

Chapter 3

Conducting two-way ecological research

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This chapter presents processes that I have explored and challenges encountered while developing collaborative two-way ecological research projects with four Indigenous ranger groups in Arnhem Land from 2008 to 2012. Prior to this I was engaged in largely western forms of ecological research. I offer the following insights and lessons I have learnt to exchange knowledge and information about experiences working in cross-cultural and remote environments, and to enhance Indigenous natural and cultural resource management. Communication about what works, what doesn't and suggestions for enhanced ways forward are essential to maximise the benefits not only for natural and cultural resource management, but also to improve wellbeing and socio-economic outcomes for Indigenous Australians, and the broader public by strengthening Australia's socio-economic fabric and human rights record.

The objectives of my research were four fold: to conduct collaborative ecological research with Indigenous ranger groups in Arnhem Land; to provide evidence of the ecological outcomes of Indigenous ranger work; to build the two-way technical capacity of those involved; and to communicate findings to the broader public. By two-way technical capacity I mean the Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge, preferred methods and skills that contribute to the development of shared aspirations, approaches and outcomes. With a number of rangers and community members, I explored innovative ways of combining Indigenous and non-Indigenous

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