COLLABORATIVE DESIGN PROJECTS IN KALKARINGI:

A Reflective Guide

CONTENTS

Bower Studio 2018

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"Preparing to work with communities must include political and historical analysis, not just cultural information. Individuals must read traditional stories and historical analysis related to the country they are working in, to understand how meanings have developed about ideas such as leadership, respect, reactions to foreigners, communities, aid, introduction of new ideas, development and change… fundamentally they must seek to understand their own cultural values."

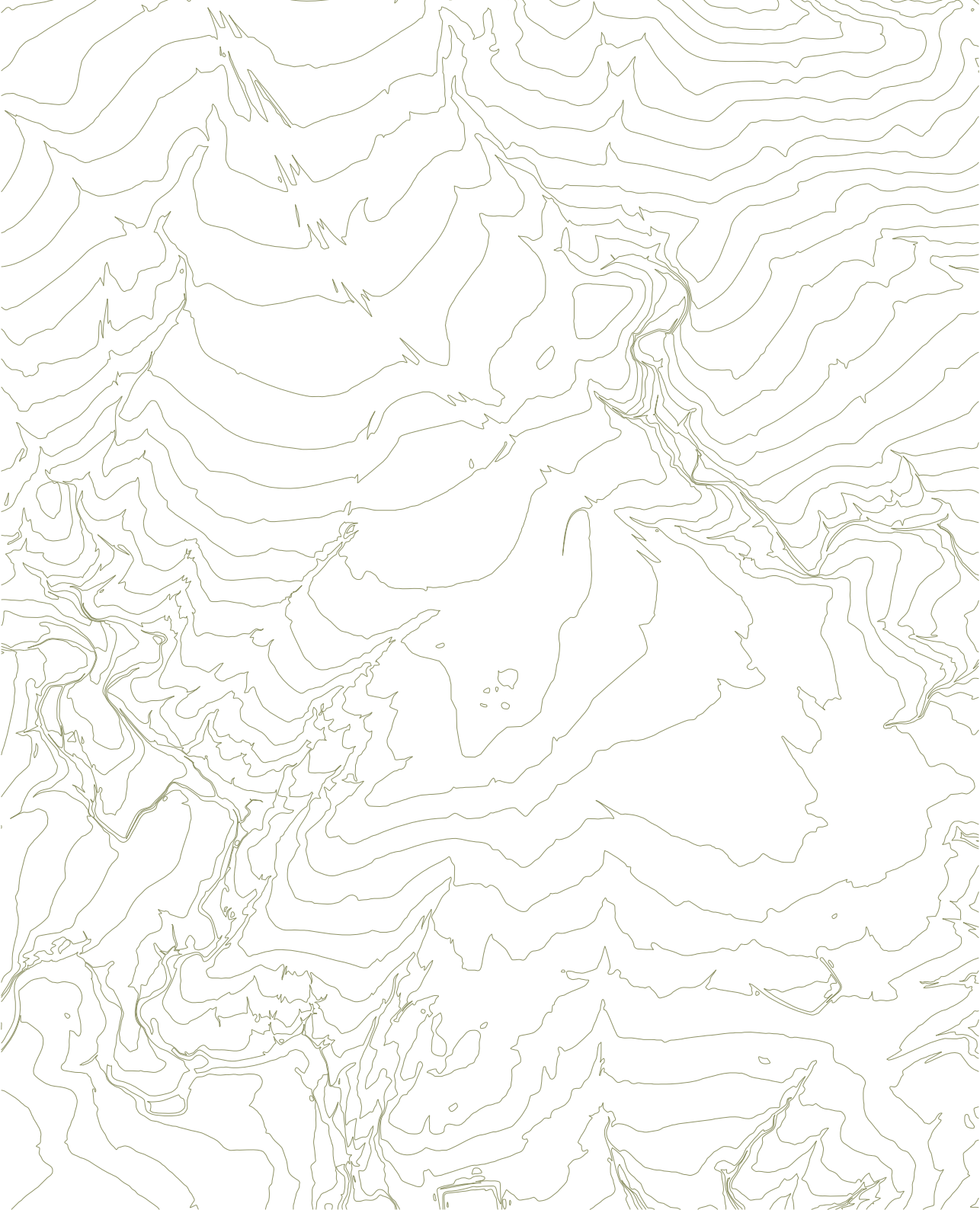Clare Land, *Decolonising Solidarity*[1]
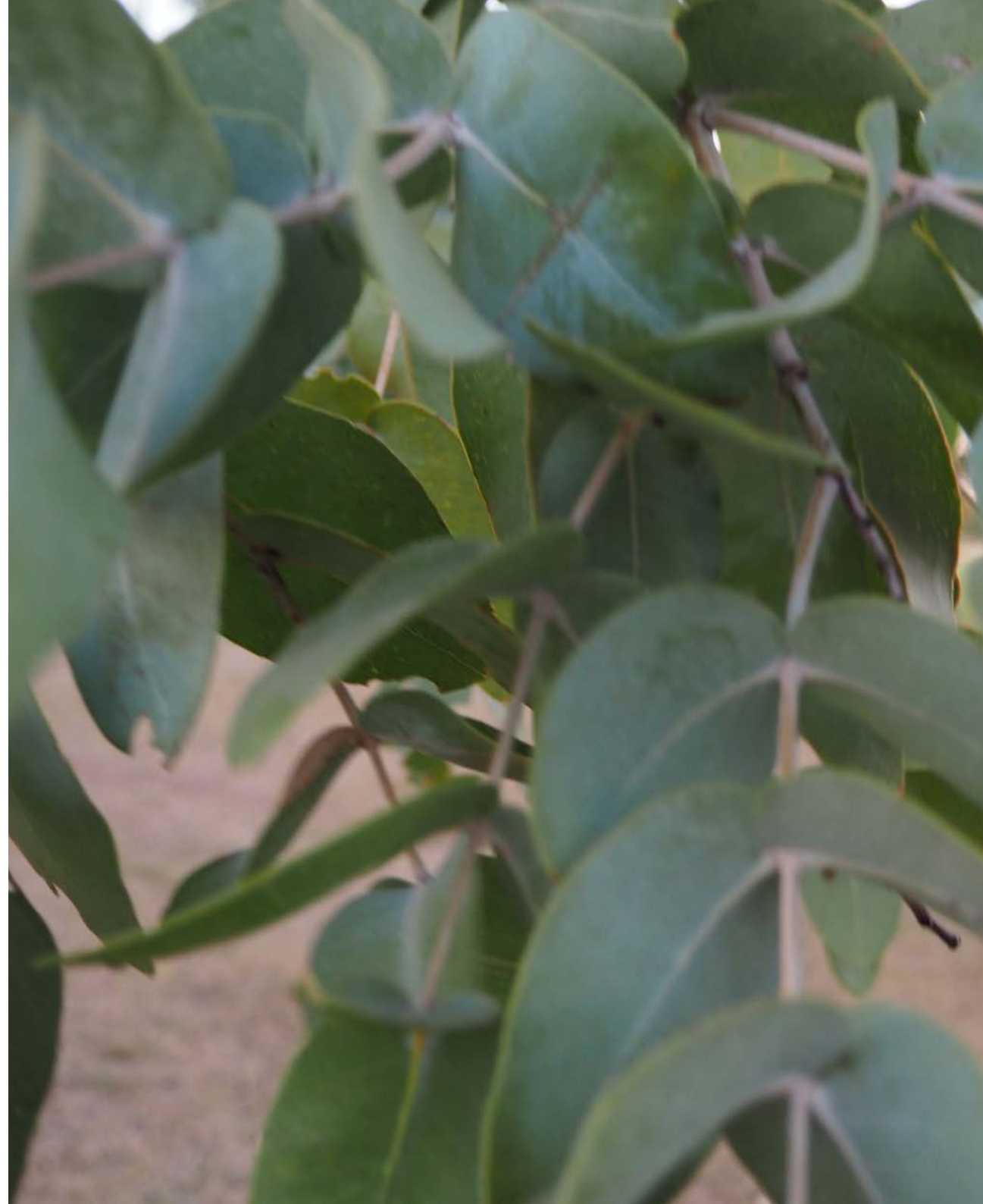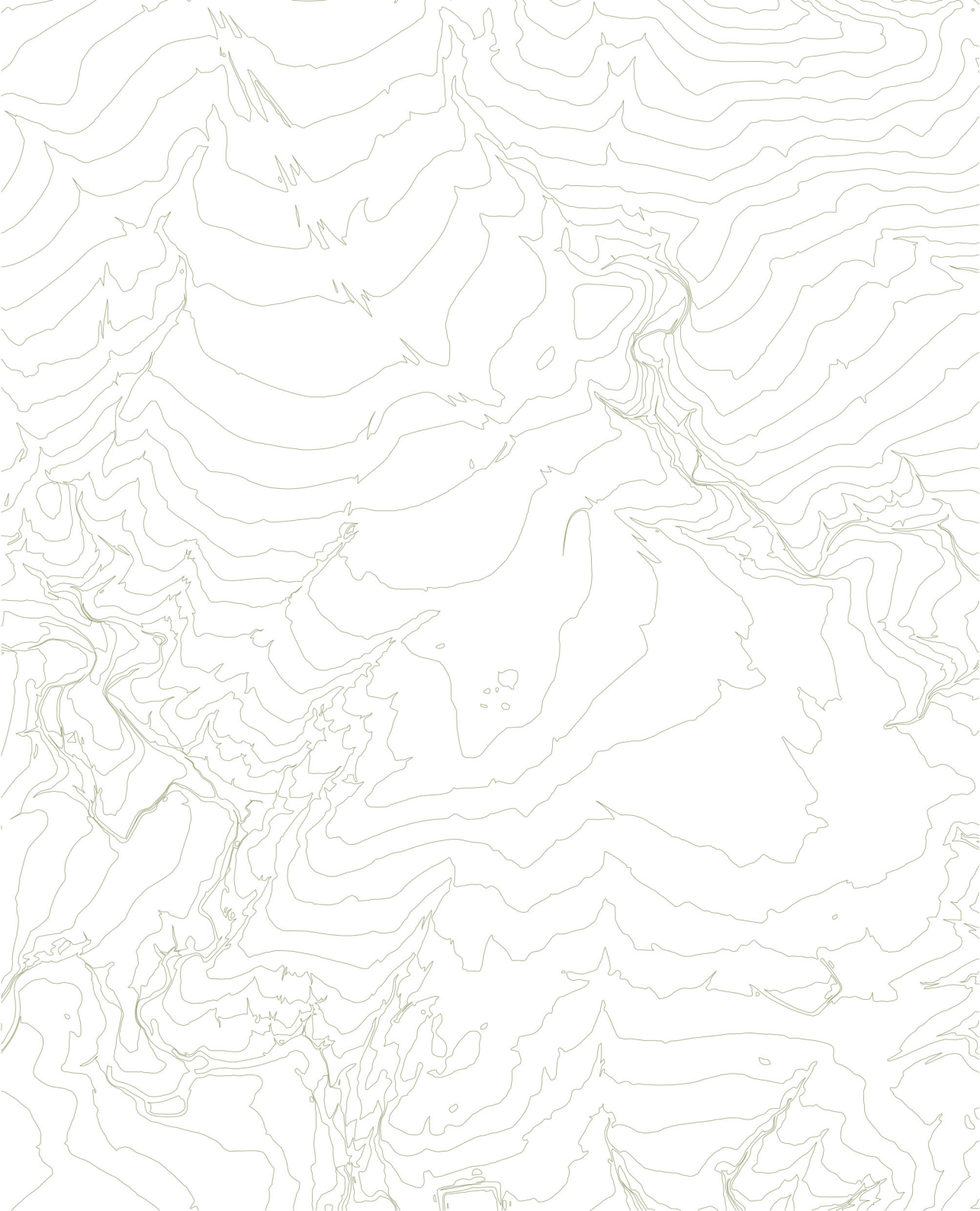
PREFACE

