

Traditional Custodians as researchers: experiences of researching with our Mob on our Country

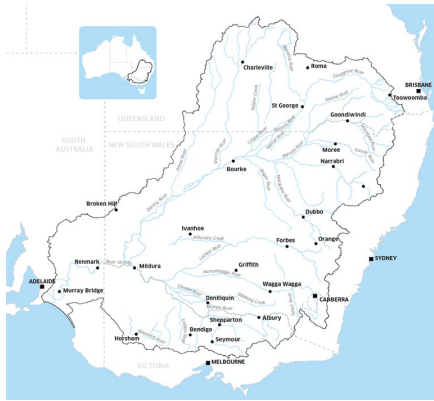
- Melinda Mann, Darumbal Nation, Rockhampton
- Samantha Cooms, Mirrigimpa Noonukul, Quandamooka
- Joann Schmider, Waribarra Mamu rainforest Aboriginal peoples of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area



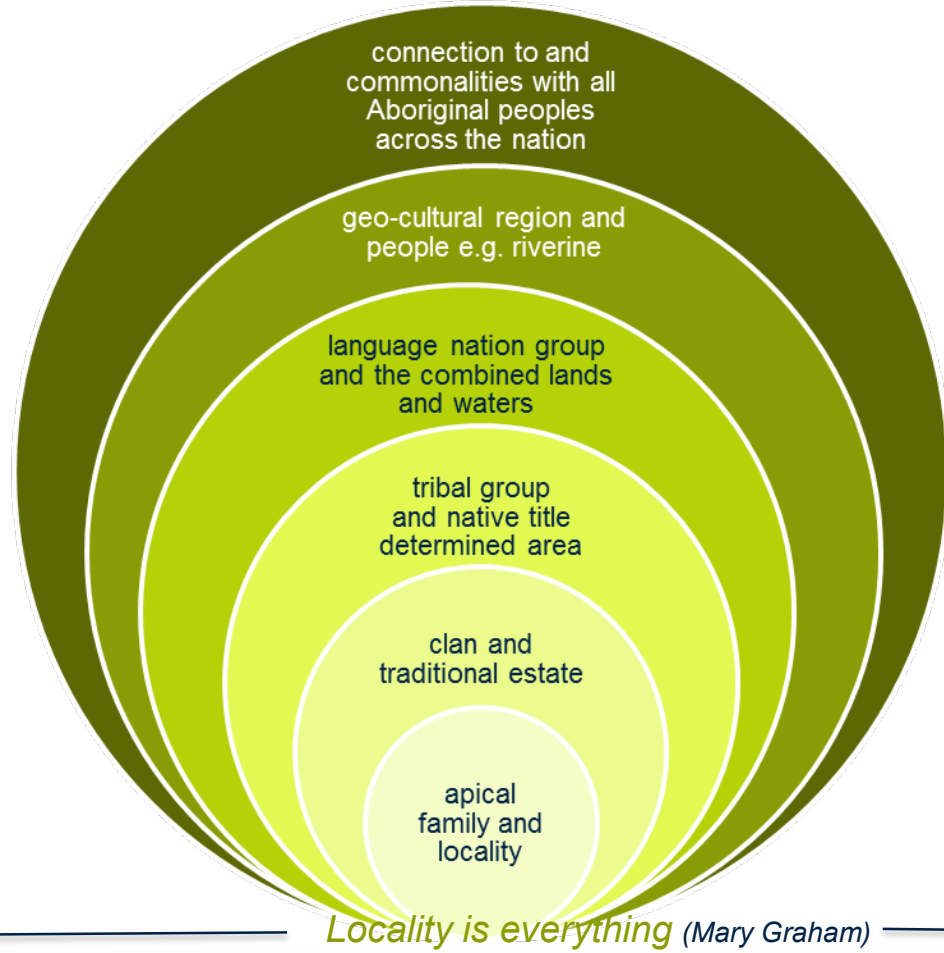
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Our presentation

- A. Benefits of Traditional Custodian researchers
- B. Challenges facing Traditional Custodian researchers
- C. Opportunities and possibilities for student researchers



- the law of reciprocity coming out of the relationship between the land and humans its shaped (Irene Watson)
- ways of knowing, being and doing (Karen Martin)



...to identify, protect, conserve, present and transmit cultural values and wisdom

