

DESERT KNOWLEDGE CRC

March
2009

Hands Across the Desert:
Linking desert Aboriginal Australians to each other
and to the bush foods industry

Project performance report to
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

by Jenny Cleary, Robyn Grey-Gardner and Paul Josif
Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre



Australian Government
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Final Report

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The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC) is an unincorporated joint venture with 28 partners whose mission is to develop and disseminate an understanding of sustainable living in remote desert environments, deliver enduring regional economies and livelihoods based on Desert Knowledge, and create the networks to market this knowledge in other desert lands.

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List of shortened forms

ANFIL	Australian Native Foods Industry Ltd
DGP	Desert Garden Produce (of the business Pwerte Arntarntarenhe Desert Garden Produce)
DKCRC	Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre
EuroGAP	European Good Agricultural Practices
GlobalGAP	Global Good Agricultural Practices
NOTPA	New Opportunities for Tropical and Pastoral Agriculture
SCM	Supply Chain Management

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1. Introduction

1.1 Industry context

The Australian bush foods industry comprises products derived from uniquely Australian flora and fauna. Currently, the industry is small, generating between \$5m and \$15m annually, although consolidated data are difficult to find. Estimates vary from \$5m for native foods only (Fletcher 2003) and \$10m for native foods and essential oils derived from native species (Lester 2003) annually, and more recently, Primary Industries and Resources SA estimates the figure to be \$16m annually (PIRSA 2006). The industry is characterised by very small and small to medium enterprises operating as sole traders or limited companies, with often short supply chains or lack of coordination, relying on spot market prices. It is developing nationally, although quite slowly. There is a recognised national industry body, Australian Native Foods Industry Ltd (ANFIL). However, there is little Aboriginal representation on this body.

The industry was founded primarily on traditional Aboriginal knowledge of the collection, preparation and uses of uniquely Australian plants and a smaller number of animals (Miers 2004, Morse 2005). Until recently, supply of these plants for food production has been mainly sourced from wild populations. Despite the development of the industry, which has been largely reliant on Aboriginal knowledge, Aboriginal participation in the industry is currently marginal (Morse 2005), and predominant involvement is in the supply of raw product through bush harvest. Despite many years of use and knowledge of native species and, more recently, ownership of land, few Aboriginal people in Australia have engaged successfully in market-based commercial ventures involving native plants. The few exceptions have been in the use of plants as a medium for creative expression and as the basis for art and craft enterprises (Whitehead et al. 2006).

A wide range of bush plants comprise the Australian bush foods industry and it can thus be thought of as part of the agri-food industry sector. The agri-food sector is large and multifaceted, exists worldwide and involves a range of businesses that create industry-specific (e.g. grains, meat, fruit and vegetables, etc.) agri-industry chains that often exist across international boundaries. The businesses involved in such chains tend to deal in low-margin commodities where competitive market forces have typically resulted in the cost of production being very close to the value created, thus leaving relatively thin profit margins (Boehlje 1999). Additionally, production is directly affected by climate and the resulting uncertain weather conditions, which very often result in a variable supply of the product. Ensuring constant volume, high quality 'safe' product (Foster et al. 2001) at the right time and price is thus a key business consideration and involves rigorous supply chain management (SCM) both within the company and between businesses in the industry supply chain (Dunne 2001, Bryceson & Kandampully 2004).

As a result, analysis of agri-industry supply chains has become a valuable tool in determining where added competitive advantage can be generated for the companies and/or industries involved (Bryceson & Smith 2008).

1.2 Project context

Many chains focus on minimising cost per unit of value added and on maximising returns. In the bush foods industry this is a necessary principle if Aboriginal people are to achieve real benefits and/or livelihoods. However, given the inter-cultural placement of many chains in the bush foods industry, Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (DKCRC) research has identified that there is a need to include the non-market social and cultural considerations in the analysis of chains in the bush foods industry (Cleary et al. 2008). The conventional view of a successful value chain is that it incorporates 'hard' elements such as transaction cost minimisation per unit of value added and vertical integration and coordination of businesses within the chain to maximise competitive advantage (Porter 1985). While there is some emphasis and consideration of social factors such as trust, satisfaction, appropriate power structures, commitment, communication, relationship-specific investment and strong personal relationships (Batt 2003), the traditional measure of success is return on investment. Consideration of the non-market social and cultural elements of bush food chains in which Aboriginal people participate, particularly as non-cosmopolite producers, has been identified by DKCRC as critical to developing effective and efficient industry chains that both reward Aboriginal people economically and accommodate their sociocultural values. Identifying and achieving the right balance between the economic and social factors is important, and we argue that this balance may be different for different chains in the agri-food sector, dependent on the environment and context in which the chain is situated (Cleary et al. 2008).