Architecture is inextricably linked to the social, political and historical context that it inhabits. When applied to the context of Australia, a unique set of complexities arise when an architect engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as the end users, clients or contributors to architectural projects. In my studies of architecture thus far, I have become aware that it is fundamental to establish ethical and appropriate modes of practice that respond to such complexities. An important consideration is the necessity for cross-cultural communication and negotiation that underpins respectful and collaborative relationships between architects and their clients.

The following text will draw upon insights gained during my participation in three collaborative projects in three remote and distinctively different Indigenous communities. These experiences have acted as crucial learning points for me in considering the social practice of the architect within a distinctly Australian context.

In 2015, I took part in a collaborative studio project in the remote town of Wilcannia, New South Wales. A collaboration with The University of Sydney School of Architecture and the Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly, the studio worked on developing strategies to improve food quality and security for the local Paakantji community. Whilst developing these strategies with the community across a variety of formal and informal social settings, I became aware of the specific importance of inclusive communication practices within cross-cultural settings.

My participation within two Bower Studio projects at the Melbourne School of Design has since strengthened this awareness. In May 2017, Bower Studio worked with the Thamarrurr Development Corporation in the remote community of Wadeye, Northern Territory. A cross-cultural collaboration between a team of university students and the local construction crew necessitated negotiation and shared

construction training. This led to the first stage of the Wadeye Cultural Precinct, a media pavilion that enables the community to display archived audiovisual footage from the Kanamkek Yile Ngala Museum.

This year I have participated as a student mentor for Bower Studio, assisting with the planning and construction of cultural infrastructure developments in Kalkaringi, Northern Territory. In April 2018, Bower Studio worked in collaboration with the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation to provide essential renovations to the Karungkarni Arts and Culture Centre and a new Bus Stop 'Bough Shelter'. During this collaboration, the processes of talking, designing and then building together afforded many opportunities for dialogue and discussion. These opportunities highlighted for me the importance of appropriate sensitivity to cross-cultural exchanges, key to facilitating informed decision making and mutual understanding.

Whilst my involvement within these projects constitutes a small and relatively narrow scope of experience, it represents the culmination of opportunities made available to me in my studies of Architecture thus far. My participation as a student within these projects frames the perspective from which I am able to analyse and reflect.

Whilst exploring these ideas, I remain keenly aware of my subjectivity as a white, non-Indigenous Australian. As such, there are some questions that I have continued to reflect upon whilst producing this body of work, posed by Clare Land in *Decolonising Solidarity*. They include, "What is the role of non-Indigenous people in Indigenous affairs? How can non-Indigenous people truly be effective allies for Indigenous issues?"[2] Fundamentally, Land asserts that it is vital for non-Indigenous practitioners to reconstruct their motivations in line with a conscious and critical framework. This framework must continually take into account a cognizance of the workings of race and privilege within the post-colonial context of Australia today. In response to these considerations, I hope that the following document will provide stimulus for continued reflection on cross-cultural practices in architecture, taking into account the multifaceted complexities that arise when "Aboriginal communities and non-Aboriginal workers negotiate relationships of solidarity."[3]

"A different future is one where remote Indigenous communities become radical learning centres across a network of practitioners. Lessons would be shared between different communities, and feedback would be given to policy makers. This is a future that already exists in many places across the country if only policy makers would shift their gaze. "

