

## FINAL REPORT (DEVELOPMENT AWARD)

### AWARD CODE and TITLE

**2008/326.36** FRDC People Development Program: 2013 Indigenous Development Scholarship

**AWARD RECIPIENT:** Matt Osborne

**ADDRESS:** 16, 25 Grenfell St, Adelaide

**HOST ORGANISATION:** Rural Solutions SA

**DATE:** 15th May 2014

### ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN

Completion of the National Seafood Industry Leadership Program and regional visits to the Northern Territory, Queensland and the Torres Strait Islands to discuss Aboriginal involvement in Fisheries.

### OUTCOMES ACHIEVED TO DATE

I have a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait involvement in the fishing industry, fisheries management and research across Australia. I have increased my networks across members of the fishing community. I have also undertaken professional and personal development (including leadership, communication and presentation skills).

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the following people and organisations for their support during my Indigenous Development Scholarship.

**My Wife** - First and foremost I want to say thank you to my darling wife for supporting me to undertake this leadership course. I had to spend a lot of time away from family to do this and it's been great to know you've supported me at every step. Thanks for all the thankless tasks you did in my absence, all the odd jobs, chores and stresses you took on for me to better myself.

**Dhimirru and Yiralka Rangers, Phil Rist and the staff and Board of the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation.** I'd like to thank all the Traditional Owners who welcomed me to their Country, showing me around and sharing their stories and experience. It's something I will never forget.

**The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation and it's staff (particularly Jo, Patrick and Crispian),** for their advice, support, flexibility and access throughout the Development Scholarship, NSILP, Seafood Directions and everywhere else we talked.

**Rural Solutions SA**, in particular Daniel Casement, Brett Bartel and Rowena Brown. Thank you for supporting me to undertake this development program. I have benefited professional and personally from this experience and look forward to applying these skills in the business.

**The Indigenous Reference Group to FRDC** for welcoming me to their meetings and their ongoing support.

**Bo Carne** - Thanks for all the advice, help and support over the past few years. It's been great to have you as a mentor.

**Chris Calogeras and Jill Briggs** Thanks for the good and hard times. I learnt a lot, challenged myself and grew a fair bit through the leadership course. Your approach and support wasn't always what I wanted but was what I needed. Thanks for knowing the difference and supporting me through it.

**Northern Territory Fisheries**, particularly Chris and Klaus. Thanks for the good times in East Arnhem, it was great meeting you guys and having a few laughs.

## **Background**

The ocean is and has always been an important part of my people's culture and traditional practices. As far back as I can remember I have learnt and practiced traditional fishing. I have seen and experienced the restraints imposed on Aboriginal people and communities that have restricted or legally prevented traditional fishing practices. I have also witnessed the associated problems this has caused within communities and with fisheries regulators.

My university education stemmed from my longstanding desire to be involved in the fishing industry. In my current role as a consultant I have begun to fulfill my aspiration to improve the opportunities for Aboriginal people in the fishing industry. I have worked on several projects to support Indigenous participation in Fisheries including; a Feasibility study for an abalone aquaculture venture for an Aboriginal business, Social Objectives and Indicators – Testing the social framework with the Narungga community of South Australia and the South Australia Sea Ranger Forum.

## **Need**

The Indigenous development scholarship addresses skills and experience gaps I have identified. It increases professional opportunities within fisheries and supports my efforts to increase Aboriginal participation in the fishing industry and government recognition of Aboriginal fishing rights in management plans, policy and legislation.

## Objectives

The Objectives for my Development Scholarship were:

- An increased understanding of leadership and how to be a proficient and capable leader
- Improve my communication techniques and analyses of communication styles
- Effective networking techniques
- Build networks in the fishing industry, fisheries management and Indigenous organisations.
- Increase my knowledge of effective models to increase Indigenous participation in the fishing industry and fisheries management
- Build my overall capacity to work with government and seafood industry sectors, including; Indigenous, Commercial and Recreational, enabling me to help other Aboriginal people.

