Two-way learning through evaluation: An innovative Indigenous-led initiative enacting developmental evaluation at the cultural interface

Robyn Napurrurla Lawson, Verona Nungarrayi Jurrah
David Japanangka McCormack
Samantha Togni

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Kurra ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation GMAAAC

CENTRAL LAND COUNCIL

S² Consulting

Acknowledgement of Country

Nganimpa kanarlu-nyarra wardinyi-jarrimi Larrakia wardingki.
Nguru nyampu-wardiki patu-ku.
Ngula kanalu-nyarra nyanyi manu wangkami manu kanarlu-nyarra marnngu-nyanyi kamparru-wanu-patu manu jalangu-warnu-patu nyurnu manu warnkaru-patuku.
Ngulajuku.

We would like to begin by honouring the Traditional Caretakers of the Larrakia people.
We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging as well as everyone here today.

Please be advised, with the permission of their families, this presentation includes images of Aboriginal people who have passed away.

Who we are



Kurra Directors, 2024-2025

Kurra Aboriginal Corporation represents the Traditional Owners of the Granites mining lease and receives mining royalty income



Presenter:
Robyn Napurrurla Lawson

Presenter:
Verona Nungarrayi Jurrah

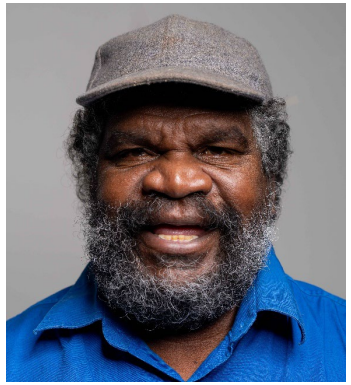


Who we are



GMAAAC Directors, 2024-2026

Granites Mine Affected Area Aboriginal Corporation (GMAAAC) receives affected area income from the Australian government as compensation for the impacts of the Granites gold mine on nine Aboriginal communities