Mark Moran, *Serious Whitefella Stuff* [4]
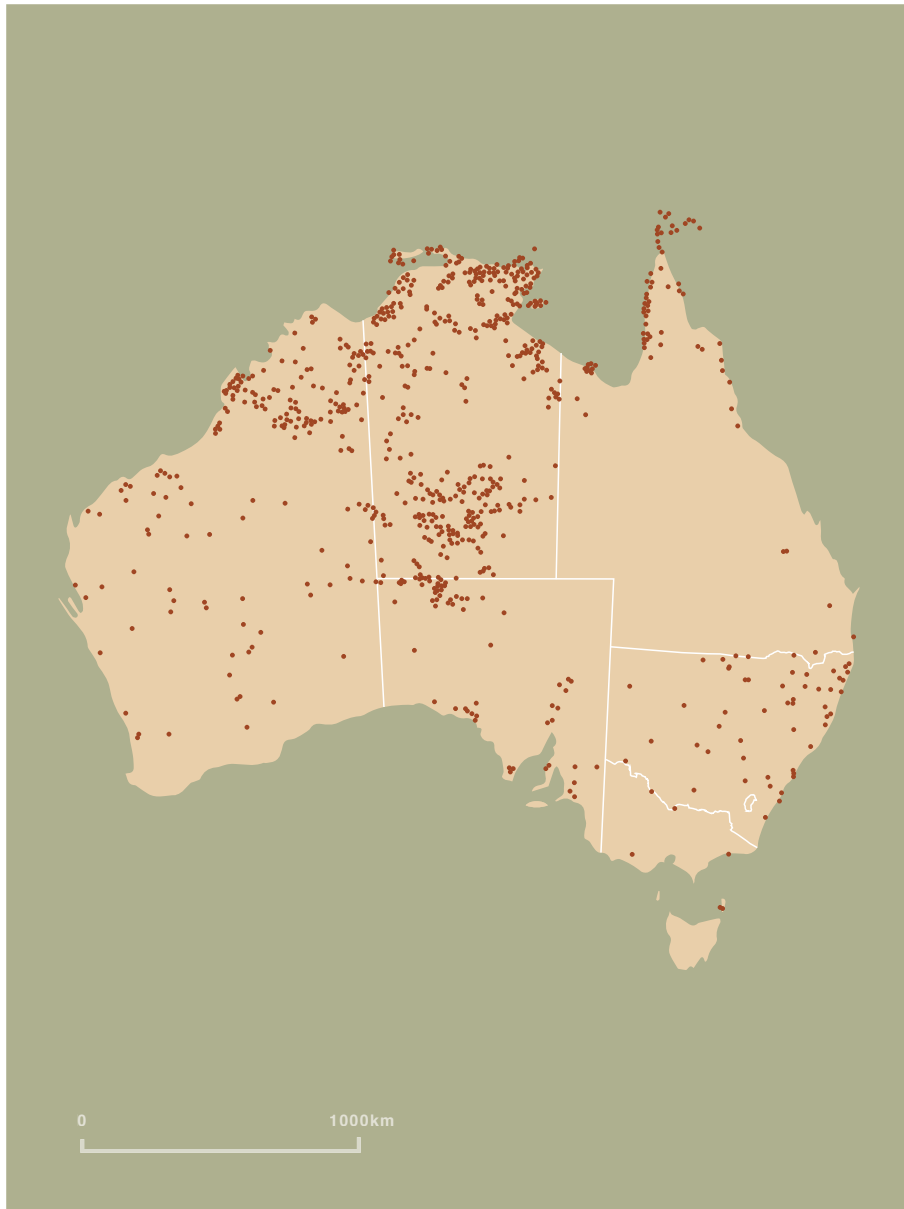
WORKING IN REMOTE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY CONTEXTS

Australia has over one thousand discrete Indigenous settlements distributed over the continent and its surrounding islands. These small settlements, defined variously as communities, outstations, homelands or small towns, display marked diversity in their discrete histories and contemporary contexts. Considering the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to stay on their traditional lands, recognised under twenty-three land statutes, in addition to the federal Native Title Act 1993[5]; remote Indigenous communities have reasserted their rights by staying fixed in place, many on land that was previously denied to them.

In contrast to the rich diversity of these contexts, a top-down approach in the history of racialized policies and practice of Indigenous affairs[6] has marred the equitable distribution of essential services to many remote communities. As Mark Moran contends, the political marginalisation of remote settlements has induced social and economic complexities which are "most acutely felt by the 21 per cent of Australia's Indigenous population who live in remote areas."[7] These complexities in turn permeate the capacity for service provision, whereby systemic undersupply contributes to infrastructure that is inequitably distributed and scarcely maintained.[8] As a result, many communities have been denied adequate funding for the development of essential built infrastructure to support sustainable livelihoods in remote contexts.

When considering the procurement of architectural services and the production of built infrastructure within remote Indigenous communities, the notion of "remoteness" is described as a highly vexed concept. A seminal report published by the Australian Housing and Research Institute in 2005, *Best Practice Models for Effective Consultation*, outlines 'remoteness' as "affecting access to design and building expertise, to building materials, to sustainable services for maintenance and upkeep."[9] These concerns directly affect the

Map of discreet Indigenous Communities by Remoteness Area.
ABS Australian Standard Geographical Classification Remoteness Structure 2001.

capacity for architects to undertake ethical and inclusive modes of practice. Andrew Broffman, a design practitioner at Tangentyere Design, similarly warns that within such contexts, inclusive design practice is "in danger of becoming merely rhetoric…meaningful consultation has been curtailed."[10]

Paul Memmott and Carroll Go Sam suggest that architects must reframe the way that 'remote' contexts are considered in the planning and design for infrastructure within the built environment. In doing so they highlight the "diverse economic and strategic benefits made possible through unlocking local resources"[11] to support and maintain cultural continuity and skills training within communities. In line with this recognition, a large number of Indigenous organisations, NGO's and private corporations are working in such a way to ameliorate service provision in many remote community contexts.[12]

When service provision is restructured through collaborative opportunities for local training, creativity and entrepreneurship, Go Sam contends that communities are better enabled to contribute to hybrid economies and the aspiration towards financial self-determination."[13] Accordingly, practitioners (architects, builders and bureaucrats) hold a responsibility to recognize the diverse economic and strategic opportunities made possible when infrastructure is planned, designed and developed.

These responsibilities can be directly applied to the ongoing collaborative relationship between Bower Studio, the Melbourne School of Design and the remote Indigenous communities of Kalkaringi and Daguragu. My participation within this collaboration this semester has elucidated that cross-cultural relationships are strengthened by opportunities for mutual learning and shared training, a process supported by Bower Studio's unique pedagogy. As consultation and planning continues for the development of cultural infrastructure projects within the Kalkaringi and Daguragu, a consideration of the unique and vexed complexities and opportunities of remote community service provision must remain a point of continued reflection and engagement.

Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation construction crew, PJ, Carlos and Rhonda with Bower Studio student Henry.