## Methods

### ***National Seafood Industry Leadership Program (NSILP) 2013***

Residential 1 – Fremantle – (March 2013)

- Graduate Journey: Leadership and Learning - Ellen Smith and Dylan Skinns
- Industry Panel – Dan Machin, Arnot Verboon and Bill Passey
- Industry Tour – Geraldton Fishermans Co operative (Lobster processors)
- Group development activities
- Development of our vision, mission and strategies
- Industry network dinner (met with Janet Howieson, Dan Machin, Justin Clarke, Geoff Ellis, Emily Osborne, Richard Stevens)

Residential 2 – Sydney (July 2013)

- Industry Panel – Harry Peters, Will Brunker, Brad Warren and Louise Shaw
- Lobbying and building influence
- Course materials: Handling conflict and leadership theory
- Industry Tours – Sydney fish market and local seafood restaurant
- Group discussions, updates and development of strategies
- Industry network dinner – Tony Andrews

Residential 3 – Canberra (November 2013)

- Meetings with Government Departments – AFMA, DAFF, DSEWPAC
- Industry Panel – Melanie Young, Patrick Hone and Bo Carne
- Tours – FRDC and Government House – Paul Pak Poy

- Vision Launch and Presentation
- Graduation Dinner – Patrick Hone, Tim Karlov, Gordon Neil, Melanie Young

### ***Seafood Directions 2013***

With support from Rural Solutions SA I attended the Seafood Directions 2013. The conference and industry dinner was a great opportunity to network with individuals across sectors and build my understanding of the challenges and opportunities to build partnerships.

As part of the conference myself and four other NSILP 2013 participants presented the current NSILP vision, mission and group strategies. This was the first stakeholder presentation delivered by the NSILP 2013 participants and was good to measure how stakeholders received to progress and outcomes of our group strategies.

During the closing session of the forum Patrick requested several NSILP graduates and current NSILP participants to provide a quick snap shot of their views and take away messages.

The following are the key messages from my summary:

- Reflecting on the IRG presentation
  - Indigenous people have used and managed marine and aquatic resources for tens of thousands of years (e.g. eel aquaculture by the Gunditjmara people in the Lake Condah region of Western Victoria)
  - Indigenous people used technology, understood water flows, tides and the habits and movement of animals
  - As Brad Warren (Oceanwatch) discussed in his presentation on the characteristics of “Professional” fishermen, Indigenous people:
    - Had (and still) have technical skills
    - Provided a benefit to the broader community
    - Had a good profile and public acceptance
    - And by definition were professional fishermen
  - Similar to the interviews within ‘Drawing the line’ Indigenous people were stopped from fishing
  - However;
    - There was no consultation or compensation
    - Instead there was dispossession with considerable prejudice
    - Let alone all the other impacts that were put onto Indigenous people, and still are now
- As per Tim and Ben's presentation, we (Indigenous people) are not telling the positive stories enough in the media. This needs to improve to increase awareness within the industry and broader community.
- As Ian mentioned, with the costs of licensing, infrastructure and equipment it is very difficult to enter the fishing industry now.

- Which is creating another level of exclusion for Indigenous people to participate
  - There are some programs tackling this issue e.g. Northern Territory Government are assisting Indigenous people to enter the industry and operate sustainably (financially and culturally)
- Looking at all these similarities, I ask you Is the fishing industry in the too hard basket? Seriously, is it in the too hard basket? (Patrick – no). So why should engaging with Indigenous people be?
- I'm not coming from a point of negativity but providing context and looking positively to the future
  - We can't change the past, but we also won't affect the future unless we act now.
- It was good to hear about FRDC's support to the IRG and I look forward to holding Patrick to his commitment of all FRDC projects having an Indigenous component
- Although there has been work in this space, there is a lot more work to be done
  - Small steps and partnerships
- As people return to work, look for opportunities to collaborate with or employ Indigenous people
- If you'd like a hand, people such as myself and the IRG are available to provide advice.
- There is no silver bullet but small steps do make a difference

### ***Northern Territory Regional Visit***

While I was developing my application to FRDC I talked with Bo and arranged to go out with him and his team to see how the ranger groups were functioning and how the NT government was supporting Aboriginal management of Sea Country and empowering Aboriginal communities.

