relationships with prospective local co-researchers and senior authorities who will guide research work and services delivery, as well as identifying resources necessary for these services to be delivered.

Working locally in this way, the building of service delivery capacity is a key feature of our research and facilitation work. Our location within the northern region provides a locus for knowledge and culture interventions, as we foster and articulate the making of strategic links between people, ideas, institutions, places and contexts. Examples of these are governments, Aboriginal people, civil society and universities as they respectively seek to understand how research and services delivery work, embedded as they are in changing political economies and policy areas.

Figure 1: Researchers James Gaykamaŋu and Donna Jackson speaking with residents of One Mile Dam Town Community about their experiences of bad weather.
Disaster Resilience Research

Stage 1 of this project was conducted in 2015 and was focussed on the experiences of Aboriginal people living in Town Communities and the Long Grass during severe or extreme weather events (for more details see the Stage 1 project report [http://www.cdu.edu.au/sites/default/files/the-northern-institute/drmp-report-2016.pdf](http://www.cdu.edu.au/sites/default/files/the-northern-institute/drmp-report-2016.pdf)).

Pre-existing assumptions about what might constitute resilience, or disasters, were not used to ground or organise our research approach. Rather we began to collaboratively develop strategies for working in the project sites, including approaching Town Camp Leaders, seeking advice from elders, and beginning to work together with a small but diverse team of Indigenous co-researchers.

Throughout this project we were guided by, and supported, several key Indigenous researchers – Kellie Pollard, Donna Jackson and Maurice Fejo from the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation, James Gaykamanju from the Bagot Community, and Yirrinjiŋba and Bulkanhawuy from Raki’ Mala Indigenous Consultants. Without the knowledge, experience and engagement methods of the Indigenous co-researchers, it would not have been possible to meet with so many people and work carefully with their ideas and experiences.

As we began work on the project the Australian Red Cross introduced us to the existing project plans and objectives. Key NTES staff also emphasised that hearing the stories and experiences of vulnerable people in adverse weather would be of particular benefit as they devised future emergency management strategies and community engagement activities.

We met with Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC) to discuss their current role in working with vulnerable Aboriginal populations, and to devise a working plan for the project. All subsequent activities have been carried out under the guidance of LNAC, and as a collaboration between CDU and LNAC researchers.

It was agreed that while aspects of traditional knowledge may arise in these consultations, they would not be a primary focus of the research. The project instead was more significantly focused around the identification of tangible local outcomes supporting the safety and well-being of Indigenous communities during future emergency events.

Early on within the project it was identified that the assistance of Indigenous researchers would be significant to the success of the project, at the same time as it was recognised that these researchers would be bringing skills to the project that were not easily recognised within the Western academy or employment pathways.

It was agreed that a key component of the research would hinge around Indigenous researcher development; both in the conduct of the project, as well as beyond the project through the development of means for recognising and profiling Indigenous research work.
Recognising community researcher and volunteer services

In negotiating the Stage 1 research, all organisations involved voiced a commitment to supporting the development of Indigenous research capacity through the project work. Towards the end of Stage 1 an additional Stage 2 of the project was negotiated. The new project agreement noted that:

As has often been the case, these willing and capable co-researchers mentioned their feelings of invisibility and lack of recognition for their many years of contribution to knowledge work, agreement making, evaluation and consultancies. [Stage 2 aims to] develop forms of recognition which are relevant for the skills and expertise that these researchers brought to the project (Research Services Agreement, 2016).

This new round of work was to proceed in 3 stages:

STAGE 1: Work with a web designer to produce a prototype website displaying research profiles of Indigenous researchers and research organisations

STAGE 2: Work with Indigenous researchers involved in previous Australian Red Cross/CDU research projects, and other interested Indigenous researchers collaborating with CDU, to feedback on the website and develop their own research profiles

STAGE 3: Complete a short report for Australian Red Cross reflecting on the insights gained from collaborative work with Indigenous researchers in Step 2, and detailing some ways to support and recognise Indigenous researchers and volunteers involved in projects or programs

Figure 2. Yirrininba Dhurrkay (left) and Joy Bulkanhawuy (right), researchers from Raki Mala Indigenous Consultants (www.rakimala.com)
It was not clear at the outset what the best means might be for profiling skills and competencies of Indigenous researchers. The research project itself was an experiment in the ways in which differing skills and capacities of the research team could collaborate towards an outcome which was both amenable to the funders, researchers and participants on the ground. Continuing to work beyond the completion of the Stage 1 report, we also began to explore means for supporting Indigenous researcher development.