Presenter:
David Japanangka McCormack

Good Governance Program Team



Karina Menkhorst
GGP Coordinator, Central Land Council



Peter Marin &
Paul Case
Governance Trainers
MLSC Corporate







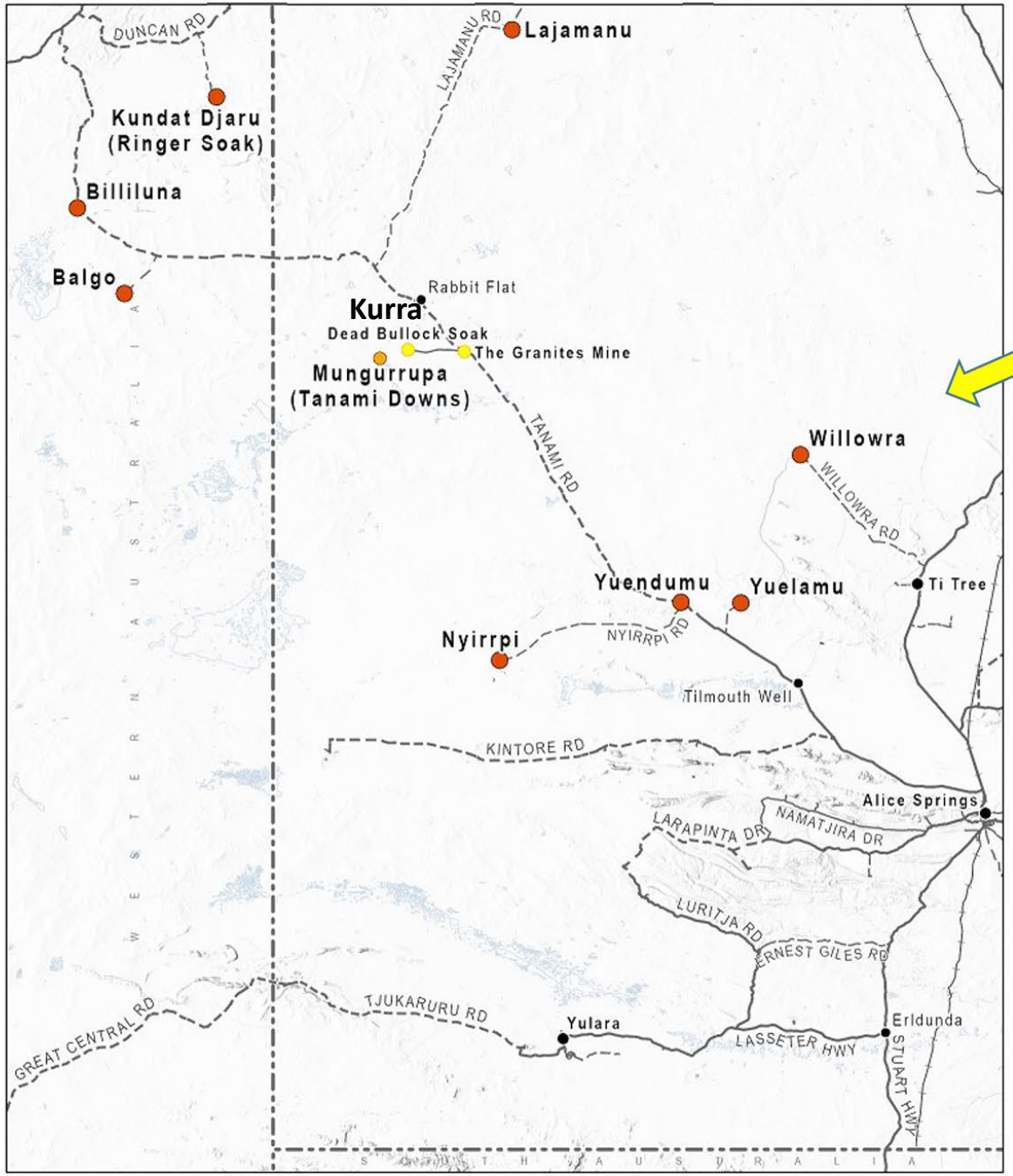


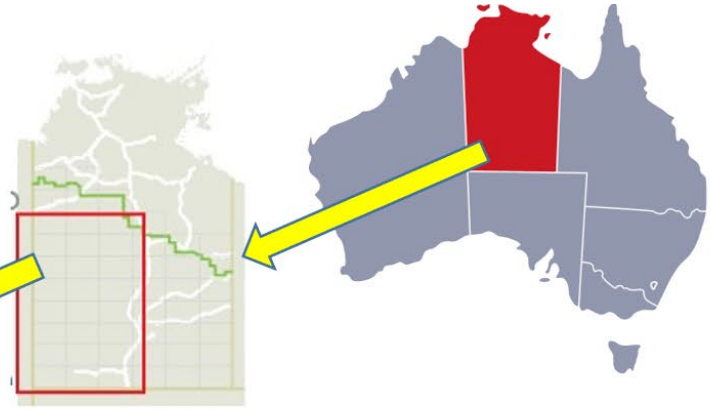
Sam Togni
Evaluator
S2 Consulting

JBWere

QIC

Where we come from









Tanami Desert region of
NT and WA
Over 200,000 sq kms

Similar in size to
United Kingdom or
New Zealand









Overall what we are hoping the Good Governance Program (GGP) will achieve



How we do the GGP evaluation

It is good because everything we do, we do it in cycles; we come back, refresh, we come back, refresh.