Additionally, DKCRC research has shown that social elements such as the development of interpersonal relationships, networks and effective communication mechanisms are foundational to developing economic efficiencies in bush food chains. Current information asymmetry exists, which marginalises some participants, particularly at the upstream end of the chain (Cleary et al. 2008). For example, DKCRC has undertaken post-harvest pest management research on bush tomatoes (*Solanum centrale*), but the dissemination of that information to critical links in the chain has been difficult where appropriate communication mechanisms to facilitate information and knowledge transfer do not exist and producers are widely dispersed over large distances. Additionally, access at the upstream end of the chain to market information, for example post-harvest handling techniques, industry standards and current market prices, is critical to full participation in the industry.

Aboriginal bush foods industry participants with whom DKCRC is working have expressed that one of the key issues for them in participating in the industry has been a lack of knowledge and information about how and where other Aboriginal people are participating. The 'Hands Across the Desert' project was conceived in response to this issue, and the DKCRC identified need to address the important social factors in industry chains as described by Batt (2003). It was one of two such projects undertaken by the DKCRC during 2008 aimed at building capacity of Aboriginal people in the bush foods industry. The other was a project that enabled participants in a bush foods industry chain to participate in networking and information-sharing activities that addressed the vertical relationships between participants in the chain.¹

¹ The 'Walk the Chain' project, funded by the Northern Territory NRM Board, walked a group of central Australian bush food harvesters through the bush tomato value chain. The report and DVD associated with this project will be published in 2009.

1.3 Project objectives

'Hands Across the Desert' aimed to facilitate knowledge and information sharing between different Aboriginal groups currently engaged in the bush foods industry, and it specifically addressed the horizontal relationships in bush foods industry chains. A further aim has been to build, at the local scale, industry participants' awareness of the broader industry context and of the market requirements for high quality product. The project has sought to provide an opportunity for Aboriginal industry participants to increase the skills and knowledge required to enhance their participation in the bush foods industry.

The project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry through the Advancing Agricultural Industries Program. It was led by the DKCRC.

2. Project activities

Two workshops were held: the first in Broome, Western Australia and the second in Alice Springs, Northern Territory. These locations were chosen because of existing relationships between the DKCRC and Aboriginal bush foods industry participants in both locations. The structure of the two workshops is described below.

2.1 Broome (WA) workshop

This workshop was held between 12–16 May 2008 and included a group of five Aboriginal women from central Australia, three Aboriginal people from Broome and the Dampier Peninsula in WA and a number of non-Aboriginal participants.

2.1.1 Workshop participants

Northern Territory:

- Angelina Luck, Edi Holmes, Jilly Holmes and Lulu Teece (bush harvesters from Ampilatwatja Community)
- Rayleen Brown ('Kungkas Can Cook', a catering business in Alice Springs).

Western Australia:

- Pat Mamanyun Torres (Mayi Harvests) and Bruno Dann (bush harvester and member of Indigenous Harvest Australia Cooperative)
- Kevin May (Project Officer/Indigenous Coordinator with WA Department of Agriculture and Food for the Kimberley region). Kevin undertook a facilitation and coordination role during the Broome activities.

Additionally, a number of non-Aboriginal people participated in the activities and were included to provide additional expertise and support. These participants included:

- Chris Ham (WA Department of Agriculture and Food) and Kim Courtenay (TAFE WA)
- Jenny Cleary, Murray McGregor and Ange Vincent (DKCRC)
- Sunder Madabushi (Ampilatwatja Community support person)

Significant support for the Broome activities was provided by the New Opportunities for Tropical and Pastoral Agriculture (NOTPA) project staff within the Department of Agriculture and Food WA, Broome.

2.1.2 Workshop activities

Participants visited three different production types of Kakadu Plum (Gubinge)²:

- bush harvest blocks
- enriched bush harvest areas (where a bush harvest site exists, and this is enriched by supplementary plantings)
- plantations of Gubinge (*Terminalia ferdinandiana*) operated by WA Aboriginal industry participants.

Workshop participants discussed harvesting techniques, post-harvest handling and storage, quality control measures and the business and marketing models that the WA participants use to bring their products to market.

Participants also viewed a locally produced DVD that highlighted sustainable harvest methods for Gubinge. The DVD also highlighted appropriate post-harvest handling techniques that maximise commercial return for Gubinge. While the DVD's focus was on serious industry issues, its presentation was engaging and comedic, and it was narrated by Aboriginal celebrity, Mary G.