In the following sections we report on the findings that have emerged from these experiments. Initially, we recount reflections made by the Indigenous researchers on the project. In Section 3, we provide suggestions for engaging and recognising Indigenous researchers in the future based on this project, and subsequent work to produce online research profiles. Finally, in Section 4, we offer suggestions regarding how government and nongovernment organisations may embark on future practices of collaborative research and service delivery design.

Figure 3. Raki Mala researcher Joy Bulkenhawuy (right) speaking with Yolŋu living in the Long Grass about their experiences of bad weather.
2. Reflections on research in Indigenous Town Communities and the Long Grass

Following the completion of the research project, a number of the researchers who had been involved in the work were asked to reflect on their experiences of the project. What worked well and what didn’t? In what ways were their particular skills and contributions recognised? Were there practices of protocols which emerged in this work which might be recommended to other researchers and research projects?

Drawing on the words of the Indigenous researchers involved, we present some of these reflections below, drawing out key issues and themes, and detailing what was significant in the conduct of research involving Indigenous communities and Indigenous co-researchers. Our suggestion here is that by considering the experiences of Indigenous researchers involved in research and other project work, appropriate means for supporting researcher development might be recognised and acted upon.

Research is a reciprocal relationship

“This project was a really important experience for me, and also for those people we visited when we were doing that research. We were sitting with them, and they could tell us their stories. The research helped with getting ideas and putting them together, we were giving out to the people and the people were getting some education as well, and that is an important thing.”

— Joy Bulkanhawuy, Raki Mala Indigenous Consultants

“If you are talking to people, provide them with a sandwich and a drink because otherwise they will think they are telling their story for nothing. It is important to go with people who knows them very well, they can know the car and they know who is coming.”

— James Gaykamangu, Yolŋu elder, Bagot Community

“If people at One Mile Dam, for example, begin to think someone actually cares, but then a few months down the track find that nothing has changed, they will feel let down and like they had offered their generosity for nothing.”

— Kellie Pollard, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

Many of the researchers involved in this project emphasised how research is itself a reciprocal relationship. Understanding reciprocity as a central feature of the research event, helps its relationships to be properly recognised and respected. In quite practical terms, this may mean making sure that researchers do not turn up to consultations empty handed, but always take along some food, or other payment, in exchange for sitting down and hearing people’s stories. It can also extend into the design of the research, where approaches which enable mutual learning through the act of researchers and participants getting together to talk can be particularly

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1 Raki Mala Indigenous Consultants is a Yolŋu corporation which provides research and cultural consultancy services. For more details please visit (www.rakimala.com.au)
2 Kellie Pollard is currently employed by the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor Indigenous Leadership, Charles Darwin University as a Research Fellow. During the Disaster Resilience project, she was employed as a researcher by Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation (LNAC).
valuable. Then in relation to following through on the relationships formed, the act of going about doing research with people, does itself perhaps necessitate some follow which is tangible for those who have been involved.

**Family connections and trust are an important part of Indigenous research work**

“Long Grass people think that when they see Balanda approaching that they are working for organisations that want to hunt them away. When Yolŋu approach Yolŋu Longgrassers they do it in a different way that makes Yolŋu feel comfortable, because they see us as family, even if they don’t know us, and they trust us.”

– Yirrŋŋu Dhurrkay, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

“When Balanda go into the Long Grass they don’t know what to do or where to start. Yolŋu thinks and feels comfortable when they recognise other Yolŋu. Through the connections of our family, people feel they are approached by someone familiar.”

– Sylvia Nulpinditj, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

“There is a historical relationship between Aboriginal people and Larrakia Nation that is based on trust. LNAC is a recognised entity by Aboriginal people in the community. People will be suspicious and won’t open their doors to people they don’t know. The method of partnering with LNAC and going through their contacts and networks was a sound method that worked well”

– Kellie Pollard, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

When working with people in Aboriginal communities, a completely different research relationship is set up between researchers and participants if the researchers are themselves also Indigenous. This relationship will be based on familiarity and trust from the outset, even if those involved are not close family members. Working in this way helps to lower any immediate suspicions and pave the way for comfortable conversations where people do not feel like their stories and information might be used against them at a later date. This trust can extend between people, for example Indigenous researchers and participants who can sit together, perhaps speak in their own language, and know how to relate to structures of authority within which they are operating, and also between people and organisations, for example Larrakia Nation whose vehicles and workers are well known to people in Town Communities and the Long Grass.

**Indigenous researchers often act as mediators or go-betweens**

“The researchers are looking after an interest for the organisation who has started the project Australian Red Cross. They accept this interest and care for it when they are doing the job. They need to talk to others by calling a meeting, etc. then need to put this important information through to others. Elders need to authorise to do this job accordingly for the safety of the community”

– James Gaykamaŋu, Yolŋu elder, Bagot Community
“The Long Grass people feel like they are the most outclassed. They are in their own little world. The only reason they would come out to engage with Yolŋu researchers is because we wear two hats – we are family and we are doing work. This is a very important role.”