"From their camp at Daguragu, the Gurindji sought the return of their traditional land so they could establish their own cattle station. This was not just an articulation of sovereignty and traditional custodianship, but an agenda that sought the Gurindji's self-determination and ability to take control of their own resources and their own future."

Larissa Behrendt, *16th Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture*[14]

KALKARINGI AND DAGURAGU COMMUNITY CONTEXT

When preparing to work within a remote community such as Kalkaringi and Daguragu, Clare Land asserts that it is vital for practitioners to seek to learn as much as they can about its specific social, political, historical and environmental context. This may include, "political and historical analysis, to understand how meanings have developed about ideas such as leadership, respect, reactions to foreigners, communities, aid, introduction of new ideas, development and change."[15] Whilst this groundwork may be considered ethical practice for practitioners in their engagement with all clients universally, the unique history of colonisation, dispossession and systemic marginalization of Aboriginal and Torres strait Islander people in Australia dictates this practice as particularly pertinent for architects engaging with remote Indigenous community contexts across the nation.

For many Australians, the remote communities of Kalkaringi and Daguragu are notably recalled for their symbolic place in the national discourse on Aboriginal Land Rights. In 1966, Aboriginal leader Vincent Lingiari led two hundred station workers and their families off Wave Hill cattle station to re-occupy traditional land at Wattie Creek, an event that has become immortalised as the "Wave Hill Walk-Off". This journey was to foreshadow a seven-year strike by the Gurindji against the brutal working conditions imposed at Wave Hill Station.

The campaign for the return of traditional land to its traditional owners was a struggle for recognition that mobilised unprecedented public support. In 1976 the Gurindji were ultimately acknowledged with the passing of The Aboriginal Land Rights Act, and in 1986 the Gurindji gained freehold title to Daguragu. Yet, as Larissa Behrendt purports, notions of access to equal opportunity within Australian society and the claims of Indigenous of self-determination are two interweaving strands of a political agenda that is as important today as it was in August 1966.[16]

Wave Hill Station - On the road to Jinparrak (Old Wave HIll Station).

Gurindji Country - Makurrula - "cold weather time" (April to July)

Darwin

Katherine

Mataranka

Kununurra

KARRANGPURRU

Yarralin

NGARINYMAN

BILINARRA

Daly Waters

Top Springs

Camfield Station

MALNGIN

MUDBURRA

GURINDJI

PIRLINGARNA

Lajamanu

WANYJIRRA

JARU

WARLPIRI

Kalkaringi
Daguragu

NORTHERN TERRITORY

Today, the communities of Daguragu and Kalkaringi (alternatively spelled as Kalkarindji) are situated approximately 460km south west of Katherine on the Buntine Highway, adjacent to Wattie Creek and the Victoria River respectively. These settlements are located on the traditional country of the Gurindji, a vast region that includes the north-western parts of Wave Hill Station, The Daguragu Aboriginal Land Trust and parts of Riveren and Limbunya pastoral leasess[17]. Whilst Kalkarindji is an open service town, permission from traditional owners through the Central Land Council, is required to visit Daguragu.

While most Gurindji speakers live at Daguragu and Kalkaringi, the Gurindji represent one language group of several that are present within the community. Gurindji, Bilinarra, Mudburra, Malgnin, Ngarinyman, Warlpiri and *Kartiya* (white people) make up the combined population of approximately seven hundred people, a number that fluctuates seasonally throughout the year. These days, the predominant language spoken by young Gurindji people is a mixed variety called Gurindji Kriol[18]. As the 2016 ABS Census revealed, only 1.5% of the Indigenous population at Kalkaringi and Daguragu speak English at home.

In 2007, following the implementation of the Northern Territory Emergency Response, services in Daguragu and Kalkaringi became centralised under the Victoria Daly Regional Council. As Charlie Ward states, "after three decades of relative stability and a semblance of community control, Gurindji political power once again became a plaything of the state."[19] In response to this administrative change, many local organisations within Kalkaringi and Daguragu, disintegrated under the 'shire-isation' of the Northern Territory's remote regions.

Nevertheless, Ward observes "visitors to Kalkaringi or Daguragu today realise that Gurindji culture remains strong, vibrant and adaptive."[20] Reflecting this, a number of Aboriginal owned corporations have been established, including the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation in 2014 and the Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation in 2011. Initiated to reassert local control of

local community organisations, these entities represent opportunities for employment, training, entrepreneurship and the aspiration towards financial self-determination.

The culmination of Kalkaringi and Daguragu's unique social, political, historical and environmental contexts are vital considerations for architects navigating the planning and design for cultural infrastructure projects within the community.

