

Joint management workshop: Towards a community of practice

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Joint management broadly refers to an agreement between native title holders and the relevant government regarding the management of national parks and other conservation or protected areas.

The NTRU has been researching joint management agreements through a series of workshops and has been investigating the concept of a 'community of practice', a national community of effective joint management practice.

The most recent workshop, 'Joint Management of Protected Areas in Australia Workshop: Native Title and Other Pathways towards a Community of Practice', brought together government staff working in joint management to share information about each jurisdiction's approach to joint management outcomes and to identify practical issues that should be addressed in developing a community of practice. It is intended that this workshop will inform a series of workshops later in 2012 which will involve native title holders and traditional owners, representatives of NTRBs and other joint management stakeholders.

Day 1 of this workshop was devoted to each jurisdiction giving an overview of their joint or co-management arrangements, including their respective challenges and successes. Access to country and the right to care for country was identified as an increasingly common outcome sought by traditional owners through joint management arrangements. However, a challenge in achieving this is matching the aspirations of joint management partners with their capacities.

Day 2 involved a discussion on a range of issues impacting on joint management, including potential in the dedication of Indigenous Protected Areas ('IPAs') over multi-tenures, including National Parks; and the manner in which IPAs can be used as a whole of country planning tool and an alternative pathway to joint management. Each jurisdiction outlined their current approaches to marine areas and the emerging potential for joint management over marine areas. Although there has been limited progress in joint management over marine areas to date, there is a growing awareness of the need to address Indigenous interest in sea country management.

Participants showed a strong commitment to sharing information about their joint management models and successful case studies. This information will now be used to inform the development of a community of practice or learning portal, with the aim of providing cross-jurisdictional support for joint management practices. Some suggestions for the content included digital information

sharing, a range of toolkits, web-based forums for discussion, research to benefit stakeholders, and email networks.

The workshop also looked to what is possible beyond the current restraints. It was apparent from feedback discussion and evaluation forms that the participants highly valued the workshop and that a range of further workshops would be constructive to facilitating a strong dialogue with traditional owners and other joint management stakeholders.

The NTRU will be publishing a report to provide a more detailed account of the workshop, which will be made available through the NTRU Joint Management webpage:

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/ntru/jointmanagement.html>



Participants of the 'Towards a Community of Practice' workshop