Cultural responsibilities and imperatives / motivations →

Exploring views related to traditional custodial identity

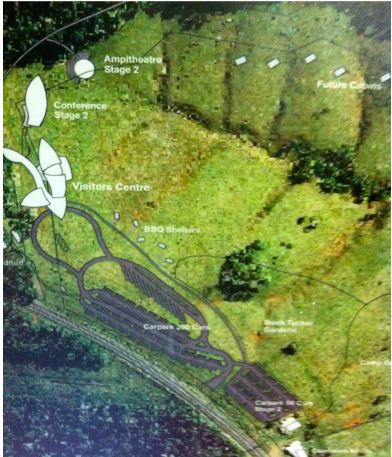
A. Benefits of Traditional Custodian researchers

1. **Transparency of motivation – TC group involvement and awareness**
2. **Established knowledge and connection – enmeshed in people, culture and place**
3. **Awareness of diversity and history – using skills and knowledge for the TC group's benefit**
4. **Custodial and kinship responsibilities – accountability and transparency**
5. **Relationship with Country and elders – connection and trust**

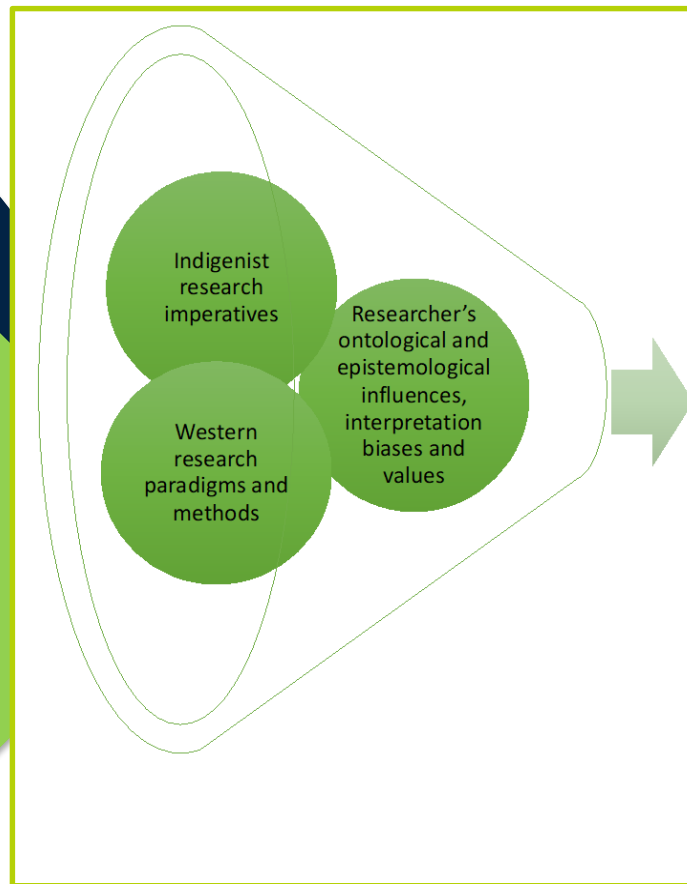
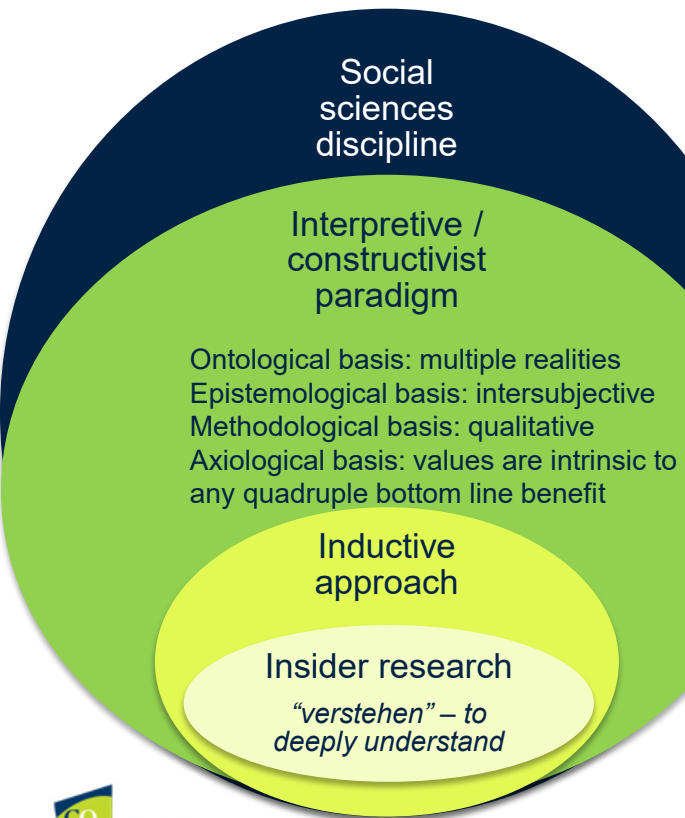