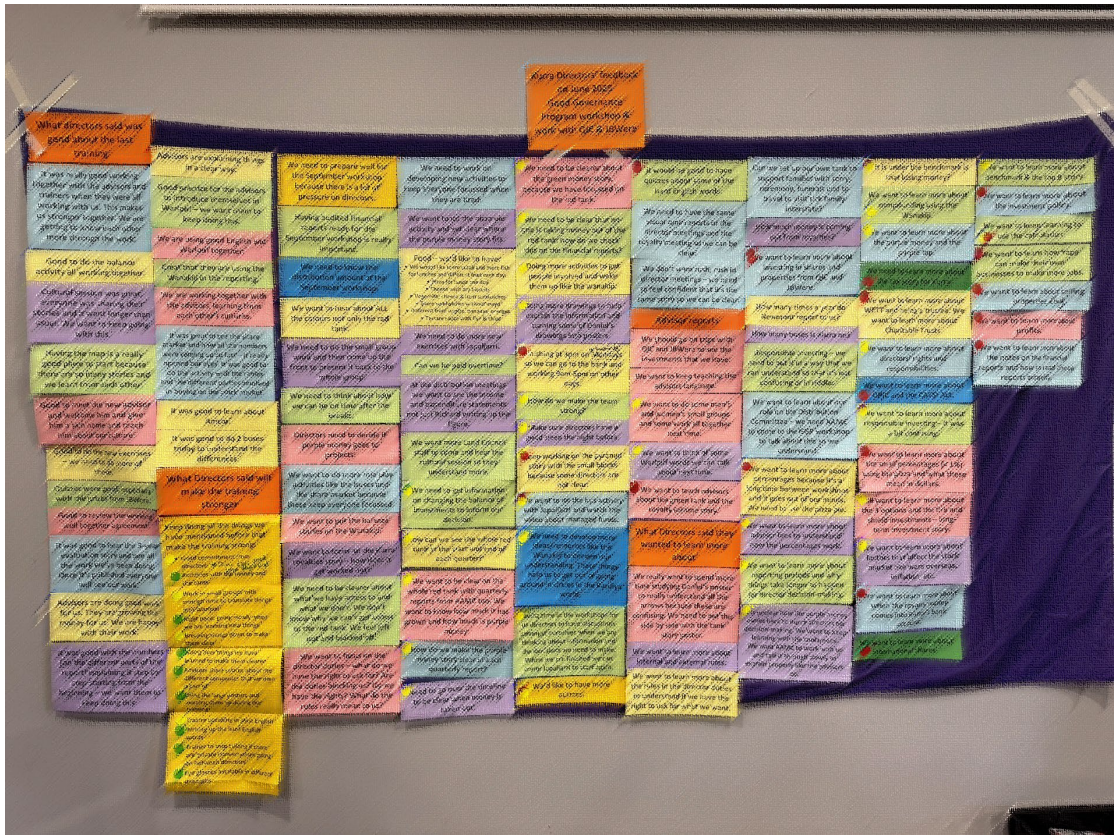
GMAAAC director (142), 2024



How we do the GGP evaluation: director feedback

Evaluation questions at the end of each workshop:

- What was strong?
- What was hard?
- What did you learn?
- What do you want to learn more about?
- What will make the workshop stronger next time?
- Any worries?



How we do the GGP evaluation

The evaluation that we are doing is really good. That's really good the way you [evaluator] put all those things up on the wall at the start to remind us. This is working together really well... It helps to remind us what was good and what wasn't good enough. It's really good.

Kurra director (120), 2023



The feedback sessions are great. I think without the feedback sessions, we'd be in a world of pain.

Investment advisor (126), 2024

Relationships are really important in the GGP and our GGP evaluation

- We give all Kardiya who work on the GGP skin names
- We take time to get to know each other
- We have developed Working Well Together Agreements for the GGP
- We have long-term relationships within the GGP team, including the evaluator



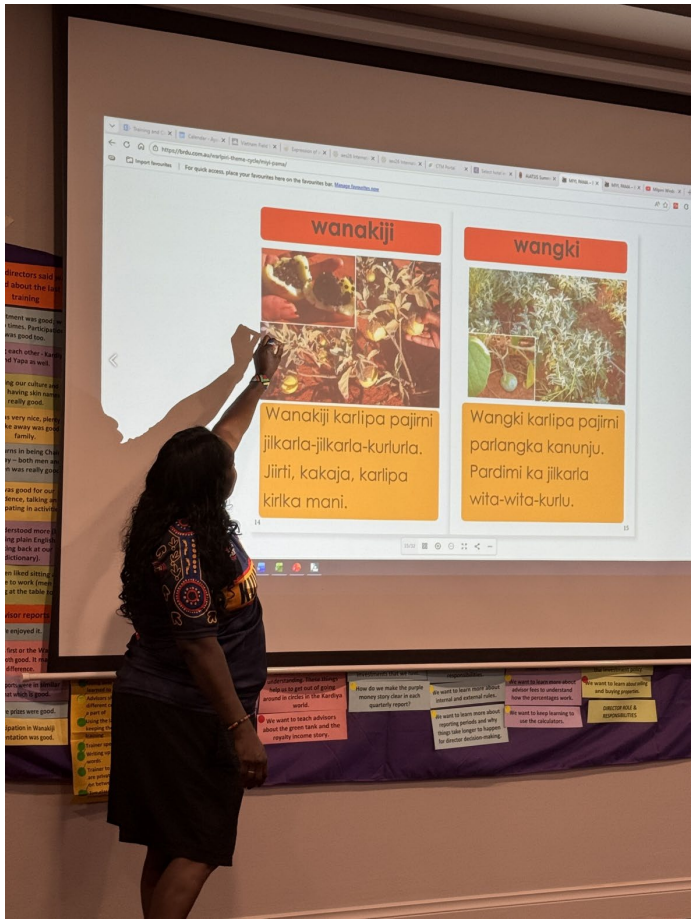
Relationships are really important in the GGP and our GGP evaluation

It's always a pleasure for us as Warlpiri. We appreciate working with different staff, and we're working with you staff for a long time now, and you're given skin names for a reason, and it's for us to connect. And giving [investment] advisors skin names as well, so they're more in tune with us, more like a kinship system that keeps us honest and together.