– Yirrinininba Dhurrkay, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

“When Yolŋu researchers walks to do engagement with Longgrassers, they can have Balanda tools for research – pen, paper, laptop. But they can also see Aboriginal tools for research – fire, sky, breeze.”

– Sylvia Nulpinditj, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

“Working directly with community leaders makes the research legitimate, particularly if organisations are willing to collaborate with these leaders. This can help with working towards mutual beneficial outcomes, even if these outcomes do differ considerably”

– Kellie Pollard, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

The research itself often involved a complex dance on the part of Indigenous researchers as they juggle the interests of the organisation that has employed them, and the interests and concerns of the people they are consulting. Often inhabiting dual roles, they are remaining true to the family and kinship relations of which they are a part, as well as successfully operating as an individual researcher reporting information to others. This mediating role operates at various levels – it is expressed in the ways in which researchers might talk with project participants, it involves navigating both Indigenous and Western structures of authority, and it can also be promoted and practiced at an institutional level where both community and organisational goals might be met and progressed through research work. This embodied translation work is particular to their role as a bi-cultural researcher, and it presents an exemplar to others who see this work happen, and might aspire to do likewise.

**Formal recognition for contribution to research projects is appreciated**

“It is very important to recognise researchers for the work they have done, so they can get more work next time. Telling their stories, putting them up on the website is a good way to do this.”

– Yirrinininba Dhurrkay, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

“Giving recognition through t-shirts or a uniform helps researchers to feel like they belong in an association that supports them. This shows we are in partnerships with other organisations.”

– Sylvia Nulpinditj, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

The value and strengths that Indigenous researchers bring to the research process often appear more significantly within the doing, rather than the writing up, of the research work. In this sense, there may not be formal recognition of this contribution which becomes apparent in authored papers and reports. Nonetheless, looking for ways to recognise these contributions through extra sets of practices not normally considered part of the
research work, can help considerably with both the ease with which the research can be carried out at the time, and the future employment prospects for (often casually employed) researchers after it is completed.

Respect for Indigenous people and cultural practices is something that happens during the research process, not just afterwards

“The recognition that was offered to Indigenous researchers in the project report, demonstrated that all researchers had equal value to the project. This was not just about CV’s or accreditation, but also about showing those knowledges as different but equal in all presentations of the project”

– Kellie Pollard, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

“Doing work that aligns with their priorities, cultural worldview and how they live their lives — this is the biggest drawcard for Indigenous researchers. Organisations should not underestimle. It comes back to legitimacy and relevance. If they want to work with Indigenous communities, then this is the way to go”

– Kellie Pollard, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

While finding means to recognise Indigenous research involvement after a project has been completed is important work to be done, Indigenous involvement in the design and delivery of the research is also crucial. There is considerable reward in being able to work on research projects which are designed in ways which facilitate good working relationships between Indigenous researchers and other Indigenous people. Similarly, keeping an eye on the manner in which different contributions might be valued as equally significant to the overall conduct of the research opens the way for projects to mobilise the value of working appropriately with differences in research teams and research interests.

Government and nongovernment organisations would benefit from working more frequently with Yolŋu researchers

“It is important for organisations to work closely with Indigenous communities, if they want to improve their work and make sure it remains relevant and effective”

– Kellie Pollard, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation

“It is good and important for Red Cross to be working with Indigenous organisations. Government and others should look to Indigenous organisations for work like this when they are thinking about Don Dale. The corrections mob and this organisation should visit the kids in juvenile detention regularly, and talk to them.”

– Yirrinjinba Dhurrkay, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

It is not yet always intuitive or automatic for organisations working with Indigenous people to also employ Indigenous researchers and consultants. However, within the many roles and agendas of government and
nongovernment organisations in northern Australia, there is considerable scope for skilled Indigenous workers to become considerably more involved in policy development and service delivery. Continuing to talk about, and properly promote and recognise, the value of such work can be of benefit in many areas of contemporary social life, including the most topical of issues at present – juvenile detention.

Figure 4. Rosemary Gunjarraŋbuy from the research organisation Yalu’ Marnŋithinyaraw (http://yalu.cdu.edu.au/) helps guide the development of a research profile template.
3. Suggestions for Indigenous Researcher Development

This section draws on comments by Indigenous researchers listed above, to make suggestions about means by which government, nongovernment and university organisations might seek to promote Indigenous researcher development within the conduct of research and service delivery programs in the future.

