



*Healing
Country*

Bundjalung Gathering

Monday 30th Sept - Wednesday 2nd Oct, 2024

We acknowledge the unceded Aboriginal lands of the Nyangbul Peoples, of the Bundjalung Nation where this gathering took place.

The Healing Country Bundjalung Gathering 2024

Summary Report

The Healing Country Bundjalung Gathering held in spring 2024, was a significant milestone in the project's journey so far. It was the first time that representatives from all three community partners came together - Jagun Alliance on Bundjalung Country (Northern Rivers, NSW), The Kids Research Institute Australia from Whadjuk Noongar Boodja (Perth, WA) and Wilya Janta Housing Collaboration from Warumungu Country (Tennant Creek, NT) – along with team members from the University Centre for Rural Health, and other partners such as the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and Viser teams.

This Summary Report provides an overview of the yarns and activities that were undertaken during our time together, as well as outputs developed during and after the Gathering. This includes a summary video, below, with the help of UCRH comms guru - thanks so much George Inwood - and the beautiful telling of our yarns through the lens of graphic artist and researcher Talah Laurie *Gumbaynggirr & Yaegl* who created the conversation maps shown throughout this report - thank you Jiinda (*friend/sister*).



Watch the Summary Video of the Gathering [HERE https://youtu.be/TFxjEqjR6l8](https://youtu.be/TFxjEqjR6l8)

The presentation that was given at the [HEAL24 conference](#) (all presentations now online, and [see our session here](#) project from ~52mins) along with the presentation slides are available on the [Project Website](#), along with this report and above video. Thank you to all those who came and shared their knowledges, scientifically based, community informed and cultural alike. Special thanks to Ricky Cook, Marcus Ferguson and Jagun for hosting us on Bundjalung Jagun (*Country*) and your generosity in teaching us all so much of the region. To our deadly Kerry and Jasmin, thank you for all the support and time given, always. Final thanks to our funding partners, the Australian Research Council (#IN220100084) and the NSW Department of Health.

Please feel free to share this report amongst the communities that you work with, we hope this gives a good insight into the work of the whole Healing Country team.

Bugalbeh (*thank you*),

Kris Vine and Veronica Matthews on behalf of the Healing Country team.

Monday 30th September, Day 1

The first day together allowed for everyone to meet and connect or reconnect in person on the coast of Ballina, Bundjalung Country. We received a beautiful Welcome to Country by Ricky Cook, who ended up staying for the whole day and contributing to many of the yarns. The day was focused on the history of the project's formation and then importantly on hearing from the three community partner representatives about their homelands and the climate impacts being observed and felt by community. The afternoon was filled with some more presentations, firstly around being accountable as researchers to community and research best practices; followed by interactive group activities on storytelling which brought with it some great learnings and plenty of laughs. Discussions held and key learnings from sessions are also graphically represented in the below 'conversation maps'.

Overview of Healing Country by Veronica Matthews

- By sharing the background of this project, Veronica shared how we all came to work together on this project at different times in the journey of its formation.
- A project timeline showed how ideas for this project go back to yarns with networks and community from early 2021, leading to a successful grant and this team of researchers and community partners forming over the last three years.