GMAAAC director (132), 2024



Two-way learning in the GGP



- Cultural sessions are an important part of the GGP workshops – directors are the teachers and Kardiya are the learners
- We bring Yapa culture, language and ways of being into the GGP – recognising that there are two laws
- We teach Kardiya team members about Yapa ways of learning and teaching

Two-way learning in the GGP



We had to introduce our cultural values into the GGP because that's where the money comes from our culture, our land.

Valerie Napaljarri Martin, Kurra director, 2024
(name included by request)

...we are teaching them things that they didn't learn in school and they are teaching us things that we didn't learn in school.

GMAAAC director (122), 2023

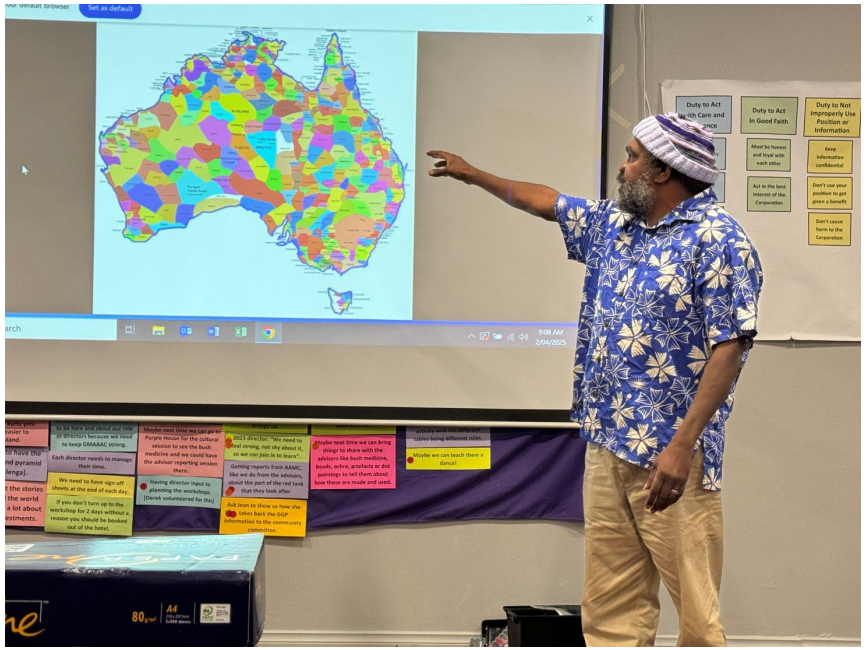
Two-way learning in the GGP

We are learning both ways; we are learning from them and they are learning from us. At first it was us trying to learn from them… it was hard for them to understand, and they are learning from us now that we have got this workshop going, so that's good. That's how it should be really, if you want to work together as one.

Kurra director (114), 2024

I've never experienced training like this before with materials and this two-way learning. We're creating and making materials ourselves to help us, ourselves, learn more.

GMAAAC director (123), 2023



Director feedback has changed the GGP to align with Yapa ways of learning

- Small group work – men's and women's groups > speaking in our first languages
- Lots of activities with co-designed visual resources and posters
- Kurra directors developed the Wanakiji/Ngayaki (bush tomato plant) resource
- GMAAAC directors developed the Watiya kurlu yimi (Tree story) resource
- These changes help new directors to learn more quickly



Director feedback has changed the GGP to align with Yapa ways of learning

What did the GGP workshops look like at the start?

- Presentation-style delivery
- Expert-led learning
- Content presented via PowerPoint
- Content recapped briefly
- Workbook-focussed learning
- Directors seated at tables; trainers at the front
- Text-heavy
- Technical language used
- Pace not conducive to directors' learning
- Discussions predominantly in English language

What do the GGP workshops look like now?

- Facilitation-style delivery
- Relational and reciprocal learning
- Content presented via co-designed, place-based and bilingual visuals and interactive activities
- Content revisited and layered to support deepening understanding over time using the visuals
- Small group, experiential-focussed learning
- Directors and trainers moving between being seated at tables and working in small groups seated on the floor
- Visuals-heavy
- Plain English and technical language used
- Pace more conducive to directors' learning
- Discussions in English and Aboriginal languages

Director feedback has changed the GGP

It was my first workshop and I learned a lot and it was going at a good pace and other directors were helping me.

Kurra director, 2026

What's made this program completely different and unique is the live action evaluation. So, we get that evaluation [feedback] and then we tailor the next round of workshops to try and meet [the directors'] requirements.