These suggestions are focused around:

- Categories of research worker which organisations might see themselves as engaging within research and service delivery work.
- Practical means by which capacities, experience and availability of researchers might be made clear and visible. Here we draw on work carried out assisting the development of online profiles for Indigenous researchers involved in the project.
- The development of pathways for young people to enter into research as an employment opportunity able to be supported by funding organisations.

**Profiling categories of research workers**

A common suggestion amongst the researchers we have worked with is that is it easy for Balanda (European) researchers working within the tertiary education system to receive accreditation for the research work that they do. However, these same pathways are often not open in the same way to Indigenous researchers.

Indigenous researchers are often qualified for the work they do by the family and community networks they are connected to, and the particular kinds of authority that they hold within these networks. Being able to identify and work with appropriate categorisations, and level of authority and seniority when engaging Indigenous researchers is an important step in appropriately recognising their contributions to a project, and the responsibilities they might appropriately adopt.

Drawing on experiences of this and other research projects, we have identified four categories of Indigenous Culture, Knowledge and Language services providers, and a range of services. All of these people, of course, are already day to day involved in governance – governing and being governed – in an Aboriginal world. Our typology describes the emergence of different (overlapping) roles as Aboriginal people become providers in research work, or other aspects of service delivery and policy design.

**Category 1: Local senior authorities over people-places**

All projects are negotiated in local communities with the initial agreement and ongoing supervision of traditional owners of the land and elders of its people. These elders are paid and consulted throughout each project. Their role is crucial in seeing that the project conforms to local needs, practices, histories and aspirations. Engaging them in the work of government and research helps to form communities, supports and makes visible their ancestral authorities, and helps organisations to undertake successful projects in remote communities. Elders are often overworked and undervalued. They supervise all work, and are also engaged in some projects as knowledge authorities in their own right.
Category 2: Service managers

The work of managing the ‘business’ side of research and service delivery is complex and often invisible. It is inevitably a ‘both-ways’ process which needs to attend to Australian bureaucratic imperatives – contracts, reports, financial auditing, taxation – as well as to local Aboriginal needs and protocols – authority, remuneration, recognition. This work has in some settings been undertaken through a partnership between remote Aboriginal workers and nonAboriginal colleagues.

Category 3: Community researchers

Working under the guidance of the senior authorities, community service providers may be engaged as researchers and evaluators, as well as interpreters and educators. They very often have experience as teachers or health workers or rangers. They are literate in English and their own languages. They sometimes work within established research or interpreting organisations, sometimes they are engaged to undertake work alone. They have particular skills both within their own knowledge traditions, and the institutional structures and practices of wider Australia. They have indispensable skills in working together the various knowledge and governance traditions which are at work in their local communities.

Category 4: Mentorees

Aboriginal young people are an important part of Aboriginal community life. They have their roles and participate often as onlookers in every part of ceremonial and political life. Young people are rewarded in many ways for the serious participation in cultural life, and should be remunerated for their serious contributions to language, knowledge and culture work. Working under the guidance of Community Researchers, mentorees are on hand to help and to learn. They take some of the pressure off the senior authorities and the community researchers, and learn the complex practices of intercultural negotiations and knowledge work for the new generation.

During Stage 1 of this project, our research process involved working with Indigenous researchers and authorities who were engaged in relation to contributions they could offer to the project. At the time we did not seek to engage researchers and senior authorities in relation to these categorisations of knowledge and culture workers, however, doing so in the future might assist to differentiate and clarify contributions (and appropriate payment schemes) for diverse contributions to the research team and the research project as a whole.

Local senior authorities over people-places: We worked with James Gaykamangu an Elder from Bagot Community, as well as with other Town Community leaders when first seeking permission to carry out research work, and to speak to residents in the Town Communities. No consultations took place until we had spoken with these leaders and gained their permission to continue.

Service Managers: Kellie Pollard (LNAC) worked in the role of a service manager, coordinating aspects of the project which involved relations between CDU researchers, Larrakia Nation Researchers and Town Community leaders.

Community Researchers: Donna Jackson (LNAC), Yirrinjiba Dhurrrkay (Raki Mala), Joy Bulkanhawuy (Raki Mala) and Maurice Fejo (LNAC) all worked in the role of community researchers. They worked under the guidance of Town Community elders and leaders, and facilitated research consultations in Town Communities and the Long Grass. At times they drew on family connections to help introduce the project to participants, and the Raki Mala
Researchers also helped to conduct consultations in Yolŋu language where this was appropriate when sitting with people in the Long Grass.

**Mentorees:** Unfortunately, in this project we did not engage any young mentorees. However, this is something that we would certainly seek to do in the future, as a way to assist young Indigenous people to become comfortable and skilled with research work.