² Kakadu plum is known locally as Gubinge, and for the purposes of this report will be referred to henceforth by that name.



Gubinge fruit



***Project participants viewing
Gubinge DVD***



***Project participants on site at Chile Creek,
Dampier Peninsula WA***

2.2 Alice Springs (NT) workshop

The second workshop was held in Alice Springs from 16—18 December 2008 at the Desert Knowledge Precinct and a number of other sites in and around Alice Springs. Seventeen Aboriginal people involved in the bush products industry participated.

The final group of attendees included bush harvesters from Ampilatwatja Community in the Northern Territory, the owner of a bush foods catering business in Alice Springs and representatives from Aboriginal enterprises in South Australia and Western Australia.

2.2.1 Participants

Western Australia

- Kevin May (Indigenous Coordinator, Department of Agriculture and Food WA)
- Pat Mamanyun Torres and Kim Harris (Mayi Harvest)
- Bruno Dann Marion Mason (Indigenous Harvest Australia Cooperative)
- James Edgar (cultivator and Gubinge harvester).

South Australia

- Patricia Gunter (producer of bush products for medicinal purposes)
- Ron Newchurch (Bookyana Bush Foods).

Northern Territory

- Edie Holmes, Angelina Luck, Jilly Holmes, Bidy Beasley, Juliet-Anne Morton, Lulu Teece (bush harvesters from Ampilatwatja Community)
- Max Emery and Ruth Emery (Desert Garden Produce)
- Rayleen Brown (Kungkas Can Cook).

Non-Aboriginal people who attended workshop sessions to accompany participants or who were representatives in the bush products industry or DKCRC staff were:

- Jan Ferguson, Paul Josif, Ange Vincent, Jenny Cleary (Desert Knowledge CRC)
- David Blackman (interpreter)
- Allan Cooney (Centrefarm)
- Caroline Searle (Community Liaison Officer)
- Robyn Grey-Gardner (consultant facilitator).

2.2.2 Workshop activities

The workshop comprised an introductory session, two streamed facilitated sessions at the Desert Knowledge precinct, a field trip, a cooking and presentation demonstration and bush food tasting.

2.2.3 Discussion session one

In this discussion session the workshop participants shared their experiences of participation in the bush foods industry. The discussion centred on what products are available in which location, success stories, limiting factors for bush produce production, market potential and collaborative opportunities for the product chain. The issues particular to bush foods raised during discussions of the products include:

- sustainability of product supply
- uneven supply of bush products
- uneven quality of products
- uneven pricing of products
- producer/supply end of the chain is predominantly where Aboriginal people participate, with little representation at the marketing end.

In addition to the group discussion, some participants created paintings to convey their stories of participation in the bush foods industry. Each participant presented their painting to the group and talked (either directly or through the facilitator or interpreter) about the meaning and message in the painting.

The following are a selection of workshop paintings and narratives:



Pat Mamanyun Torres (Broome, WA)

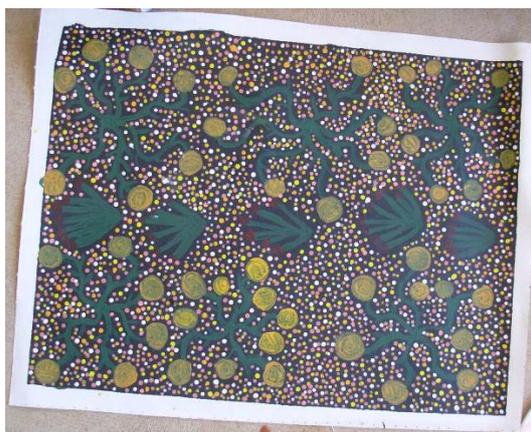
The story for the painting:

This painting features Gubinge in flowering and fruiting form. In our region, we can get up to three picking seasons if there is plenty of rainfall.

Straight after Gubinge starts, this fruit or plant ripens and is called guwarl.

Pat makes value-added products: jams, chutneys, cordials, food and drink products. She uses seeds from the region in muffins, damper and scones.

Ultimately this painting is about [Pat] linking with Rayleen Brown because, to value-add, [Pat] need a commercial kitchen to access commercial markets like the high premium quality gourmet baskets at Myers ... Networking from west coast to the desert, then ultimately reaching over to east coast to Queensland. Reconnecting traditional lines of trade ... The three sisters story, because they were three beings who travelled across the land and created the food plants.



The story for the painting:

Two kinds of bush tomatoes, still unripe. They are spreading after rain on a clay pan [or open space]. They'll soon be ripe, maybe in a month. After turning yellow we pick and eat them raw. In the middle is turkey bush, a good medicine for colds.