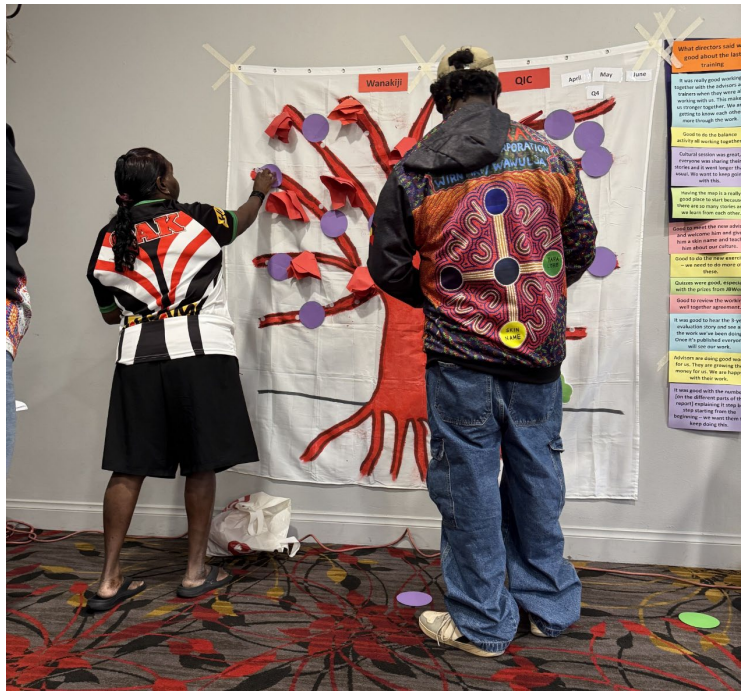
MLCS Corporate governance trainer (101), 2024



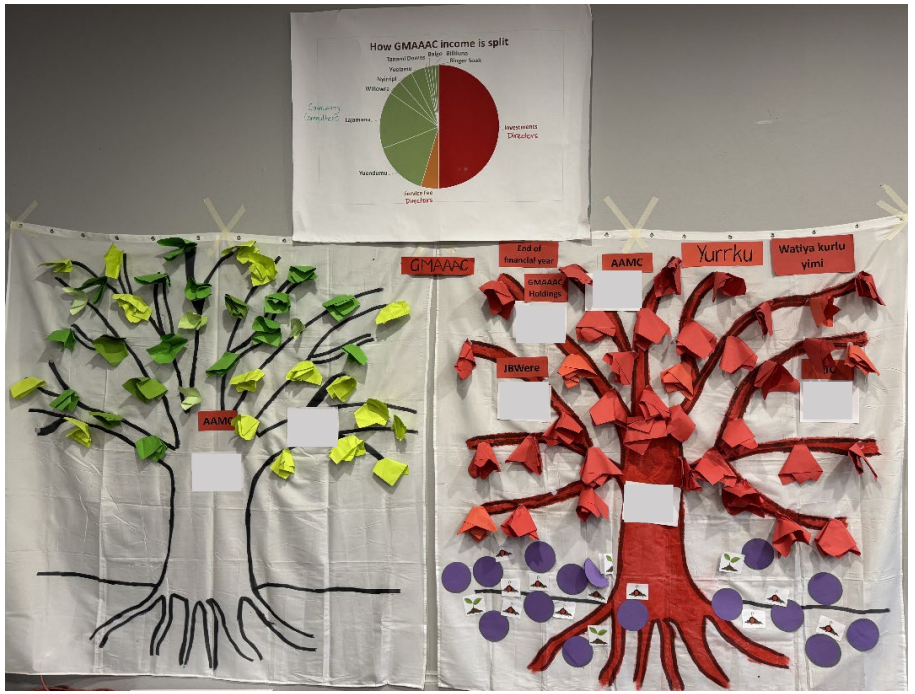


Directors are co-designing the GGP

Kurra: Wanakiji/Ngayaki
(bush tomato plant)



GMAAAC: Watiya kurlu yimi
(The tree story)