![Figure 5. Raki Mala researcher Joy Bulkanhawuy (far left) speaking with with Yolŋu living in the Long Grass about their experiences of bad weather.](image-url)
Online research profiles

As a means to support their professional development, and the recognition of past research and other work, all researchers involved in this project were offered the opportunity to produce an online research profile. This could also be printed as a hard copy document.

Not all researchers wanted to take this offer up, as they were involved in full-time work and did not want to advertise themselves as currently available to take on research work. Others were very interested to complete a researcher profile, and to have it displayed on a website enabling them to access the profile easily, and show it to others (this website is still under development but can be viewed at www.cdu.edu.au/centres/iri).

Initially we sought to work with researchers to produce a ‘research profile template’. The idea was that we could then offer this template to organisations working with Indigenous researchers. They could then use this template to produce a profile for researchers involved in their projects or programs.

However, we quickly found that each researcher wanted to profile themselves in a slightly different way. Some wanted to foreground their clan group, homelands and kinship relations, while others preferred to foreground work experience presented as a conventional CV.

Allowing this difference to be part of the process of learning how to create researcher profiles, instead of developing a profile template, we developed a process of sitting down and talking together about the work that people had done in the past, and their hopes and interests for research and employment. It was through this discussion that the researcher would then dictate the story of their profile, to be recorded and displayed online.

Through doing the work, several steps in this process began to emerge important when developing online profiles.

1. **Telling the researchers’ story**

Some of the researchers we worked with to build a research profile already had established CV’s and available online biographies. However, for those that did not, an important place to start was with telling the story of their journey to becoming a researcher (often on a part time basis). In these instances, there was a reluctance to separate the personal aspects of this journey from what might be considered strictly professional. Rather these biographies told of the different places and institutions where researchers had worked, their reasons for choosing particular trajectories, challenges they met on the way and the focus of their current career trajectories (e.g. promotion of their own businesses, juggling research and mothering, supporting young researchers to flourish).

2. **Collecting available online materials**

Many of the researchers we worked with had been involved in a number of other projects over the years. Sometimes these projects were research related; sometimes they had another focus (e.g. community development, service delivery, media or arts). Often no-one had spent the time to gather together available online materials relating to these projects, so some work could be done to pull together these materials, and list them as clickable links within the profile. In this way, the online profile can act as an archive, as well as a description, of previous work experience.
3. **Detailing processes of payment and contact details**

An online research profile differs from a conventional CV in that it can act as a gateway for future employers or funding bodies looking to engage Indigenous researchers. With this in mind, details around how researchers might be contacted, and the rates that employers might expect to pay for their services are relevant pieces of information to include on the profile. In some cases, the formalising of rates of payment for research services is an important business development aspect of this work, and an activity which can support the development of future employment opportunities for the researcher.

4. **Assembling and checking the online profile**

When all text, images, hyperlinks and attachments assembled, they can be put together as the researchers’ online profile. After doing this, there is a next step which involved going back to the researcher and checking that the appearance of the profile was as they expected, and if there are any elements which they would now like to change.

5. **Identifying practical steps to assist employment in the future**

Both in the course of research work, and in the development of researcher profiles, it may become clear that there are means to assist the future employment of Indigenous researchers. Some of these have already been mentioned in the previous section, and include: promoting Indigenous researchers in social media posts about the research project, making their contributions clear in project reports, passing their names and contact details through professional networks, including links to their online profiles in internal and external publications and budgeting for their involvement in future research projects and/or cross cultural inductions or training events within the organisation.
Sample researcher profiles

Miriam Yirrininba Dhurrkay

My name is Miriam Yirrininba Dhurrkay, known as Yirin. I am a traditional Wangerri woman from Dhalinybuy homeland, born and raised up at Galiwinku community.

I currently work at the Aboriginal Resource Development Service (ARDS) and am the founding director of Raki Mala, an Aboriginal research and consultancy company.

Raki Mala

Raki Mala is a research organisation that helps to open the closed doors between ways that Yolnu and Balanda do business and leadership.

I established the business when looking around at ceremonies, and noticing that Yolnu only know about Yolnu business, and Balanda only know about Balanda business. But my work is to open a door between these ways of working, and to find ways of working altogether. djama rambaj

Work with Raki Mala has included research work on Disaster and Emergency Management in Aboriginal Communities in Darwin, language translation support, Indigenous knowledge and technologies workshops, cultural induction courses (NTG and PEW foundation).

Research philosophy

When balanda researchers work with Yolnu, the first step is that they should do an induction to give them time to think about how they made their way to do this research, and what about it is interesting.