Bidy Beasley (Ampilatwatja, NT)



Kevin May (Broome, WA)

The story for the painting:

This picture represents what we are doing here today. We are from the west Kimberley, sharing about the locally grown wild bush fruit with Indigenous people from central Australia who are sharing about their wild fruit: Hands Across the Desert.

Ideas for the future:

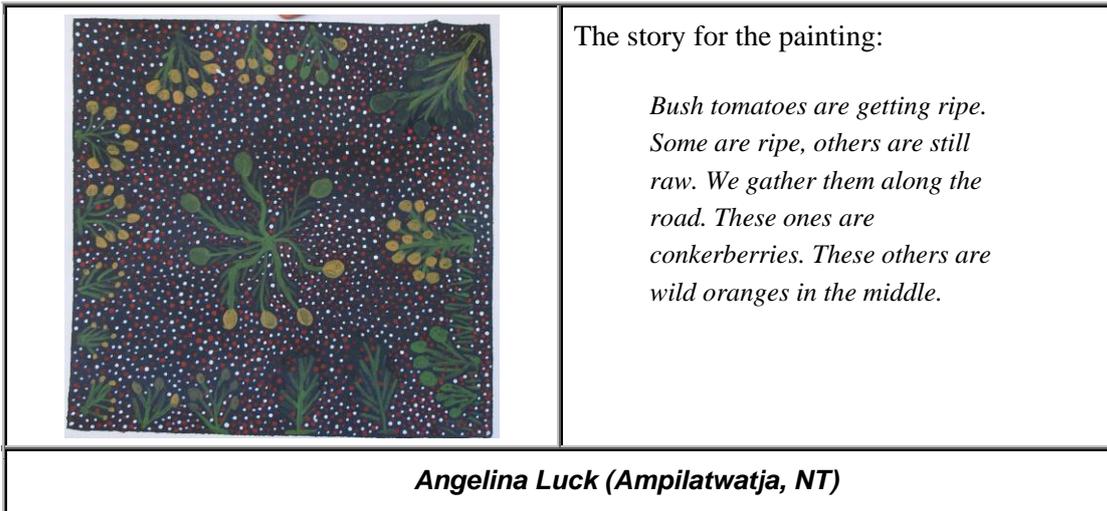
- *It is an ecclesiastic of ideas because we haven't gone any further yet*
- *We need to find out more about the Gubinge fruit before the market can increase.*



The story for the painting:

These are little black bush bananas with flowers. They're nice, really sweet. We're already eating them at home.

Lulu Teece (Ampilawatja, NT)



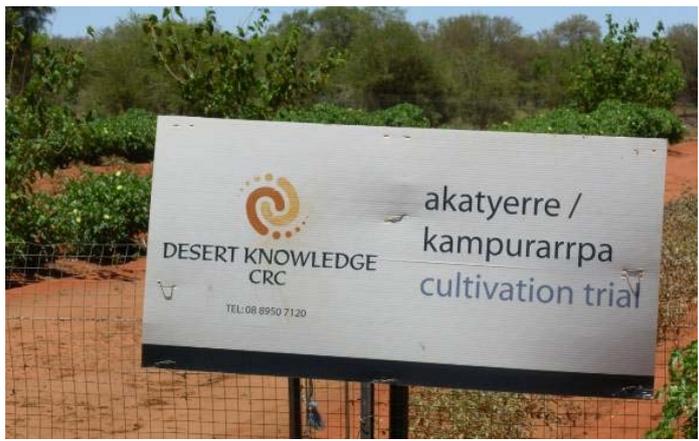
2.2.4 Field trip

The participants visited the Pwerte Arntarntarenhe Desert Garden Produce (DGP) business near Rainbow Valley on 17 December 2008. The hosts, Max and Ruth Emery, own and operate DGP.

Pwerte Arntarntarenhe DGP operates as a commercial, horticultural producer of bush tomatoes. DGP also engages in participatory research in partnership with DKCRC. The research has focused on identifying the viability of producing bush tomatoes under a commercial cultivation regime. DGP has been extremely successful in all aspects of the bush foods industry.

Max Emery provided information on all aspects of bush tomato horticulture, including plant development, plant selection, planting method, purpose-built garden design, fencing, watering practices, plant maintenance, fertiliser type and application method and harvesting. He also explained the post-harvest methods used in the business, including drying, cleaning, storage and packaging of fruit as well as marketing and transportation.

Workshop participants were able to freely wander through the cultivation area and inspect the plants and fruit.