The trip was organised to travel to Gove via Darwin. We spent a day with the Dhimurru rangers and then travelled down to Blue Mud Bay to spend some time with the Yirralka Rangers to look at Sea Country Management and Traditional fishing in NT. The trip coincided with a NT Government Stock assessment program, in which several key culturally, recreationally and commercially important fish species were investigated. The rangers were being trained in processing techniques to feed information back to NT fisheries stock assessments.

Gove - Nhulunbuy

Chris, Klaus and I collected samples of tricky snapper (Grasslip Emperor) for Dhimurru junior rangers to learn processing techniques to collect otoliths, total and standard length and DNA, gill and stomach samples. The Ranger Program provided an opportunity for the junior rangers to develop skills for future employment. One

Senior Ranger was present and participated in the training exercise. He also provided leadership to the junior rangers (please refer to Photos in Appendix 2).

## Baniyala

Baniyala is a small, remote Aboriginal community and is part of the Laynhapuy Homelands Aboriginal Corporation. The Yirralka Rangers provide land and sea management programs within the Laynhapuy Indigenous Protected Area. This includes 4500km<sup>2</sup> of coastal vegetation, heathlands, mangroves, flood plains and wetlands within the area of Blue Mud Bay.

Similar to Gove, we collected samples to train rangers in processing skills to provide ongoing information and samples to feed into NT fisheries management. The rangers operated under flexible working arrangements that supported their needs and interests. Generally rangers were aged in their late 30's and 40's. This stemmed from the community nomination process and the need for respected and knowledgeable people to hold ranger roles (Photos attached in Appendix 2).

It was interesting talking with the ranger facilitators about some of the issues around the flexibility of ranger's schedules and ensuring tasks are completed. Governance was described as a key contributing factor to the success of ranger programs, the same can be said for all business or services.

The role of Aboriginal politics in the development and management of Ranger programs was an example of conflicting expectations of management between Aboriginal Communities and Government. The role of Aboriginal decision making was noted as a key component that should be supported and recognised as an important process to developing a sustainable model and program. Allowing discussions to occur in the presence of supporting staff was noted as providing an opportunity to give voice to concerns and where necessary provide information and clarification to assist community leaders in their decision making processes.

The remoteness of some Aboriginal communities is a double edged sword, providing both challenges and opportunities. Lack of services, high expenses and isolation are disadvantages but also a means of opportunity for Aboriginal people to provide services to government that would otherwise be very difficult and expensive to collect. Aboriginal people also have a detailed and historical knowledge of their country and are able to provide details and information that may not be available from other service providers or Government staff.

The NT water police were present in the region and the Rangers and NT Fisheries participated in a joint patrol. The Rangers were involved in the development of the patrol strategy and were empowered by the water police officers to search for commercial crabbing equipment and check for compliance in the absence of police during the day of operation. Conversations with the Rangers, NT fisheries and NT water police provided an overall consensus for the importance of Rangers providing information to water police on recreational and commercial fishing activities. They also noted the future direction of empowering Aboriginal rangers to conduct compliance activities on their Country. It was good to see Aboriginal people having a large influence in defining compliance operations to manage and protect their Sea Country.

## Queensland Regional Visit

My second regional visit was to Cardwell to visit Phil Rist and the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. I met Phil through a contact at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority during the SA sea ranger project. Phil came down to present at the forum and discussed the importance of Aboriginal control in business structures and cultural governance. My trip to Cardwell was to discuss and observe the community governance structure and learn more about how they're managing their Sea Country, the TUMRA process and its implications on traditional fishing within the Girringun region.

## Ranger programs

I had a meeting with the manager of the Girringun ranger program to discuss the services the rangers delivered and how cultural knowledge and heritage protection was incorporated. The rangers delivered service to government agencies including land clearance, revegetation, turtle surveys and beach cleanups. The diversity of services allowed for continuity of work (and funding) and also assisted in maintaining cultural sites. The limited scope to work solely on sea country management requires a diverse approach to support economic development and employment for Indigenous people. In the cases I saw and am aware of, Ranger programs have significant benefits including preserving cultural practices and heritage site protection. They provide the infrastructure and means to be able to do this effectively and meaningfully.