KEY COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation and the Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation represent two key stakeholders in the collaborative partnership between Bower Studio and the communities of Kalkaringi and Daguragu. It should be noted that they are two organisations with distinct interests and visions for the self-determination of the community and may not necessarily reflect the multifaceted interests of the entire community population.
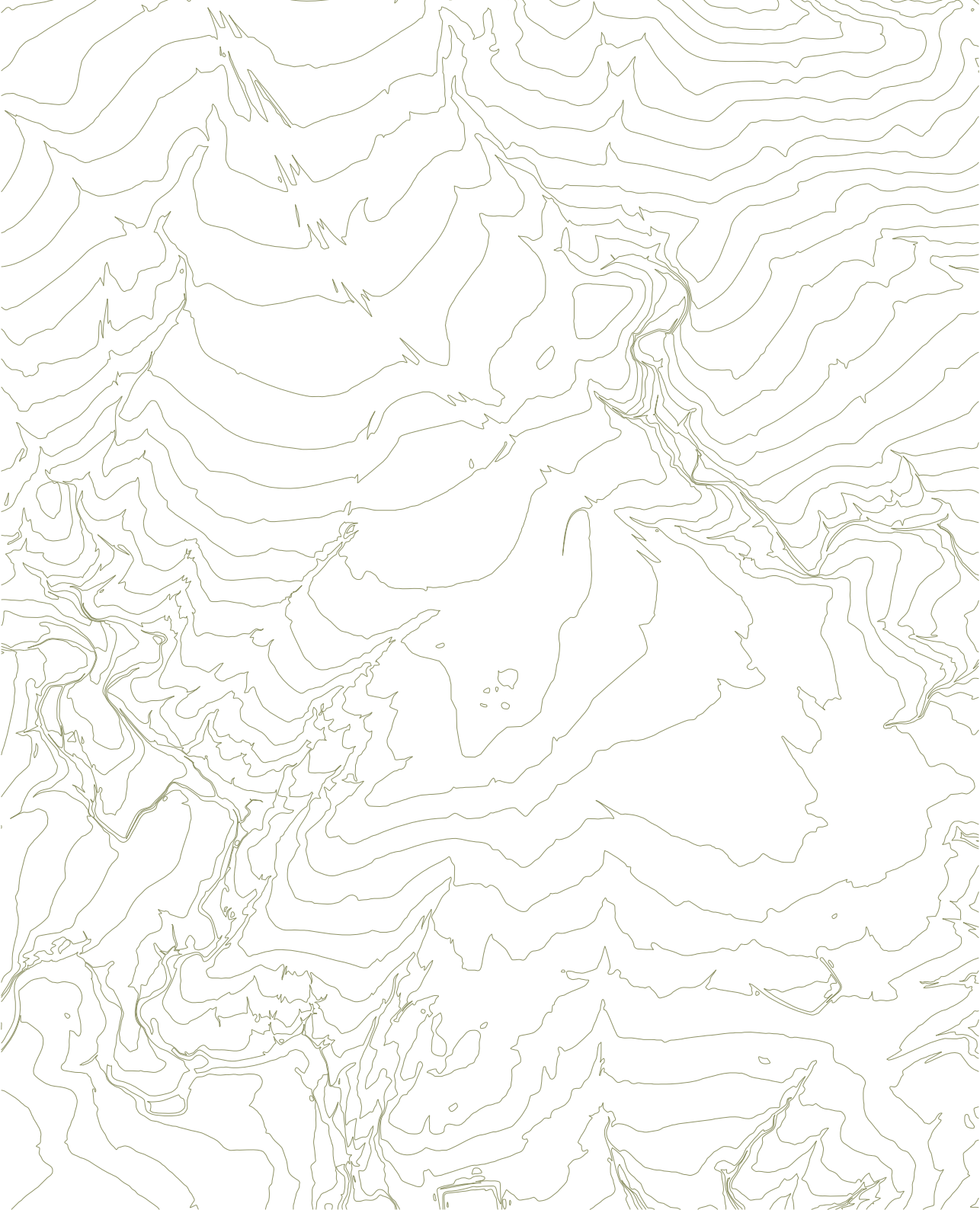
GURINDJI ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

The Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation was formed in 2014 following the Federal Court determination of Native Title over the Township of Kalkaringi by its Traditional Owners. The Corporation, referred to colloquially as "Gurindji Corp" is a not for profit organisation that is owned and governed by a board of appointed local community members. Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation acts as a key community body, helping to facilitate community projects, such as the annual Freedom Day Festival, that align to its mission – "To empower our People towards self-determination."[21] The *Kalkarindji/Daguragu Business Directory* also notes that Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation employ "a full-time carpenter and a local Indigenous crew to service a growing number of contracts in areas of construction, refurbishments and maintenance."[22]

The Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation office serves as a community hub and meeting place.

KARUNGKARNI ART AND CULTURE ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation was formed in 2011 to "tell the stories of the Gurindji people through the creation of art, preservation of language and promotion of cultural activities for the benefit of all."[23] This mission is reflected within the name *Karungkarni*, which refers to the Child Dreaming place for the Gurindji people,[24] thus imbuing the importance artistic and cultural preservation and transference. The organisation is owned and governed by the Aboriginal artists of the Kalkarindji / Daguragu communities, with a growing membership of approximately 50 artists.

As a focal point for cultural activities, the Arts and Culture Centre exists as a key cultural facility within the community, a space for a diverse program of art production, language projects, and the continuation of cultural knowledge and learning. The Art Centre is currently housed in the old powerhouse building, a site notoriously prone to flooding, at the entrance to the community on the Buntine Highway.

Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre. Artist Rosemary Johnson talking with students at the Centre.

Map of Kalkaringi highlighting service providers and community organisations.

DAGURAGU ROAD

BUNTINE HIGHWAY

VICTORIA RIVER

Community
Health Centre

Central
Land
Council

Wankurr
Club

Kalkaringi
School

*GURINDJI
CORP*

Vic Daly
Regional
Council

Central
Park

Kalkaringi
Store

*KARUNGKARNI
ART AND CULTURE
CENTRE*

KALKARINGI

0   100   200   300   400   500m

2018 BOWER STUDIO PROJECT SUMMARY

In 2017 the Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation secured funding through the NT Government Arts Trail Regional Stimulus Grants to commence the initial stage of cultural infrastructure development within the community. The Art Centre is housed in the old community powerhouse, and as such is not purpose built for its current use as a facility accommodating a diverse range of cultural functions. Thus, improvements to the existing infrastructure at Kalkaringi help to ensure the safeguarding, revitalization and promotion of Gurindji art, language and cultural heritage.