The bush tomato cultivation trial site at Pwerte Arntarntarenhe, Rainbow Valley



Max Emery describes the differences in bush tomato species to the workshop participants



Rayleen Brown and Lulu Teece discuss and closely inspect the bush tomato crop

2.2.5 Discussion session two

This session followed the field trip and further explored the idea raised at the Broome workshop about developing an Aboriginal bush products network. Participants discussed in detail what they hoped to achieve from forming such a network, the outcomes they thought it could achieve, who else should be invited to participate and how these other participants would be invited.

However, as discussions progressed, it became clear that a network would not meet the aspirations participants were expressing, and the discussion then focused on forming an Aboriginal bush products association.

2.2.6 Bush food cooking demonstration

Rayleen Brown, workshop participant and owner/operator of 'Kungkas Can Cook' provided a bush foods cooking demonstration for workshop participants on the evening of 17 December 2008. Kungkas Can Cook is a catering business specialising in using bush foods as the basis for its products. Rayleen gave a short presentation on how bush foods are sourced for her business, the market, the challenges she faces in using bush products and her plans for the future of the business. Rayleen described how she sources most of her bush-harvested bush tomatoes locally, through a wholesaler. She described her preference for bush-harvested product and explained that this both supported her cultural values around supporting bush harvest and provided the basis for her business to differentiate itself from other catering businesses. She also explained the difficulty she faces when bush tomatoes are in short supply and how important it is for her business to have a secure supply of the products that she uses. She expressed a desire to move towards broader supply of bush food specialty products that she could sell locally or online via the Internet, such as sauces, chutneys and jams. Rayleen served a sumptuous three-course meal cooked with bush foods, many of them locally sourced. The cooking demonstration was a welcome opportunity for participants to savour the fruits of their labours and understand the demand and selection requirements of bush products as well as developing an understanding of a value-adding business.

Rayleen Brown, owner and operator of Kungka's Can Cook describes the different ingredients used in the dishes made on the premises



Workshop participants enjoy tasting the food

3. Discussion

Participants in both workshops expressed that what they had learned during this project had been valuable. Many had gained significant insight and understanding of the bush foods industry and learned first-hand about how Aboriginal people are choosing to participate in multiple ways in bush food enterprises. They shared ideas and knowledge about the future and articulated ways of enhancing Aboriginal participation in the industry. This section of the report describes these learnings and synthesises outcomes from both workshops.

Participants at the Broome workshop were able to see multiple methods of growing and harvesting Gubinge and were shown that each method requires different production and harvesting techniques and activities. They learned about the issues, activities and comparisons between different production methods. For example, cultivating the crop near communities solves some harvesting issues. The bush harvesters in central Australia predominantly live in an environment of welfare dependence, where access to resources such as vehicles and other infrastructure, including communications infrastructure, is extremely limited. This makes it difficult to harvest bush tomatoes and wattle seed (*Acacia* spp.), which may be growing some distance from bush harvesters' communities. When one of the central Australian bush-harvester participants was shown a plantation of Gubinge, she commented, 'It's good to plant them where you live, then we can just walk outside and pick. Don't need cars.'

Anecdotally, processors further along the chain have quite clearly expressed their frustration at what they see as an inability to purchase directly from the harvesters, while recognising that such transactions would not currently be efficient, given the lack of institutional arrangements among the harvesters, inefficient communication mechanisms and the perceived difficulties associated with access.

Cultivation of bush tomatoes and other bush foods in central Australia is currently minimal and it is believed that enriched bush harvest is not practiced. Participants at the Broome workshop were able to appreciate the value to their industry of growing, as well as bush harvesting, bush foods in central Australia.

Of significance were discussions around how cultural values were incorporated into, and guided, the ways in which people choose to participate in the industry. For example, some participants are engaged in bush harvest and have developed business and marketing strategies that enable values associated with the cultural importance of bush harvesting to be incorporated. These participants described how the stories associated with bush-harvested Gubinge are part of the branding strategies they use to sell their products. They highlighted that their participation is within a niche sector of the market where product authenticity is valued by discerning consumers and that this was important to them in the sense of maintaining strong traditions of bush harvesting. Other participants are choosing to cultivate bush foods and they highlighted how this was contributing to a broader market sector, for example supermarkets, where high volume quality product is demanded. This was highlighted by both visits to Gubinge plantations and by the field trip to DGP at the Alice Springs workshop, where Max and Ruth Emery are growing bush tomatoes at a commercial scale.

Participants were able to see and experience first-hand the differences between bush harvest and enriched bush harvest sites and plantations and to learn about the benefits, risks, and potential for different approaches in the commercial context of the bush foods industry.