## TUMRA

I met with Whitney Rassip (Girringun TUMRA coordinator) to talk about the TUMRA and how it was seen in the community. The key points were:

- Strong cultural process to decide on the take of turtles (people aren't taking dugong),
- Traditional hunting is important for traditional knowledge transfer,
- Good partnerships with researchers (James Cook University), with rangers assisting with research on: habitat, turtle, turtle nest, dugong and dolphin monitoring
- Wanting management of hunting to be influenced by community gained (in partnership with researchers) and managed turtle and dugong population data.
- Wanting TUMRA's to expand beyond hunting to become a holistic approach to Sea Country management

## Governance

I spoke with Phil about the key factors for running a successful Aboriginal Land and Sea management business. The key points for me were:

- Strong Governance is constantly the key message
  - From my experience and from what I have seen there is a heavy reliance on the elders to play this role. It is often hard to bring in the next generation and finding/developing knowledgeable (both culturally and in business/government processes) people is difficult. Without this

there is a significant the risk of losing of the ground and opportunities that the previous generation fought so strongly for through poor management or a lack of appropriately/suitably trained people to take over.

- Clearly defined scope (i.e. Girringun are not involved in Native Title issues)
- Defined boundaries (know where we work)
- Good administration
- Having a culturally respectful and assured process
- Making it attractive for Government to partner
- Strong and consistent leadership
- Succession planning

Phil and I also spoke about incorporating heritage matters into aspects of on ground works. This plays an important role in reconnecting with Country and protecting and maintaining cultural sites.

I was also provided with opportunity to be an observer at a Girringun board meeting. The board is made up of Elders from across the nine Tribal groups. It was a great opportunity to meet and chat with the Elders and hear their stories (please refer to Appendix 2).

### **Horn Island Indigenous Reference Group Meeting**

Following my visit to the Girringun Aboriginal Corporation I travelled to Horn Island to attend the IRG meeting. The meeting discussed the changes to the group to a subprogram of FRDC and updates on Indigenous project applications to FRDC. The meeting also hosted Simon Vetch, Director of Fisheries Regulation and Governance at the Department of Agriculture, James Findlay and other AFMA staff.

### **Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management workshop**

During the Horn Island IRG meeting I was asked to attend the Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management Workshop (EBFMW) on behalf of the IRG. With support from Rural Solutions SA and FRDC I attended the two day workshop and presented an Indigenous perspective to the information and discussions.

Below is a summary of my presentation

It was acknowledged that Indigenous peoples, like all people are seen as part of the ecosystem, and that we all have impacts on that ecosystem. However the cultural and customary interactions of Indigenous people with the ecosystem, is often poorly understood by other sectors. Government commitment is required to adequately recognise Indigenous fishing rights in management plans and decisions and to ensure these do not impede or impact on cultural or customary activities.



The lack of integration of Indigenous community objectives and perspectives into EBFM were considered to be due to the following:

- consistency in the legislative recognition of Indigenous rights;
- problems with the use of 'Maximum Economic Yield (MEY)' and 'allocation' as proxies for economic and social objectives/benefits, whereas customary fishing is not for economic gain; and
- cultural catch has significant social value that is not accounted for in the current economic evaluation of the resource.

It was also suggested, given recent developments in the issue of Indigenous rights to marine resources, that fisheries management jurisdictions need to more explicitly consider the social objectives of Indigenous communities in the development of management plans and harvest strategies.

It was raised that further work needs to be undertaken in the area of considering how data collected from Indigenous communities was going to be used, and that collaborative approaches between managers and associated communities would be the optimal approach.

My goal for workshop was to ensure Indigenous people were recognised as key stakeholders in Fisheries management and decision making, generate greater awareness of the primacy of Indigenous people and network with jurisdictional representatives and researchers. The workshop provided a good opportunity to discuss the future of fisheries management in Australia and raise the issue of inconsistent 'meaningful' recognition of Indigenous people as stakeholders and acknowledgement of Indigenous primacy to fisheries.