Sharing stories of home by Representatives from each site

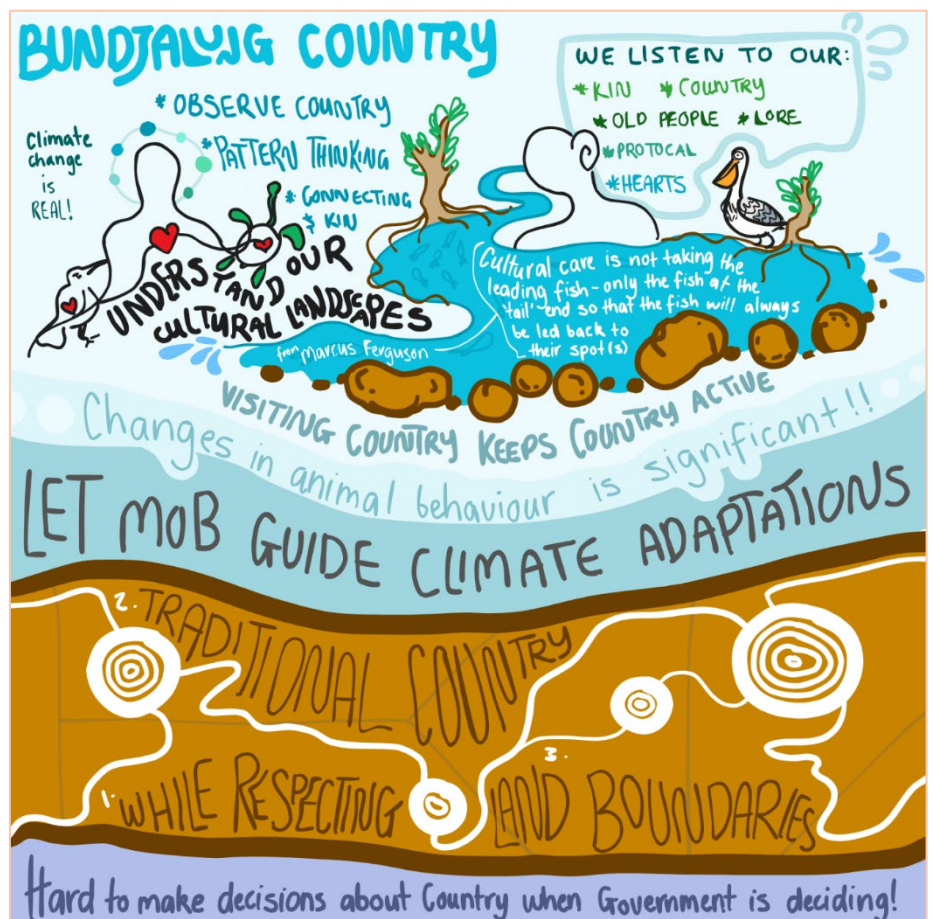
Warumungu - Aunty Patricia Frank Nurururla, Aunty Linda Turner Nabanunga and Sheana Sampson;

Whadjuk Noongar Boodja - Aunty Lynette Dimer & Aunty Lynnette Coomer; and

Bundjalung - Marcus Fergusson

- Listening to the Elders and Knowledge Holders from each of the project sites allowed us to hear unique challenges being felt across different Countries, as well as many similarities, such as weather pattern changes impacting plants and animal seasonal cycles and availability, as well as the importance of truly listening to community voices and to the knowledge that Country has to share.





These conversation maps visually summarise talks by Elders and Knowledge Holders of each of the three project sites from the **Sharing stories of home** session.

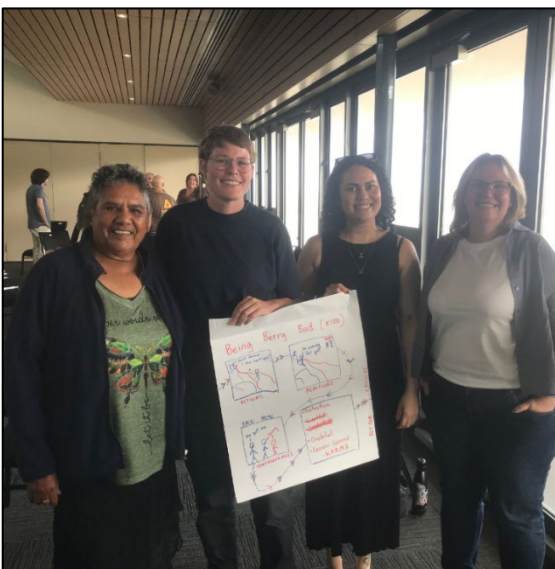
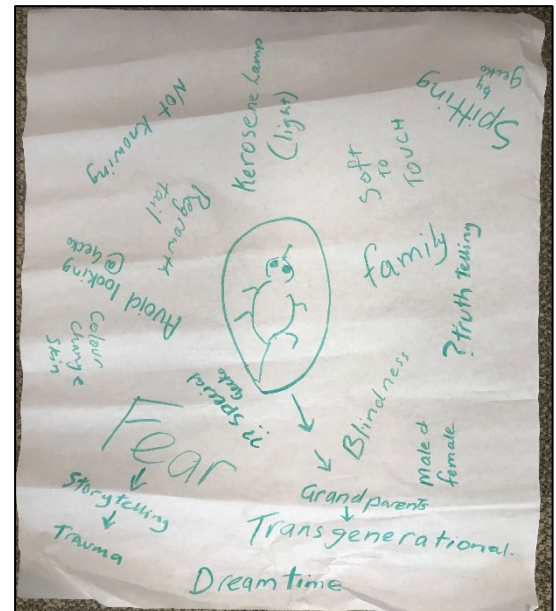
This thing called research: Ethics, Consent & Data sovereignty by Aunty Lyn Dimer & Kris Vine