Participants were highly amused by the DVD they viewed in Broome, and one of the outcomes from this activity included the recognition from central Australian participants that a similar DVD in the central Australian bush foods context would be useful. Food safety issues and traceability are increasingly a focus of the bush foods industry, particularly for processors at the downstream end of industry chains. They are demanding high quality product, and there is mounting pressure on those processors supplying product for export to comply with standards and certification associated with food safety and traceability, for example GlobalGAP (Global Good Agricultural Practices) and EuroGAP (European Good Agricultural Practices). Currently in central Australia, bush tomatoes and other species are primarily bush harvested by multiple, atomised suppliers and sold through a small number of wholesalers. Cash payments are made and traceability for quality and food safety is difficult. The central Australian participants were able to see first-hand how Gubinge, for example, needs to be handled to maximise commercial return and meet increasingly rigorous post-harvest quality and food safety standards. Comments about the video included: 'It's funny, but it tells the right story.' The visit to DGP and the detail provided by Max and Ruth Emery about their post-harvest and handling techniques for bush tomatoes also added to this knowledge and reinforced for the central Australian bush harvesters the importance of this issue to the market. Rayleen Brown also highlighted the importance of being able to source high quality produce with which to develop the unique culinary creations on which her business depends.

The central Australian bush-harvester participants also expressed an interest in value adding, something that the women in this group had not previously done. They saw how this was being done in Broome with Gubinge, for example with hand-made sauces, fruit preserves and fruit-based cordials, and talked about whether it would be possible for them to make and sell products themselves from bush tomatoes. There was a comment that their community 'has a good kitchen.' One of the participants also commented that they might be able to sell their bush tomatoes themselves. Information provided by Rayleen Brown during the cooking demonstration at the Alice Springs workshop demonstrated the possibilities for multiple commercial bush food uses and the increasing value and recognition of these by non-Aboriginal consumers.

Whitehead et al. (2006) point to a historical indifference of non-Aboriginal Australians in valuing native plants for food. While this indifference is clearly changing, as evidenced by the growing demand for bush foods by non-Aboriginal consumers, bush harvesters with whom DKCRC has worked have previously described (anecdotally) the monetary value associated with commercial bush harvest as a secondary or tertiary reason for participating, although it provides a limited but important source of independent income. This raises the question of whether the bush harvesters' perception of the low commercial value of their activities is due to the minimal rate of return they receive and the lack of information about how consumers value the products.

For many of the bush harvesters in the 'Hands Across the Desert' Project, the fact that non-Aboriginal people highly value bush foods and will pay to buy these products in supermarkets or in restaurants was quite new information. Both the cooking demonstration and subsequent meal, together with the value-added products seen in Broome highlighted the time, effort and labour costs associated with value adding in this context. It enabled participants to see that while value adding has the potential to increase return, there are also costs incurred and that these must be considered carefully prior to undertaking value-adding activities.

Participants in the Alice Springs workshop were enthused with the activities undertaken during the three days. They conveyed their appreciation for opportunities to express themselves in ways they found comfortable. Painting was an appropriate method for the Alyawarr ladies from Ampilatwatja, who commented that what they were painting was their life. The interpreter took that to mean that they weren't just painting bush food, but showing who they are: tribal people living on their own country who continue to harvest bush food, because that's what they do. Many families are passing on the harvesting skills to their children.

There was particular enthusiasm about the decision to progress a new entity: an Aboriginal bush products association. Participants described this as a highlight, and talked about it in terms of recognition of their own skills and abilities to carry it forward. Part of the decision-making process also included serious consideration of whether they should seek membership of ANFIL rather than start a different association. However, they concluded that joining this body would not fully meet the aspirations they have articulated as the goals for the Aboriginal bush products association. The bush harvesters expressed that they would like to be able to access information about what the market wants. They spoke about this in terms of the frustration they sometimes experienced in harvesting products that were not required. For example, they talked about how they harvested particular seeds one year, because there was a request for them from the wholesaler with whom they dealt. The following season, they harvested the same seeds, only to find that they were not required. They saw that the association might be a mechanism through which they could get information *before* they went on harvesting trips.

The decision to progress the association embodies the commitment the participants conveyed during the workshop to ensure a strong Aboriginal presence in the industry and a forum through which Aboriginal voices could be heard more broadly in the bush foods industry. Participants explored many names for the association, but no firm decision was made and further discussion was suggested.

The initial purpose of the association, according to participants, is to form an alliance that can advocate and represent Aboriginal concerns and interests for:

- increased Aboriginal control over more of 'the chain' to include processing and value adding of products
- commitment to marketing of products
- opportunities for employment and training for Aboriginal people
- representation of Aboriginal interests in forums for issues such as IP and patents
- sharing of resources and information such as infrastructure, field days and access to new information.

