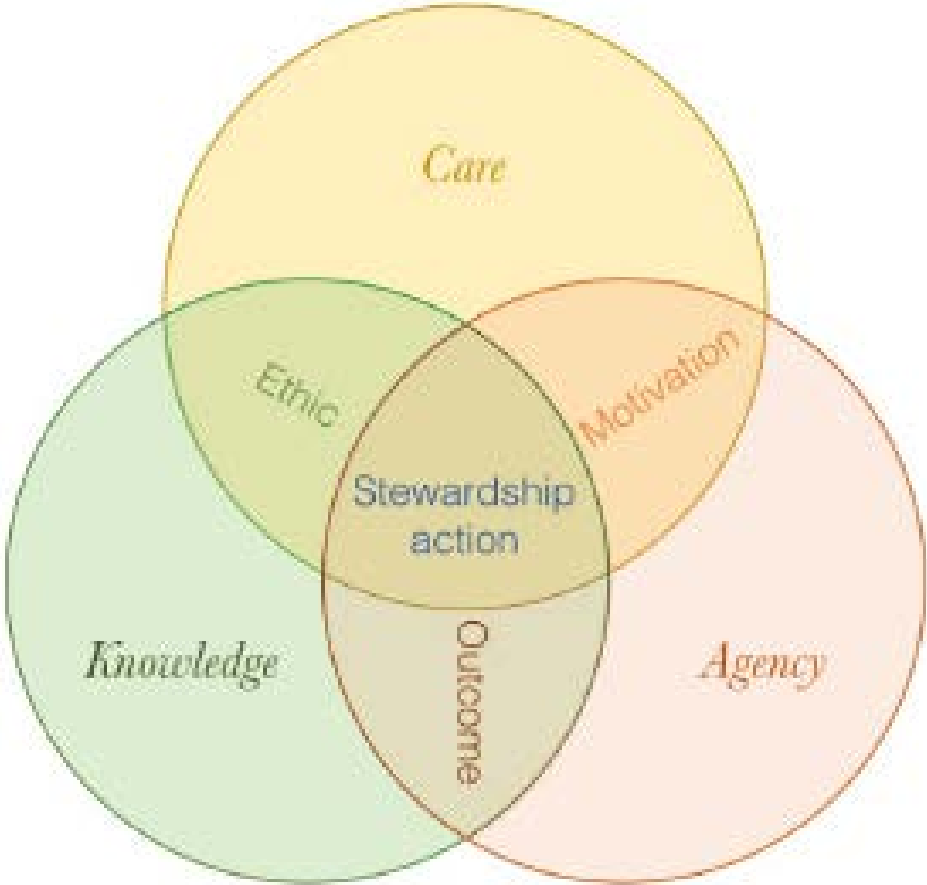


Biosphere stewardship - reflections from indigenous governance systems and ethics of care and reciprocity

Dr Ro Hill, CSIRO Land and Water and James Cook University, Cairns, Australia

Framework for stewardship



Indigenous governance – agency?

- Self-determination
- Sovereignty
- *Sui-generis* rights stemming from occupation since time immemorial
- The view that rightful decision-making stems from these rights to self-determination and nationhood
- von der Porten and de Loë 2014



Indigenous-led stewardship: Larissa Mundraby, Kimberley Ranger Forum 2017

Indigenous care - yes

- Caring for country
- Land country and sea country



Photo: Kimberley Land Council

What is Indigenous Land Management?

ILM includes a wide range of environmental, natural resource, commercial, economic and cultural resource management activities undertaken by individuals, groups and organisations across Australia. For example:

- ◆ weed and feral animal control
- ◆ fire management
- ◆ threatened species management
- ◆ hunting, art and ceremony
- ◆ knowledge sharing.

Outcomes...



Photo: Giringun Aboriginal Corporation

Additional benefits of ILM

The positive outcomes of Indigenous involvement in natural resource management are not only environmental. Examples of other benefits:

Health & wellbeing

Engagement in ILM was a factor in decreases in blood pressure, body mass and heart disease risk in at least one remote community¹

Cultural

Support for intergenerational transfer of knowledge that is critical to the maintenance of cultural practices and institutions²

Social

Reduction in anti-social behaviour of young people, and increased access to housing and employment²

Economic

Fee-for-service contracts for ILM work were estimated to be worth \$4–6 million in the Northern Territory in 2009²