I provided comments to the draft report and liaised with the IRG to ensure their views were represented in my comments.

### **Broome Indigenous Reference Group meeting**

I was invited to attend the Broome FRDC meeting to present on my attendance at the Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) workshop. The slides of EBFM presentation to the IRG is provided in Appendix 3. My attendance at the workshop was an opportunity to meet additional members of the IRG and participate in conversations on research planning and strategic direction. A highlight of my time in Broome was the cultural aspects that were incorporated into the visit, particularly the attendance at the formation of the Djukan Tribal Council.

### **Results/Discussion**

The Scholarship has increased my networks with Indigenous people involved in progressing Indigenous participation and recognition in fisheries management. As an early career researcher this has been an invaluable opportunity to support my personal and professional aspirations.

The NSILP was a great development experience that increased understanding of what makes a good and effective leader as well as building my own leadership skills and motivating me to continue to develop these throughout my career. The regional visits provided me with a greater understanding of the barriers and successful approaches for Indigenous Sea Country management and partnerships with government. The networks I developed through the program have supported me to communicate with a broad group of sectors and are providing opportunities to continue my development and participation in this sector after the program.

Through the development program I was able to achieve my objectives for the scholarship. I have:

- Improved my communication techniques and increased my understanding and experience of communication styles
- Improved my networking techniques
- Built networks across all the sectors of the fishing community as well as Indigenous Land and Sea Management organisations
- Increased my knowledge of effective models to increase Indigenous participation in the fishing industry and fisheries management and
- Increased my overall capacity to work with government and seafood community sectors; Indigenous, Commercial and Recreational.

These outcomes are represented by my nomination and appointment to the Indigenous Reference Group. This is a great opportunity for me to apply learnt skills and continue my development.

## **Benefits and Adoption**

The primary sector that will benefit from this development activity is the Indigenous sector. As the fisheries management transitions to triple bottom line and EBFM approach, there are opportunities to meaningfully incorporate recognition of Indigenous primacy and culturally supportive policies and management approaches.

From my experience in this area (especially during my Scholarship) there is a growing recognition and discussion of the Indigenous sector and a general understanding that there is a considerable amount of work required in this area to build up the intellectual understanding of researchers and decision makers. There are opportunities for developing an information resource on Indigenous use of aquatic resources and understanding of cultural significance. This work is also being undertaken in other sectors e.g. water management).

There have been varied responses to this issue by state and commonwealth governments. The FRDC decision to make the IRG a subprogram and the associated investment in Indigenous research is a strong recognition of the significance of the sector and I believe will lead further changes to fisheries management structures and Indigenous participation programs across Australia.

The other sectors of the fishing community is also expected to benefit by having Indigenous recognition incorporated into fisheries management through improved

decisions and a true triple bottom line approach and meaningfully incorporates all users.

### **Further Development**

I see the content of this Development Scholarship as an important tool to grow emerging leaders and Indigenous people passionate about fisheries. I would like to see a similar program continue to be run to increase the pool of skilled and experienced people in the sector.

**Appendix 1 - Matt's section of the NSILP mission launch**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_detailpage&v=idftOg4GO0s#t=341](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=idftOg4GO0s#t=341)

**Appendix 2 - Photos**



Matt's National Seafood Industry Leadership Program graduation. Photo courtesy of Rural Training Initiatives



Matt with Junior Dhimurru Rangers during dissection, measurement and sampling training for NT Fisheries. Photo courtesy of Dhimirru Aboriginal Corporation





Matt at Baniyala campground with Golden Snapper during the Northern Territory regional visit. Photo courtesy of NT Fisheries



Yirralka Ranger training on the dissection, measurement and sampling of Golden Snapper. Photo Courtesy of NT Fisheries



Matt, Phil Rist (Nywaigi) and Uncle Bill Morganson (Wargamay) at Giringun Aboriginal Corporation.

**Appendix 3 – Power Point presentation on EBFM workshop**  
Separate document