Project participants described the association as a mechanism for providing an opportunity to support and promote Aboriginal representation and ascendancy in all sectors of the bush food and other bush products industries. Activities and a timeline were created to activate a clear plan and articulate the vision and principles for the association. A summary of this is included as Appendix 2.

The Alyawarr ladies suggested a workshop at Ampilatwatja, so they could show the others their country, their bush foods, how they harvest them and tell the stories associated with them. While this has not been possible within this particular project, it was an idea that was received enthusiastically by other participants.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

This project has significantly contributed to building the human and corporate knowledge, skills and collaborative capacity of participants. This has been achieved by establishing and maintaining enduring linkages between harvesters, producers and business people (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) from the Kimberley, South Australia and central Australia.

Project activities provided an opportunity for participants to highlight the challenges that people in the industry face, particularly Aboriginal people. Participants spoke about their industry experiences and worked through problem-solving strategies aimed at strengthening their businesses. The workshop discussions also identified a number of specific issues that hinder the further development of the bush foods and other bush products industries, including lack of coordination and the inability to easily share knowledge about marketing, quality management and value-adding opportunities.

Enabling bush harvesters to examine successful businesses and business models in this context has increased participants' understanding of how to enhance the existing bush food value chains. More importantly, it has facilitated knowledge sharing of how people's skills in successful value-chain management have been developed in this inter-cultural context and of how Aboriginal people are engaging with the market as equals.

A significant outcome has been the decision to proceed with the establishment of an Aboriginal Bush Products Association, and participants have developed a project plan to carry this forward. This outcome has exceeded the initial project objective of establishing an Aboriginal bush foods network.

Work has begun on the task list for progressing the association. DKCRC has facilitated the provision of legal advice to the group, and this advice is currently being considered. Potential funding sources for the provision of executive support have been identified.

The project has also shown that when Aboriginal people are able to come together in ways that have meaning and that support cultural norms, for example provision of an interpreter and alternative communication mechanisms such as painting, then dialogue, knowledge sharing, mentoring and engagement are enhanced. The project facilitators believe that the model pursued to achieve the project outcomes has broader application, both within the bush foods industry and in other industry areas where greater Aboriginal engagement and participation is desirable.

Recommendations from this project are:

Recommendation 1: That DKCRC provide ongoing initial support to help develop the Aboriginal Bush Products Association. This support should include assisting the group to seek legal advice about establishing the association, providing expertise to help with an application for funding to support the group's establishment and activities, and facilitating further information- and knowledge-sharing opportunities.

Recommendation 2: That funding from an appropriate source be sought to pay an executive officer to support the group's ongoing activities.

Recommendation 3: That DAFF consider the methods used to achieve project outcomes as a model for enhancing Aboriginal participation in other industry areas.

Jenny Cleary

Project Coordinator

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6. Appendices

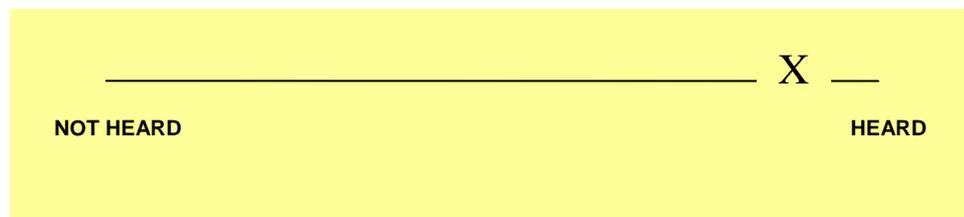
Appendix 1: Participant Evaluation

Participant evaluation

A brief evaluation was conducted during the final session in the central Australian workshop on 18 December 2008. Participants were asked what they had achieved from participating in the workshop and what could be improved.

Question 1 **Have you been heard?**

An independent facilitator drew a continuum and asked the workshop participants to place an 'x' on the line where they felt they had been heard during the workshop. The following diagram shows the response from the participants.



Question 2 **What was good about the workshop?**

The participants were asked what was good about the workshop. The points below are copied from the white board.

1. Informal but informative and getting heard and the message across about what we do
2. Everyone was given the opportunity to tell their stories in their own way, within the time limits
3. Good information exchange
4. Association [preliminary] name "Black Fella Bush Products Association" came out of the event – there is a future!!
5. Painting, the trip to Max's place and Rayleen's cooking gets 10/10
6. Value traditional knowledge and fight to keep it strong and maintain it

Question 3 **What was not-so-good or can be improved?**

1. Too much sugar – be more aware of diabetes when catering
2. Allow some quiet time and space during the event so people can have time to think about what's been happening and said.