If you want to be successful in this work and achieve your goal, then Yolnu consultants and researchers are the people you can approach and we can work together rambaj djama, ral-manapannir. The Yolnu will be standing and leading the way. They know the path to take.

If NT researchers and government are doing something to do with Yolnu affairs and policy, these organisations can come to Yolnu researcher first. This is the right way to go.

Today young people don’t know were they are. They speak a mix of English and Yolnu languages and struggle to work from their Yolnu foundations. I have put myself in the spotlight to teach young Yolnu, and to journey along the road together. To bring up young Yolnu so they can stand tall and show they still have Yolnu culture in there hands.

We are like birds building a nest, with the mother and father building one nest for the young ones. They look for food and bring it back to the nest until eventually the birds are grown and they build another nest and so it keeps on going. We need to practice going along this way.

Raki Mala Service Rates

Information on Raki Mala service rates

Kellie Pollard

Kellie Pollard is a Koori researcher and currently holds the position of Research and Evaluation fellow within the Office of Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous Leadership at Charles Darwin University. She completed a Bachelor of Arts at the Australian National University and a Bachelor of Arts with Honours at Charles Darwin University. Her honours major in archaeology, was a comparative study of Australian Indigenous and Native American’s perceptions of theory, methods and practice in archaeology. Ms Pollard was a graduate APS officer in the Commonwealth public service before a career change into applied community based research. Working for the Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation she has been involved in government funded and academic collaborative research projects with the organisation over nearly eight years. This has included ARC funded projects. Ms Pollard supports Indigenous emancipation in research and decentralised approaches and methodologies that build the capacity of Aboriginal people to participate in research and evaluation processes to empower Aboriginal self-determination. She is currently completing her PhD at Flinders University, which is an archaeological study of contact between Europeans and Aboriginal people between 1880-1910 in the Darwin region.

Education:
- B.A. (ANU)
- B.A. hons (CDU)
- PhD candidate (Flinders University)

Past Projects:
- Disaster Resilience, Management and Preparedness in Aboriginal Communities in Darwin and Palmerston (with Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation)
- Telling It Like It Is: Aboriginal Perspectives in Race and Race Relations (with Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation)
- Indigenous Research Resource Centre (with Charles Darwin University)

Kellie Pollard talks about the importance of Indigenous Australians to gain... (from Indigenous Research Resource Centre, CDU)

Anita Golung Munyarryun

Galiwin’ku

My name is Anita Golung Munyarryun. I work at the community library in Galiwin’ku. I have three young boys who are still going to school at Shepherdson College. I would like them to learn to speak English very well and to finish Year 12.

When I was young I lived with my grandmothers at Rumiruy, which is the homeland for all Dauthure clan.

I spent some time as a volunteer Dingu Farmer helping old man Timothy Bulkinrinj. This man always gathered all the Wangum tribe so we could learn from him when he was telling stories and teaching us the right way to live.

I got a job when I was 18, working with Agud Caro delivering ‘meals on wheels’ and helping elderly people in the community. My next job was working at the childcare centre looking after the kids, then it was after this that I started working at the library.

These days I also work part time with Yalu’ Mamithinyaraw as a researcher.

My past projects have included:

‘Helping and Caring, not only our family: NT Indigenous Perspectives on Volunteering’ (CDU)

‘Remote Engagement and Coordination – Indigenous Engagement Research’ (CDU)

Families and Schools Together program (volunteer worker)

For the future I have to show my kids the right way to go, so they can have good role models to guide their way.

I would like to do more training in research work, to help me become more confident and put myself forward when working with both Yagur and Balanda. It is important that I show my skills to others, other young mothers and other young fathers, so they can have an example of the right way to go.

Supporting intergenerational learning and future employment

“Whenever I work I feel like I do this for my young children at home. I have a daughter who has potential, and I would like her to learn ways of working with balanda organisations.”

– Sylvia Nulpinditj, Raki Mala Indigenous Consultants

“We are worried about our people. Are the younger generations going to be able to do what we have been doing? Are they going to put their feet down on strong foundations and follow these ways?”

– Yirrijiŋiba Dhurrkay, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

“Supporting apprenticeships for new trainees, inductions, engage with government people in all areas. Supporting young people to move into our work together; this is important for the young people who might follow a pathway to research work.”

– Yirrijiŋinba Dhurrkay, Raki Mala Aboriginal Consultants

One of the key suggestions made by the researchers involved in the project was that research offers a promising pathway for young people who are looking for employment, and for ways to draw on their skills and family connections to work with government, nongovernment and university organisations. Supporting Indigenous researchers through project work, is therefore not only about supporting individual established researchers, but offers the opportunity to support young researchers to become confident and work-ready.