B. Challenges facing Traditional Custodian student researchers

- 1. Grounded-ness of the aims, objectives and research question tasks
- 2. Nutting out about the contribution to the field of research
- 3. Definitional questions
- 4. Budget limitations
- 5. The clock ticking
- 6. Literature review difficulties
- 7. Research design challenges



Research design challenges for Traditional Custodian student researchers



The researcher's

Indigenous standpoint as 5 values
(drawing on Foley, 2003, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers)

1. Respect Indigenous philosophy based on relatedness to Country, Culture and Kin (adapted from Japanangka Errol West, 1998 cited in Foley)
2. Political integrity and empowering Aboriginal voices (adapted from Rigney, 1997)
3. Reflexive approach to Western research approaches: appreciate the relationships between First Nations status, (de)colonisation, knowledge construction, and power relations (adapted from Ardill, 2013 drawing on Moreton-Robinson 1998 and Nakata, 2007)
4. Practise relationally accountable Indigenous ethics on Country, with Kin, about Cultural matters (adapted from Martin, 2008)
5. The research must benefit the community

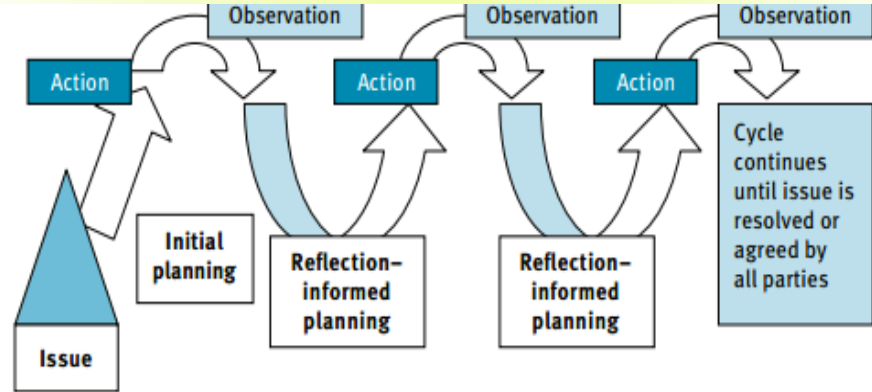
Exploring methodology

1. Field work, grounding the literature

Qualitative sampling for 100 Indigenous voices, semi structured interview, yarning, survey, text analysis, ethnographic method, vignettes

2. Locational study grounding and development

Participatory action research, capacity development with 10, reflexivity, collaborative yarning, “Rule of Threes”



3. Industry grounding and knowledge translation

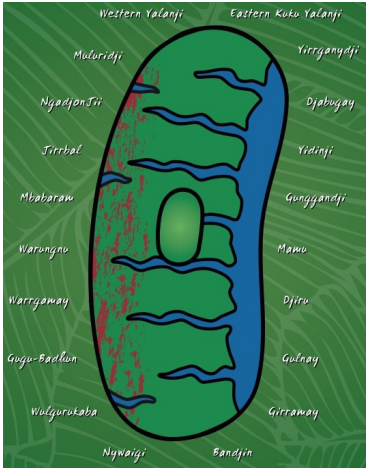
Qualitative sampling for 30 industry voices, knowledge transfer focus group and community based training

C. Opportunities and possibilities for student researchers in this space

1. **Contributing a valuable thread in the Indigenous research fabric**
2. **Building a body of Traditional Custodian literature**
3. **Weaving new stories into our Country narratives**
4. **Emancipating, resisting and self-determining**
5. **Changing our views, changing institutions and changing systems**



Our message



1. Traditional Custodian researchers have unique challenges
2. There are real and significant benefits for communities when Traditional Custodians research
3. Moving forward means
 - mitigating the challenges
 - capitalising on the benefits, and
 - advancing the cultural imperative to protect, maintain and create traditional knowledge.