The securing of government funding allowed Bower Studio to continue its ongoing collaboration with the Kalkaringi and Daguragu communities. This relationship first began in 2015/16 with the planning, design and construction of the "Wave Hill Walk Off Pavilions", a series of 'Bough Shelters' that commemorated the Fiftieth Freedom Day celebrations. Accordingly, planning for new infrastructure developments in 2018 were underpinned by an existing relationship between Bower Studio and two key community organisations, the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation and the Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation. This allowed for a unique opportunity to incorporate lessons learned from the preceding project[25], and build upon a shared well of experience to support cultural heritage preservation and continuity within the community.

The distinctive co-constructivist philosophy of the Bower Studio involves a group of graduate architecture students as active participants in the planning, design and co-construction of built infrastructure projects. One feature in this pedagogical approach is the involvement of students from one studio as mentors for the next, "a model where researching, learning and teaching, develop mutually."[26] This year I participated as a student mentor for Bower

Studio, a role that incorporated two site visits to Kalkaringi in 2018, a planning and design trip in February and a construction trip in May.

The outcome of these trips led to a series of additions to the old powerhouse building, reclaiming the existing site to accord with its current function as a keeping place for Gurindji art and Gurindji cultural practice. These additions included a new outdoor pavilion, a shaded and lockable room that doubled art making space for artists to work and sit, replacing the front door to the old powerhouse for improved access and security, and the opening up of new windows to provide much needed cross ventilation.

It is pertinent to note that whilst a design proposition was necessary for the procurement of materials and tools required before construction, many aspects of the design and detailing of the renovation were resolved on-site during the building process. During this process, solutions to problems were encountered as the construction unfolded, an experience that was shared with students, the local Community Development Program crew and observed by artists working within the Art Centre.

A selection of annotated photographs to follow will document some key moments in the construction and final built additions to the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre. My participation within both the planning and construction stages of this project elucidated an important awareness of some challenges that may arise throughout the development of built infrastructure in cross-cultural and remote contexts. In the process of designing and then building together, sensitive communication and on-site problem solving underpinned inclusive practice in the collaboration between Bower Studio and the Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation. The following photographs and a discussion of my experiences in the next section of this text may serve as a resource for future Bower Studio students to draw upon in preparation for future collaborative projects in remote Indigenous community settings.

An initial meeting held at the Art Centre before construction commenced in April.

34   The existing Art Centre doors were not operable, restricting opportunities for visible entry by visitors.

New doors to the Art Centre provide cross ventilation and visual permeability.

Painting new window frames with Karungkarni artist, Martina. Photo by Penny Smith

New windows recovered old openings in the building, providing much needed cross ventilation

38   Negotiating the design and installation of weldmesh cladding to new shaded pavillion.

A datum line and break in the weldmesh cladding enables clear views out of pavilion when seated inside.

New gutter installed at junction between existing and new shade structures.

High ceilings allow for ventilation. Perforated plywood panels line existing Art Centre verandah.

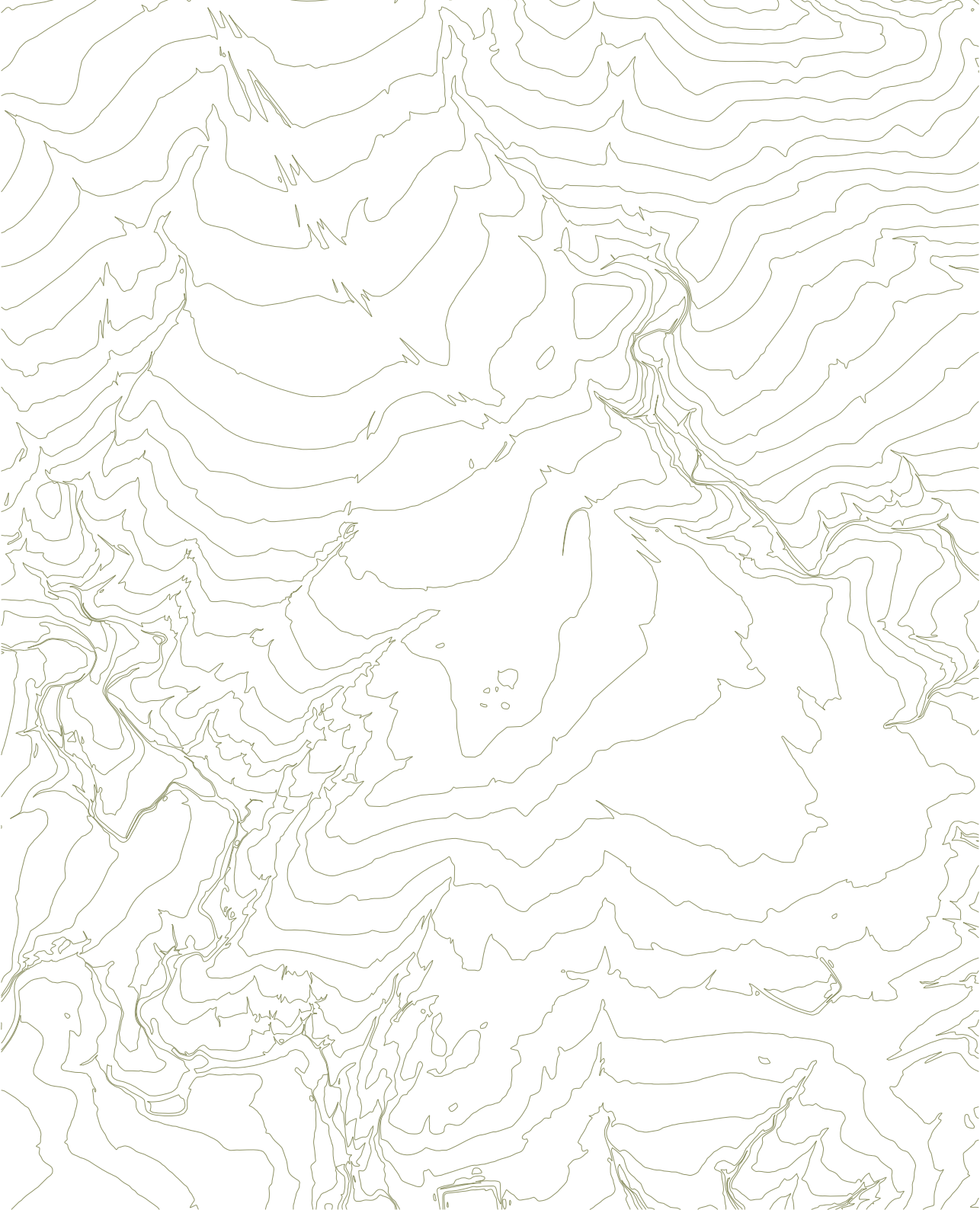Developing plans for Art Centre additions at Kalkaringi in February, 2018.