Figure 6. Yalu’ researchers Rosemary Gunjarranbuy (second from left) and Doris Yethun (far right) work with mentoree Beulah Munyarryun (far left) when consulting with Yolŋu in Galiwin’ku after the 2015 cyclones.
One way to support young people to build the skills and confidence to become researchers, is through engaging ‘mentorees’ within project work or service delivery. There need not be any pressure on these mentorees to be able to contribute to the project work as a whole, rather their role is to watch, listen and learn, in a manner which is consistent with pedagogical practices within Indigenous society.

By participating in this way, these young mentorees will quickly build a sense of what is involved in research work, and will be able to step into these roles when the time comes. We did not engage mentorees in the course of this research project; however, this is something that CDU has done within other projects with the Northern Territory Government and Australian Red Cross. It is also a practice that we plan to prioritise and maintain in other projects in the future.

Prioritising opportunities for young people interested in following in the footsteps of senior researchers, is something that funding bodies may consider in the future, and may build into the design of research projects and service delivery programs. When accompanied by suitable forms of recognition, accreditation and/or remuneration (e.g. provision of certificates for service, development of pathways to employment and provision of job relevant training) the support of young researchers can produce new and viable pathways to employment which might not otherwise be available.
4. Collaborative design of research, community development and voluntary service work

Across all aspects of this research project, there has been a strong call for the collaborative design of future research project and emergency management programs. The emphasis on collaborative design moves beyond a requirement for a central agency to engage with other involved parties and stakeholders, and emphasises the practical interrelation of different skills and commitments in the process of planning and developing future projects.

This includes not taking for granted the meaning or significance of any central concepts, such as what constitutes an ‘emergency’ or the means by which ‘resilience’ might be achieved. But rather holding such concepts as open for discussion as means are developed to support their ongoing management, reduction or promotion.

As the Larrakia Nation researcher, Kellie Pollard stated “…being open to negotiation around how to do the research and aspects of collaboration is very important. It can’t be tokenistic, negotiation is negotiation. People on the ground need to know that their needs will be being met in the way that research and service delivery is done, as well as the KPI’s of the organisation” (Interview, 18th November, 2016)

Figure 7. Tiwi people living in the Long Grass in Darwin participate in discussions about their experiences during bad weather

In the context of Stage 1 of the Disaster Resilience and Emergency Management project, we sought to build space for negotiation and collaboration into the conduct of the research project, and into the design of our research approach. Beyond the conduct of the research, such negotiation and collaboration may also be crucial as NT Emergency Services and Australian Red Cross seek to implement recommendations from the report, and
negotiate emergency management strategies in some Darwin Town Communities, where such efforts have been called for.

It has been emphasised by the researchers involved in the project, that it can be very difficult for people in communities when they make the effort to be involved in research work, and to tell their stories, but then do not see any positive effects resulting from the research.

It is for this reason that we take the opportunity here to reiterate a number of the collaborative policy and service delivery approaches which were proposed in Stage 1 of this research work.

As stated on page 24 of the Stage 1 Report, there were a number of initiatives which emerged out of the research consultations as promising places to begin developing new practices of collaborative action:

a) Development of ‘Safety Leader’ positions in interested Town Communities

In all communities we visited, there was clear support for this initiative which couples employment and capacity building within Town Communities with a commitment to culturally appropriate disaster response and good working relationships between Town Communities and emergency management organisations.

Any action in this direction should be undertaken on a trial basis, and may only be undertaken in a few pilot communities in the first instance. It would involve clear identification of the role and its responsibilities, as well as training programs and appropriate institutional support from Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Cooperation and one or more other organisations.

b) Collaborative development of emergency management strategies in Town Communities where a need has been identified.

The focus of this project has been on hearing stories and learning about the experiences of indigenous people in greater Darwin during emergency events. It has not been on the negotiation of community-based strategies for disaster management. However, in several communities (e.g. Acacia, Palmerston Indigenous Village and Bagot) this has presented itself as a possible next step.

The development of these strategies would take place in the Town communities themselves, and may differ considerably from community to community. The focus of this work may not necessarily be to seek the close integration of Town communities and Northern Territory Emergency Services systems of operation, but may offer communities the opportunity to focus on their own ways of managing emergency events, and how they may seek to productively connect with services or assistance able to be offered by external organisations.

This work may be connected to the appointment and development of ‘Safety Leader’ positions, and would require involvement of Larrakia Nation and a team of research or community support staff.

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c) Prioritise working through existing Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Cooperation outreach programs as a means to support those living in the Long Grass during the wet season.

Indigenous people living in the Long Grass are frequently well connected to family in the area and in remote communities and are often aware of how and where to access shelter in event of a cyclone.