- This session looked at how we can ensure we are doing research right ways (and shared how learning together is also about learning language two-ways, as shown in 'research speak' interpretations in brackets here): through ensuring community are leading (community-led); taking the time to form trusting relationships (relationality); always keeping people informed along the way (transparency); giving back throughout the work (reciprocity); providing feedback ongoing; respecting and protecting that Indigenous knowledges and information belong to Indigenous peoples (data sovereignty)
- Learnt about some of the key project documents - Protocol, Consent Forms and the Participant Information Sheet – and the importance of the project team really understanding what all these words mean for how we work with community.
- Highlighted researchers' accountabilities to community are well documented in things such as ethical research guidelines and research codes of conduct.



Ways of telling a story by Carl Broman & Jimmi Wright

- Using engaging and interactive approaches, this presentation allowed the group to consider the timeless art of storytelling and the common theoretical constructions, to use visualisation techniques to rediscover a special place, then share these stories in compelling ways.
- Examples of arts-informed First Nation stories developed more recently were watched and discussed amongst the group.



STORY TELLING

WATCH 'GILDANYBA: THE MOON MAN' STORY ON  YOUTUBE

Stories and research

HOW
& WHY!

Brings depth, emotions and human-ess to research.

Creates connection and relatability to research.

Makes research spaces safer, happier and more dynamic.

Belong together...

Session Activity:

Visualising our place of comfort or happiness.



where heart & brain meet

A COMFY PLACE

SET UP

CONFRONTATION

RESOLUTION

STORIES ARE AN AGE-OLD PRACTICE — THEY CARRY KNOWLEDGES, LESSONS, IDENTITY, & WISDOM



RITE of PASSAGE



Wrap up of Day 1 by Talah Laurie

- Talah introduced the group to the concept of digital scribing, or 'conversation mapping', as a way of capturing the group discussions, ideas and important key points in a visual format.
- At the end of each day, the group got to look through the early drafts of these graphic summaries to have input and ensure they were an accurate representation of main ideas that were coming from the group.



Tuesday 1st October, Day 2

Introduction to community story-data mapping

by Veronica Matthews & Aunty Lyn Dimer

- Informed of the long history of mapmaking – from an Indigenous art form of sharing cultural knowledges, to a tool of dispossession of land and Country. Being reclaimed, to ensure cultural data is kept safe and to inform decision-makers.
- Aunty Lyn shared her experiences at a recent Winyama mapping workshop where she learned about the great potential of map making to share important information



A new data platform - the Integrated Knowledge System (IKS) by Nina Woods, Jagun Alliance

- "For individuals, communities and decision-makers to safely store and access spatial knowledge, and to visualise it in meaningful ways." *IKS, Conservation Futures*
- Nina introduced us to the IKS which is under development as an option for us to host our story-data maps on a culturally safe platform. Feedback to ninawoods@jagunalliance.org.au is welcomed.



The many ways of sharing data by Thom Saunders & Kate Thompspon, QUT Viser

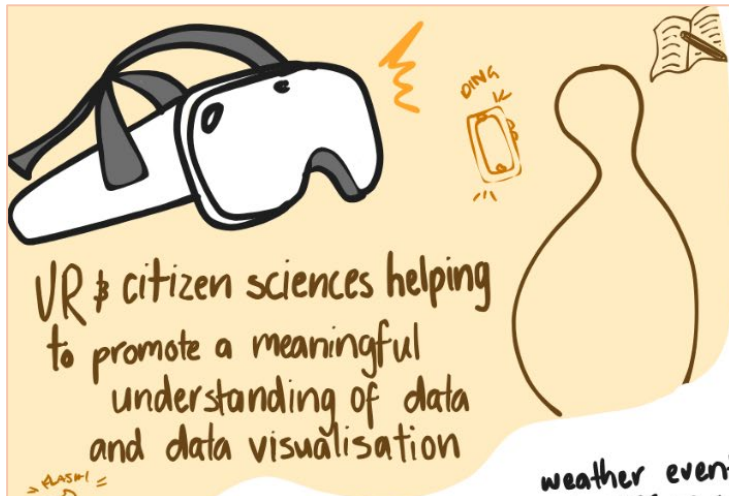
- We were shown many wonderful examples of how data can tell a story and with different purposes, such as to inform, to capture a point in time, or “be a tool for rebellion”. See presentation slides for further details of projects shared.