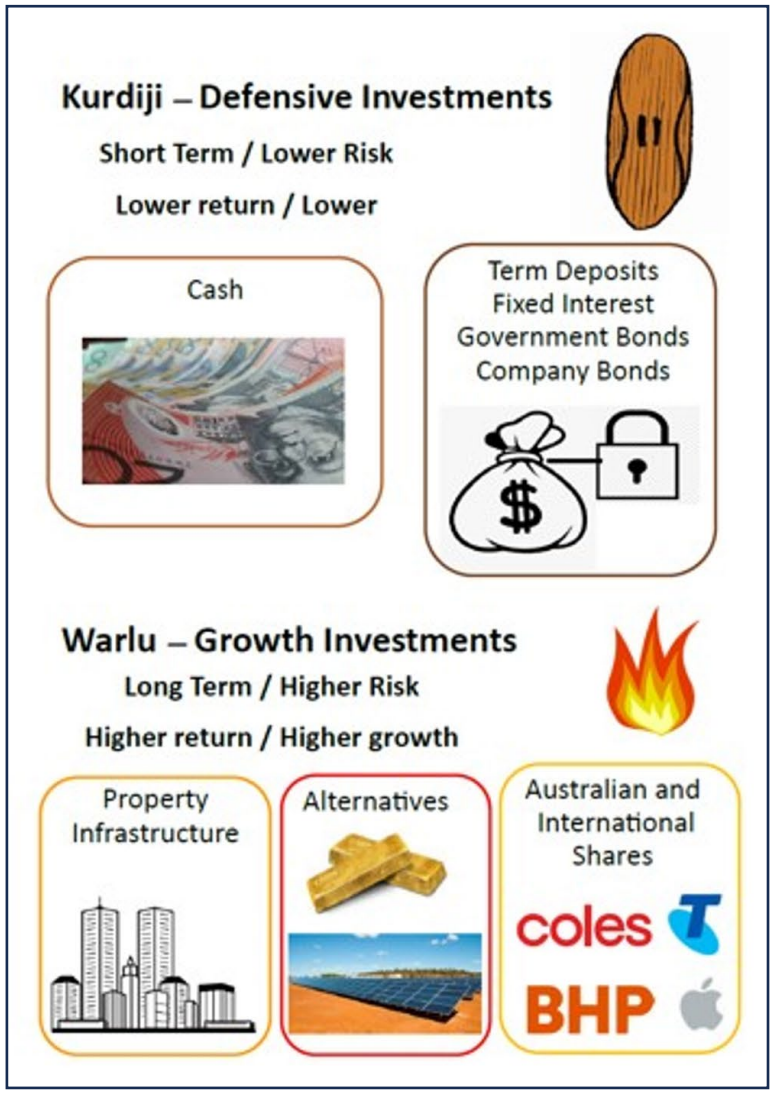
They [the trainers] are seeing our way and the importance of Yapa ways of doing things… Pictures of the plants are like a timeline to us. This is Yapa way. GMAAAC director (136), 2023