Motivation

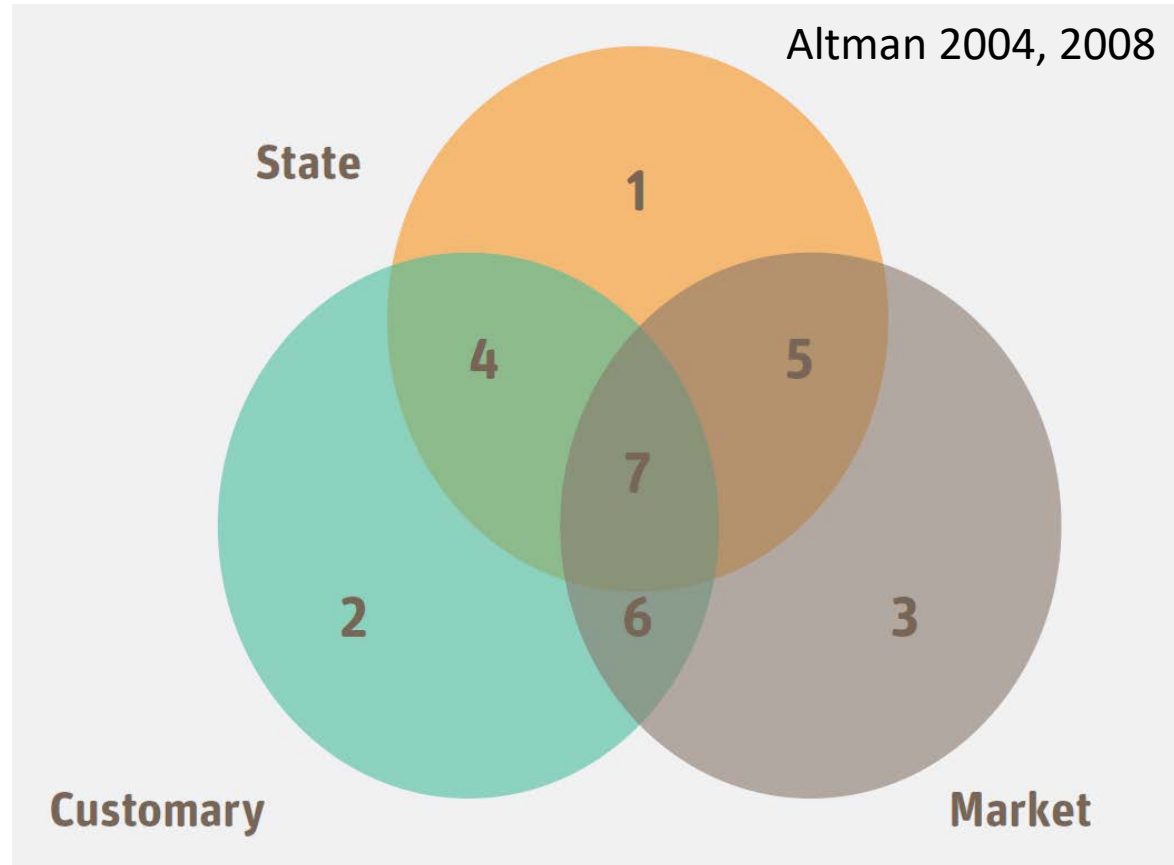
Ethics



Hybrid economies

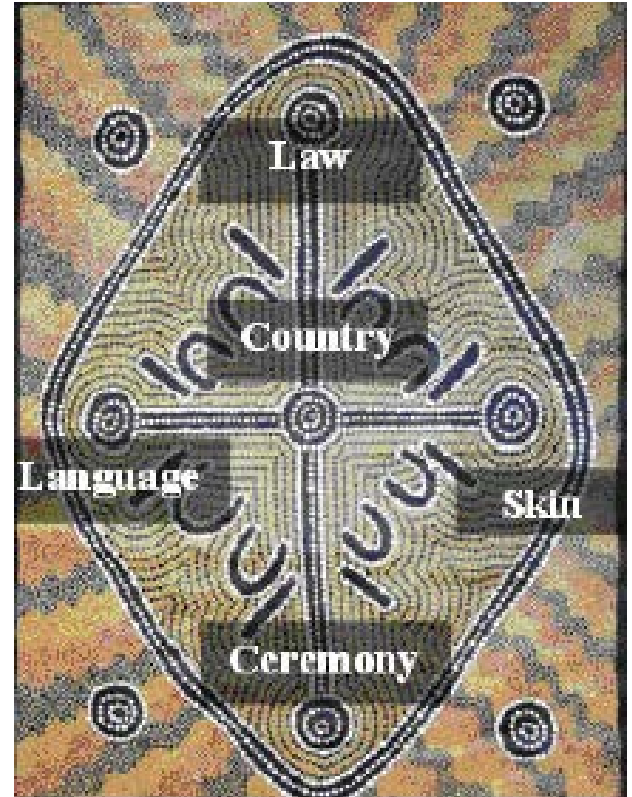
Savannah burning

- State supports Indigenous Rangers
- Custom supports rights to burn on country
- Market buys carbon credits from early burning to prevent late-season wildfire
- Art similar



Indigenous knowledge – yes, but

- *Ngurra-kurlu* framework for indigenous ecological knowledge.
- *See that tree. It is shedding its bark. No, we didn't tell it to do that. That is just its purpose, the kuruwarri [law] for that thing...*
- Where is the country (land and sea)? Where are the skin connections?



Holmes & Jampijinpa (2013)

socio-economic
and educational
disadvantage

limited access to
resources for ILM

BARRIERS

challenging role
and fragility of ILM
organisations

lack of access to
traditional lands

loss of
traditional
knowledge and
language

How to adapt

- Include the earth that we are stewarding and vice versa
- Integrate economies
- Recognise multiple benefits
- Include reciprocity and relationships
- Recognise the legacy issues and barriers



Thank you!

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