Data telling stories by Kerrie Mengersen, OUT

- Kerrie gave a great overview of AusEnHealth, a resource of climate and environmental health data that can help us make future predictions and make plans
- Of particular interest was the climate predictions of temperature, rainfall and air quality for each of the project’s sites – Bundjalung, Whadjuk Noongar and Warumungu Country.





VR & citizen sciences helping to promote a meaningful understanding of data and data visualisation

Mapping Stories

- * An age old practice
- * Keeps stories strong
- * Will be helpful with site (cultural) preservation efforts



COUNTRY
HOLDS
KNOW-
LEDGE
DEEPLY

What's our future look like?



you can hear the changes in climate by raindrops they are higher in pitch.

"Local data is a resource for advocacy!"

VISER ^{QUT}

WE WERE SHOWN
THE CASE STUDY
"SUSTAINING GONDWANA"

GEO SPACIAL EXPLORATION

→ Can be an advocacy tool as well!

QUT - The healthy air exhibition helps to:

START CONVERSATIONS

DISCUSS ART VS SCIENCE & the value of both...

NAVIGATE TOUGH
DATA STORES

STREET PEOPLE ABOUT AIR

WIND OPEN

THE HOME

THE BODY

THE NATION

SHARED BUILDING

NASA DATA

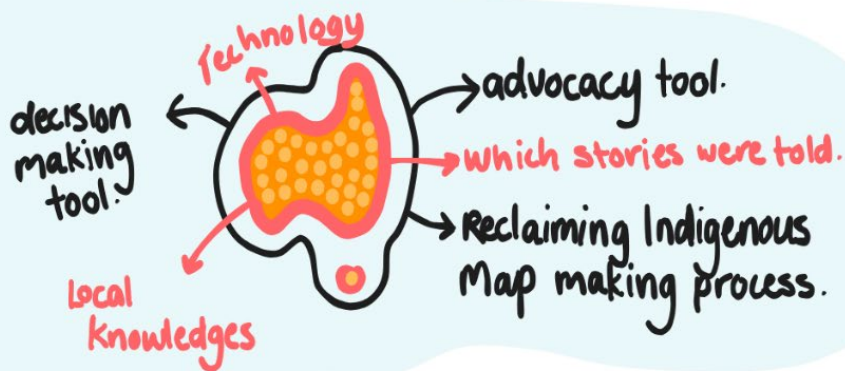
RBS DATA

PUBLIC DATA

On Country visit - Shaws Bay, Ballina

- The aim of this session was to collect data of local Country environmental changes, impacts on community and culture, that will be used to develop an example of a story-data map
- Local Knowledge Holder Marcus Ferguson very generously shared many many stories, teaching and insights into the region's history, including a wealth of images and historical records. The Viser team recorded some of the narrative data, and showed how to operate their user-friendly recording equipment including a 360° camera and drone (*little did they know the local Butcher bird was not so friendly!*)





DEMONSTRATION:

We seen an example of what a data platform looked like and what the process was like to store and protect data...