Directors are co-designing the GGP

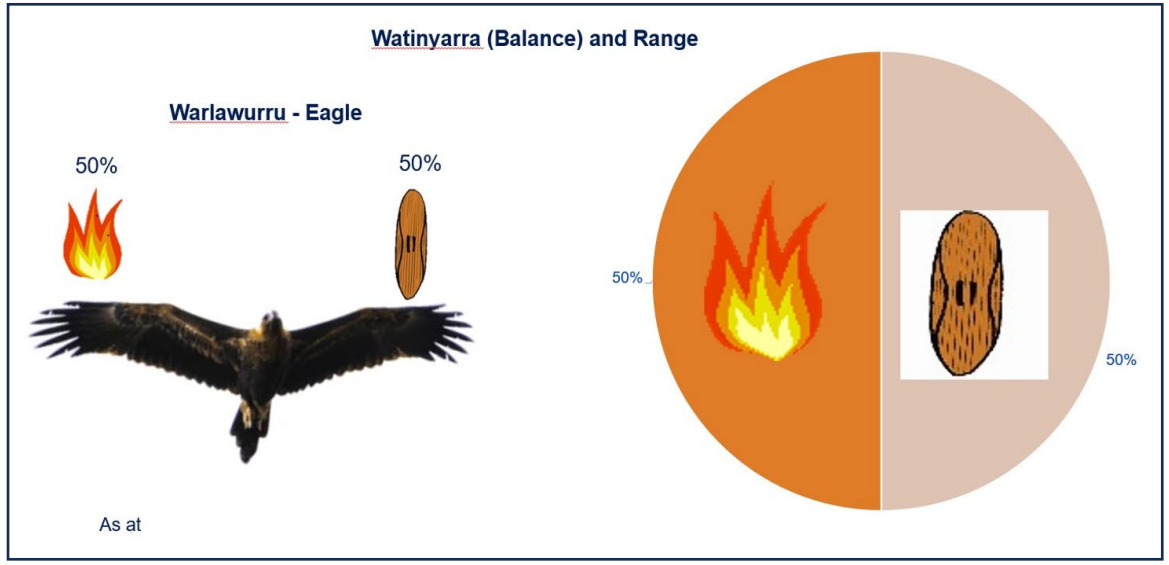
Posters using Yapa ways of learning

Kurdiji – shield: it protects

Warlu – fire: it can grow fast and make bush tucker grow but it can be risky



Directors are co-designing the GGP

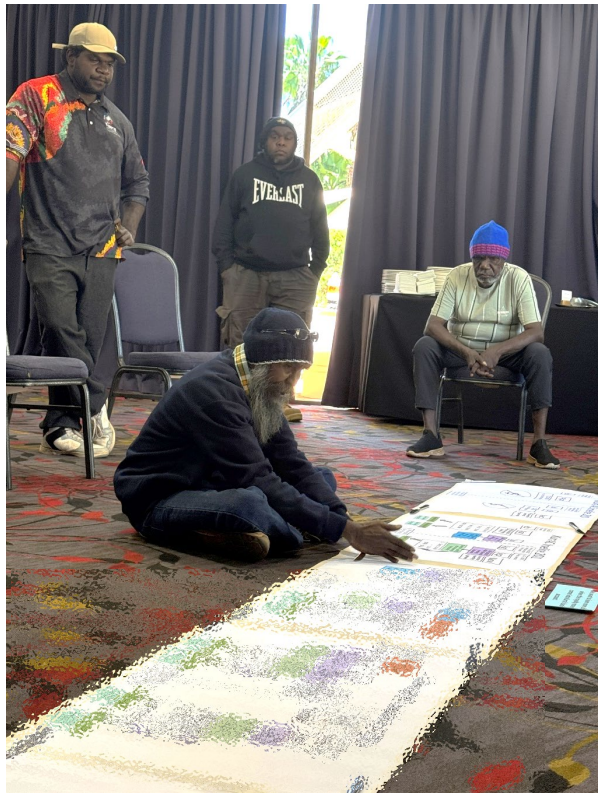




Directors are co-designing the GGP

The whole evaluation process has been a key part of creating respectful relationships. Over time, the directors are seeing that what they're saying about the GGP is recorded, it's fed back to them as a reminder at the start of each workshop, and then they have the opportunity to comment on if they're happy with progress or not at the end of each workshop. That is so powerful. Without that… there wouldn't be that same level of ownership by the Boards in feeling, "This is our program and we are shaping it."… Aboriginal ways of learning [are] set in stone [because of] the evaluation.

CLC staff member (105), 2024



GGP is *the way* to do good governance

GGP is more than just a training program; it is *the way* to do good governance for Kurra and GMAAAC:

- We are learning and getting stronger in our roles as directors
- We are feeling more confident to work well with Kardiya
- Developmental evaluation is a key part of this to keep Yapa voices strong to guide the GGP

GGP knowledge is important for our future.

GMAAAC directors, 2026

We've never had this type of teaching before and I am learning how to have discussions with Kardiya.