Those who are not able to seek shelter with family at these times often do remain reliant on transport provided by Larrakia Nation Night Patrol, or NTES and Police vehicles.

Larrakia Nation staff maintains constant contact with Long Grass communities through their outreach programs, and have an up-to-date sense of where people are camping and their particular vulnerabilities at any point in time.

This knowledge, and these face-to-face relationships, are a great resource for any external agencies seeking to work in the Long Grass, particularly around assessing and supporting preparedness prior to severe or extreme weather events. Any further work supporting awareness and preparedness in the Long Grass should also support and operate through, or in connection with, existing Larrakia Nation programs.

As discussed by the Indigenous researchers participating in this research work, the development of Indigenous research capacity extends beyond provision of support for individual researcher, as important and as valued as this may be. It also includes the commitment to continue working with and through differences in knowledge and living practices in the collaborative design of future policy, research and service delivery initiatives.

As provisional guide to such collaborative design work, government and non-government organisations may seek to refer to the following steps when working with Indigenous researchers and communities in the future:

1. **Engage key authorities:**
   - Engage key Elders and traditional authorities as advisors
   - Engage key Indigenous organisations (e.g. Yalu’ in Galiwin’ku, Wangatunga Strong Women in Wurrumiyanga, Larrakia Nation in Darwin) as collaborators and/or service delivery partners

2. **Work collaboratively with key authorities to:**
   - Negotiate the design of research and/or service delivery work, clarification of research issues including who and how they will be involved, means for gathering and analysing information, protocols to be followed, interests brought by parties involved and how they will be differently and mutually attended to
   - Identify community members for employment and volunteer activities
   - Discuss suitable forms of recognition, accreditation and/or remuneration which may be offered to elders, managers, community researchers and mentorees - e.g. provision of certificates for service; development of pathways to employment; provision of job relevant training
   - Discuss appropriate means for connecting with other organisational practices and programs for service delivery
   - Develop means for ongoing program sustainability and evaluation
3. Act in accordance with above negotiations when supporting Indigenous research within other aspects of Australian Red Cross service provision. Particularly in relation to:

- Program design
- Formalising scales of remuneration or other forms of reciprocal benefit
- Agreeing on appropriate timings, and time commitments, of research and service delivery work
- Conducting program evaluation

This list is a device to help guide collaborative design of service provision. It is not a definitive checklist or set of tasks. In many cases, the steps proposed here may suggest practices already undertaken by government and NGO staff when engaging researchers, volunteers and program participants in Aboriginal communities.
Conclusion

The second stage of the research project Disaster Resilience, Management and Preparedness in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in Darwin and Palmerston has focused specifically on the support and development of Indigenous researcher capacity. This has involved continuing to work with Indigenous researchers connected with Charles Darwin University, Australian Red Cross and Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation beyond the completion of the Stage 1 research and project report.

Productive professional relationships forged in the early stages of project design, and the Stage 1 consultations have been maintained, and further work reflecting on how Indigenous researchers participating in projects such as this may be appropriately recognised and supported. Over the course of the second stage of research work, it has been clear that for the Indigenous researchers choosing to collaborate with government, non-government and university organisations, the personal experience of working as a researcher is strongly connected with working well within the communities where the research is based, and the positive effects that this research might bring for the people that the research concerns.

The findings of this report have therefore been focused in several directions:

a) Enabling these researchers to articulate positive and negative experiences of being involved in the Stage 1 research work;

b) Detailing some strategies for supporting appropriate engagement and professional development of Indigenous researchers by government, non-government and university organisations;

c) Reiterating possibilities for future collaborative policy, research and service delivery work which may be guided by the project research. This is important both in the area of disaster management in Darwin, and in relation to future engagement of Indigenous researchers, employees and volunteers by government, non-government and university organisations.

The work of supporting and working with Indigenous researchers is a key aspect of any research to be undertaken in urban and remote Aboriginal communities. Building in opportunities for ongoing employment and professional development of these researchers is a task which may be undertaken at the level of project initiation and design. However, building in the capacity for researcher reflection and evaluation of research practice, as well as capacities and commitments to following through on research recommendations, are also crucial aspects of valuing the contributions being made by these researchers to the project at hand.

It is in this way, the contribution of Indigenous researchers to such project work, may be supported through a commitment to ongoing professional development of individuals, as well as through a commitment to the outcomes that their research methods and facilitation skills have contributed to producing. Ultimately, the involvement of Aboriginal knowledge and agreement making authorities and their communities in the design and undertaking of research improves the quality and the outcomes of the research. Fostering the development and visibility of Indigenous researchers on their own terms is a critical part of that process.