COUNTRY
IS THE BEST
CLOSE THE GAP
INITIATIVE

Shaw's
Bay's

ON COUNTRY EXPERIENCE WITH MARCUS FERGUSON



Wednesday 2nd October, Day 3

Day 2 Reflections - the map making process with everyone

- There was a strong sense of safety and trust in this smaller group by Day 3.
- Found data presentations by QUT and Viser extremely interesting, desire to share this information around climate change of heat and rainfall projections back to community. Not only about local Country changes and projected trends, but also to inform community that each place is part of a much bigger story of climate change, nationally and globally. Community need to be educated further on what's also happening outside of their communities.
- Sharing of information, knowledge translation, primarily needs to be done through visuals to ensure accessibility. *"Pictures means more to us than words on paper"* Supported that story-data maps and videos can provide this.
- Reminder that we need to be guided by Elders, inform them first, then provide opportunities for the young ones to be involved. *"Have to have our young ones be in front now, have Elders support from behind"*
- Want to also share and promote good news stories too, stories of Ranger groups and Jnr Rangers protecting the Night Parrot, and of ranger groups working in urban area of La Perouse. These are stories of inspiration for communities that can be shared through story-data mapping.



young
people's
Experience

→ Tech needs to be meaningful.
*recording Country etc...

→ Need to spend time on
Country.

→ Timing to learn traditional
knowledges needs to be right.

NO TIME LIMIT
WHEN YARNING
WITH OUR ELDERS



Reflections



We need to
hear more
happy stories

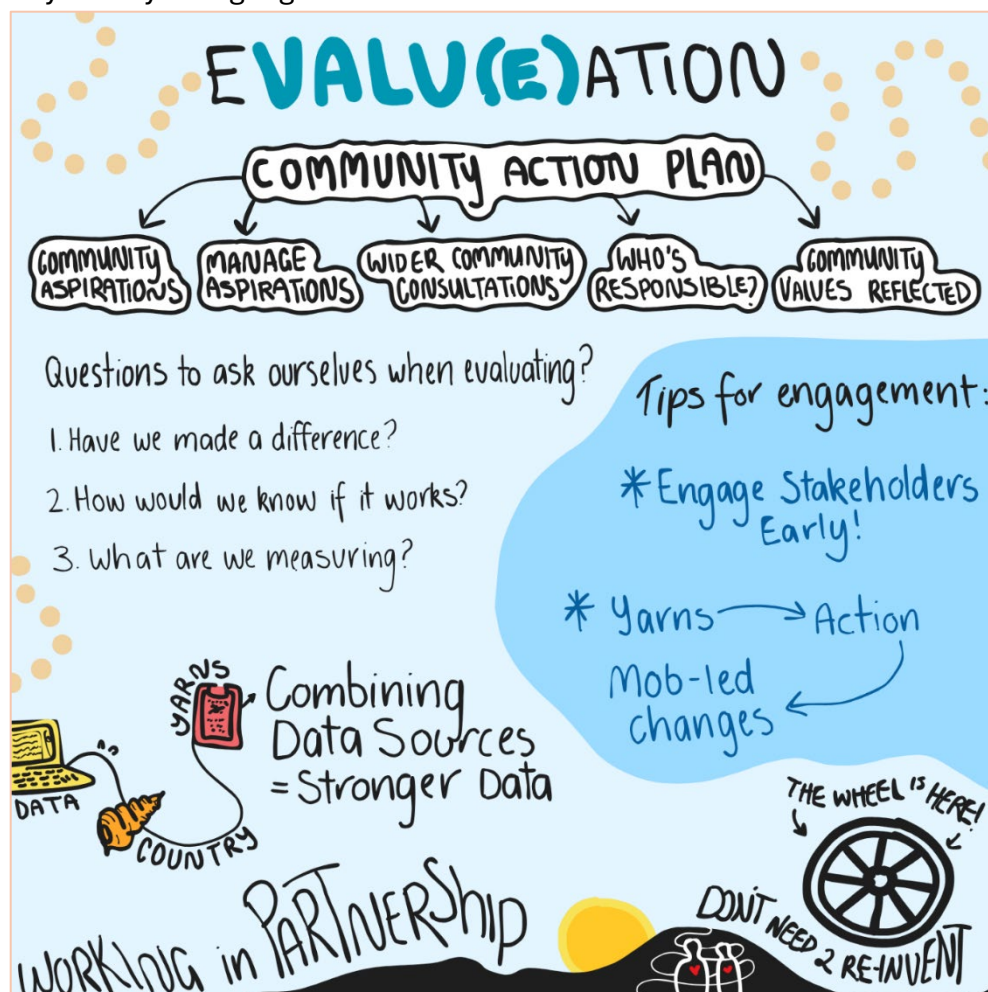
The night
parrot story
is a happy
NT story