Kurra director, 2026

GGP is *the way* to do good governance





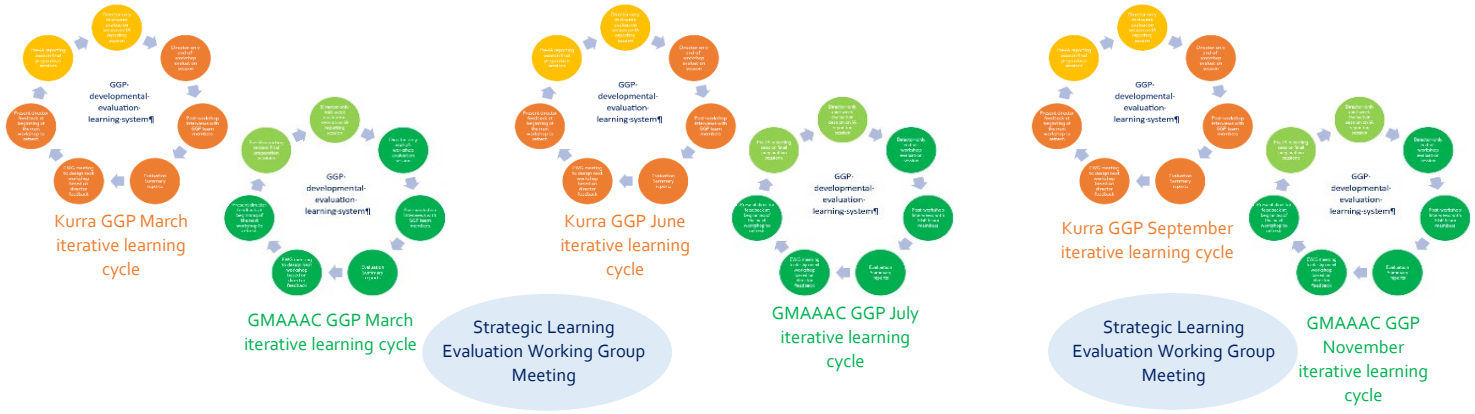
GGP is *the way* to do good governance

We highly value our culture: men's business, women's business, sorry [mourning] business. It's still strong here today. We wouldn't be here if it wasn't for our culture because of the significant area on Warlpiri land where the mine is. That's where the money comes from but culture is first.

In the GGP, strong culture across the nine communities brings everyone together with two-way learning.

Derek Japangardi Williams, GMAAAC director and chairperson, 2025
(name included by request)

GGP is strong because it has a strong learning system that centres Yapa voices





You can read more about our story here...

New Directions for Evaluation

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Two-Way Learning Through Evaluation: The Story of an Innovative Australian Aboriginal-Led Initiative Strengthening Good Governance at the Cultural Interface

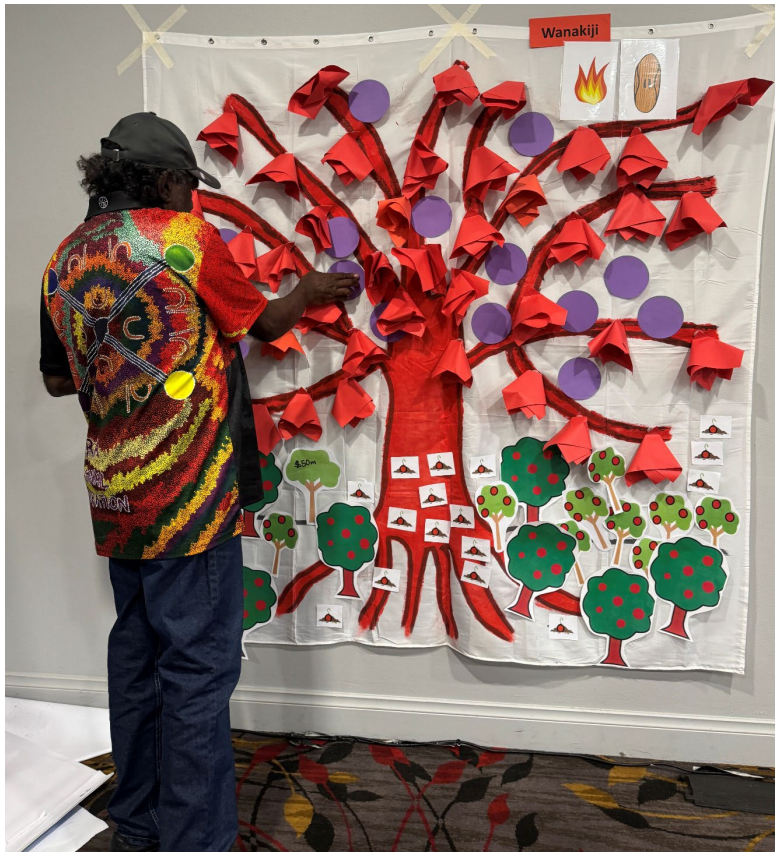
Samantha Jayne Togni, Robyn Napurrurla Lawson, Roger Japaljarri Jurrah, Valerie Napaljarri Martin, Cyril Japanangka Tasman, Natalie Napurrurla Morton, David Japanangka McCormack ... See all authors

First published: 19 June 2026 | https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.70036 | VIEW METRICS

ABSTRACT

In this article we share our story of using a developmental evaluation approach over seven years to facilitate two-way learning between Yapa (Warlpiri language for Indigenous people from the Australian Western Desert region) and Kardiya (Warlpiri language for non-Indigenous people). The effort was aimed at supporting an innovative, Yapa-led initiative to strengthen the governance of two Aboriginal corporations to ensure their sustainability for future generations. Guided by the principles of culturally responsive evaluation in Indigenous contexts, the developmental evaluation approach enabled us to prioritize relationships and center Yapa voices, knowledge and culture to effectively enact two-way learning within the complex cultural interface of our context. We created a culturally safe learning environment, which promoted cultural humility and creativity to enable effective Yapa-led innovation co-design. With readiness and capacity

Thank you for listening…





Questions?