Appendix 2: Action Plan – Establish Bush Products Association

WHAT/WHY	HOW	WHO	WHEN	Action taken
Conduct a bush producers (BP) workshop with a broad agenda of information and objectives, including formation of a BP network	Main workshop and smaller discussion groups over several days Field visit to producer farm	Bush Products Producers Bush Harvesters Bush Tucker Business reps	Early Dec. 2008	Workshop held Basis and objectives of BP Assoc. est'd Decision to establish a BP Association
Seek legal advice about incorporation choices and issues linked to establishing Association	Through DKCRC lawyers	Paul Josif, through Jan Ferguson	Dec. 2008 / Jan. 2009	Request made Dec. 2008 and Jan. 2009. Info received late Jan. 2009
Set up eEmail Communications Network	Prepare and distribute email Group/List	Jen Cleary	Dec. 2008	Email group established
Review and feedback about structure and governance	Email Group	Group, Legal	Late Jan. 2009	Email sent to members for feedback
Acquire set up and operational funds	Funding App DKCRC some \$	DKCRC	Feb. 2009	
Phone Link up	Notify & get agreed dates Support from Kevin	DKCRC Working Group	Feb. 2009	
Apply for funds to employ a full-time project officer	Apply for Working on Country funding	Ange Vincent, Eleanor & Jen Cleary	Feb. 2009	

Appendix 3: Project outcomes against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI Statement:

All Key Performance Indicators for the project have been met and completed. This report details the final workshop activities and establishment of an Aboriginal Bush Products Association in observance of the final KPI requirements. The progress report submitted in June 2008 provides details of the first workshop held in Broome during May 2008.

- A. Funding Agreement Executed (due April 2008 – completed)**
Funding agreement executed April 2008.
- B. Project Workplan developed and accepted by Commonwealth (due April 2008 – completed)**
Workplan completed and accepted by Commonwealth May 2008.
- C. Communication Protocols Finalised (due 30 June 2008 – completed)**
Communication protocols were finalised in May 2008. Confirmation of Steering Committee completed. Members approached and agreed to participate.
- D. Steering Committee Membership Finalised (due 30 June – completed)**
The role of the steering committee is to advise the project team on how the project activities should be undertaken, approval of participants and the forms of engagement and consultation to be undertaken with project participants.

Steering Committee membership is confirmed as follows:

- Damien Bond (DAFF)
- Rayleen Brown (Alice Springs – Proprietor Kungkas Can Cook)
- Eleanor Dennis (Contracts Officer with DKCRC and in this role has responsibility for managing the contract)
- Jenny Cleary (project manager and facilitator)
- Kevin May (Broome, WA – Project Officer/Indigenous Coordinator)
- New Opportunities for Tropical and Pastoral Agriculture (NOTPA), Department of Agriculture and Food WA)

The steering committee has been unable to physically meet because of clashing commitments of members and the initial delays in finalising the funding deed. However, consultation with the Steering Committee members has occurred and all were in attendance at the Alice Springs workshop, with the exception of the DAFF representative who was unable to attend.

- E. Project participants selected and approved (due 23 August 2008 – completed)**
Individual steering committee members were consulted during the organisation of activities for Stage 2 project activities and participants for activities undertaken during this stage were endorsed.

F. Facilitator engaged to conduct project workshops and a copy of the contract provided to Commonwealth (due 23 August 2008 – completed)

A facilitator was not required for the activities in Western Australia. Three members of the steering committee were actively involved in the WA activities. These members were Jenny Cleary, Kevin May and Rayleen Brown.

The workshop in Alice Springs was facilitated by a consultant, Robyn Grey-Gardner in collaboration with Paul Josif and Jenny Cleary. David Blackman was engaged to interpret for the participants from Ampilawatja, who mainly speak Alyawarr.

G. WA workshop and reciprocal central Australian workshop completed as agreed by the Steering Committee and the Commonwealth (due 31 December 2008 – completed)

H. Outcomes of workshops documented and endorsed by the Steering Committee. A copy of the report is provided to, and accepted by, the Commonwealth.

Report endorsed by Steering Committee and report herewith.

I. Project outputs and/or products produced, as agreed by the Steering Committee and the Commonwealth (February 2009 – completed)

All progress reports and final report completed.

J. Commence the establishment of a bush foods network (December 2008 – completed)

The formation of an Aboriginal Bush Products Association has been endorsed and procedures to establish it are underway. Appendix 2 outlines the task list confirmed by the interested parties and actions are already underway.