A CUPPA GOES
a LONG WAY



Community action planning and evaluating from Veronica Matthews & Kris Vine

- Overview of what the project's aim for developing community action plans – as a tool for community that is owned by community. The ideas that inform these plans come from local yarns about climate change worries and solutions.
- Can change the naming of these plans to be more meaningful in local language
- Importance of including stakeholders early on in the discussions
- Ideas of what an action/adaptation plan could include and examples given:
 - **NESP Adaptation Framework Explainer** - <https://nesp2climate.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/What-are-adaption-frameworks.pdf>
 - **Application of the NESP adaptation framework - Case study for K'gari** - https://nesp2climate.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Kgari-Case-Study-2024_press.pdf
 - **The Mauri Model** - <https://www.maurimodel.nz/about-1>
- Part of these action plans will be planning how to evaluate them along the way too. What can an evaluation mean? To assesses if something has made a difference and how much, to see how to improve the plan/approach continuously, see if it's achieved its goal/s, to understand and learn from.
- This will include thinking of Measures of all kinds - e.g Environmental, Wellbeing
- Plenty more yarning together on this to come!



Where do we go now? Important points to inform how we move forward based on our time together, with everyone

- Importance of sharing and informing mob of climate change information and projections. Not just local either, for information at each site, but also Australia wide and globally.
- There is no substitute for a coming together in person for relationship building and strengthening, let's do it again next year!
- How best to keep engaged - Ongoing sharing between communities can happen at the monthly project meeting's on Zoom, as a chance to share both ways. Reminder to ensure all community map-makers and cultural advisors are invited to attend these meetings.
- Future idea of community installations, to bring the information to mob (project touring bus may have been joked at 😊)
- Ensure that in all feedback to community to use visuals and videos. The best of those communication items are mob made.
- Story and Culture and Climate – they are all alive and changing, not static. This needs to be reflected in story-data maps and all project communications

Lunch and Tour with the team at Namabunda Farm - Bundjalung Tribal Society

- An overview of the work of Bundjalung Tribal Society was given, along with the history of the development of the Farm.
- We were very honoured to be fed with some amazing 'forest foods' made with local ingredients by Flavia and the team.
- A guided tour was given to show us all around the property and look at the work that has been happening across the landscape
- And as a final farewell, we had a sudden downpour of rain – a cleansing before we left each other perhaps.



A special thank you to our hosts for the day – for further information on **Namabunda Farm**, check out their website <https://bundjalungtribalsociety.com/namabunda-farm-1> and social media at <https://www.instagram.com/namabundafarm/>

**And finally, THANK YOU to everyone who attended the 2024
Healing Country Bundjalung Gathering.**



**All presentation slides, along with this Report and the Summary Video,
are available on the [Project Website](https://ucrh.edu.au/project/healing-country-weaving-knowledge-systems-to-meet-climate-challenges/)**

(ucrh.edu.au/project/healing-country-weaving-knowledge-systems-to-meet-climate-challenges/)

Participant Information - Helping to stay connected with each other!



Jagun Alliance, Bundjalung - Carl Broman, Marcus Fergusson, Anastasia Guise, Oli Costello, David Hinchley, Taya Barrett, Jimmi Wright, Uncle AJ, Nina Woods, Tina Williams, Kristin Denexter, Greg Telford.

The Kids Research Institute Australia, Whadjuk Noongar Boodja - Aunty Lynette Dimer & Aunty Lynnette Coomer.



Wilya Janta Housing Collaboration, Warumungu - Aunty Patricia Frank Nurururla, Aunty Linda Turner Nabanunga, Sheana Sampson & jarjum Tyquade Alum.

University Centre of Rural Health – Veronica Matthews, Kris Vine, Talah Laurie, Kerryn Harkin, Jo Longman, Ross Bailie, Geoff Morgan, Josie Evans, Jasmine Pilling and George Inwood.



Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and Viser team - Kerrie Mengerson, Kate Thompson, Thom Saunders, Michael Smallcombe & Angela Black.

The HEAL Network - Sharna Motlap.



Canadian visiting team - Amy Cardinal Christianson, Indigenous Leadership Initiative; Alex Zahara, Canadian Forest Service and REDfire lab; David Young, Canadian Forest Service and REDfire lab; Elder Joe Gilchrist, Thunderbird Collective.