

Video transcript February 2019

Voice: Mervyn Street, Gooniyandi man

Hello, my name is Mervyn, my skin name Jooroo and I'm from here; out from Louisa Downs [cattle station where Mervyn was born] but it's inside my great great grandmother's country. And I'm here, in Yiyili [Community].

I'm thinking a lot; that we all have a heart and we all have veins. We move our finger, every joint, because that's run by the veins, blood veins go everywhere, in our body.

Country is like a body.



When you're looking at the river, that river has veins – little creeks that join into the big river. Whenever we have a big wet, rain runs into the little creeks and always these little creeks help the big river. They build the river up. We've got veins and the river has veins, we've got blood veins, and the river has blood veins. The river is just like our blood.

The heart is like saltwater. You know how the tide comes in every time, the tide comes every time. Well, this is my thinking: the lung, underneath our body, it breathes. It gives you air, and bringing [life]; there's lots of things happening in our body, inside. The tide comes every time, goes down, tide comes every time, and goes down and our lungs work the same way.

Country's just like a body – when the lung stops moving, we'll go [die]... What's going to happen with all these changes now, is the river going to flow or not? I don't know, we don't know.

And the river is just like a tree, standing up. That's our family tree for all language groups that goes right down to the saltwater. Rivers have names. It doesn't matter where it is, a waterhole will have a name. Little creeks and springs, and whatever else is in my Country, all have names and the river flows down, to other people's country. That Bunuba mob have a lot of stories about creeks, billabong, and things. We've got Jaru in front, we've got Kija in front, we've got Bunuba and Gooniyandi, Nurtuwarta [Community] and right down to Nyikina-Mangala, right down. They've all got names in the river and we all share that one big rain. That rain helps us, every language group. We all share that water. The river is like our family tree for all language groups; it flows into the sea. Just like that.

I want to say this too: it's not only language people living here, we're mixed people, in town and everywhere, in stations; everybody is mixed, kartiya and everybody. We're all part of that river, we drink one water from the one main rainfall. Everybody. Yeah, that's all from me. Thanks.

Further information

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The project page can be found on the Hub website, along with the project start-up factsheet.

This project is due for completion in June 2020.