A new shaded outdoor pavillion reclaims the open space in front of the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre.

"There is little in the way of support networks, information exchange or best practice websites from which people can draw. So, you arrive in a community from scratch, work it out through the school of hard knocks, as did those who preceded you."

Mark Moran, *Serious Whitefella Stuff*[27]

RESOURCES FOR ARCHITECTS AND STUDENTS OF ARCHITECTURE

When considering the procurement and production of built infrastructure within remote Indigenous communities such as Kalkaringi and Daguragu, Anoma Pieris contends that such work continues to be undertaken by predominantly *non*-Indigenous practitioners. This condition brings with it a set of cross-cultural complexities whereby a fraught history of "colonisation and dispossession have produced cultural divisions and defensiveness between clients and architects."[28] Accordingly, this history may foreground relationships between architects and remote Indigenous communities as the clients to infrastructure development.

Addressing the sparse representation of practising Indigenous architects within Australia, Pieris suggests, "the profession must relinquish its class privilege to train previously marginalised communities."[29] Meanwhile, the introduction of cultural protocols represents an important step towards respectfully navigating cross-cultural contexts. As Terri Janke suggests, protocols promote culturally appropriate working practices, "agreeing to comply with the accepted protocols of other cultural groups promotes interaction based on good faith and mutual respect."[30] Encouraging ethical conduct, cultural protocols might be considered as 'practice tools' for practitioners across a variety of working contexts.

Of the relevant policies made available by the Australian Institute of Architects, the following is noted in its "Indigenous Housing" policy,[31]

- *Mandatory curriculum content on Indigenous cultural awareness is to be encouraged in all tertiary architectural courses, including on such topics as contact history, discrimination, cultural change, and the socio-economic implications of poverty and disadvantage. (AIA 2008)*

- *Employees working in the Indigenous housing sector should undergo a program of awareness to understand the extent of complexity of the topic as well as past successes in policy, practice and delivery. (AIA 2008)* [32]

Bower Studio and Kalkaringi Community lunch to celebrate the construction of community infrastructure.

When considering these policies, it is interesting to observe the relatively limited body of relevant resources made available by the AIA for students and design practitioners working within such contexts. As noted by Lee and Morris, "there is a gap in the literature documenting cross-cultural consultation with specific reference to the built environment settings."[33] Furthermore, Moran contends that little is evaluation or knowledge exchange in regard to the effectiveness of different approaches, practice tools and frameworks.[34] In response to this, and reflecting upon my experiences in Kalkaringi, I was propelled to survey what resources might help to bridge such a gap for students and architectural practitioners and to consider; what are the 'practice tools' that architects might refer to when embarking on a project within a remote community context? Furthermore, how do these resources shape working practice and methodology, and ultimately the production and outcome of architectural design?

One resource that I found of particular interest was the recent *Australian Indigenous Design Charter: Communication Design*, published by Deakin University in 2017 by a collective team of design practitioners including architect Jefa Greenaway and Indigenous Architecture and Design Victoria. An Indigenous led initiative, the *AIDC:CD* aims to "improve high ethical standards of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples representation in design practice."[35] The charter is a ten step 'best-practice' model to assist designers to appropriately understand, respect and represent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views.

Whilst the *AIDC:CD* responds to the Australian Institute of Architect's policies on Indigenous cultural awareness, it should be considered as one resource in a vast array of essential reading for an architect engaging with predominantly Indigenous communities as the end users, clients or contributors of architectural projects. This notion is addressed within the charter, which explicitly states that it should "not be viewed as a 'how-to' guide for creating Indigenous designs but instead a guide to develop open, and respectful cross-cultural engagement and exchange."[36] As such, the charter may be viewed as a one foundational resource from which the practice of ethical cross-cultural collaboration might stem.

THE AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS DESIGN CHARTER: COMMUNICATION DESIGN (AIDC:CD)[37]

1) Indigenous led.
Ensure Indigenous representation creation in design practice is Indigenous led.

2) Self-determined.
Respect for the rights of Indigenous peoples to oversee representation creation of their culture in design practice.

3) Community specific.
Ensure respect for the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by following community specific cultural protocols.

4) Deep listening.
Ensure respectful, culturally specific, personal engagement behaviors for effective communication and courteous interaction are practiced.

5) Impact of design.
Always consider the reception and implications of all designs so that they are respectful to Indigenous culture.

6) Indigenous knowledge.
Respectfully ask the client if there is an aspect to the project, in relation to any design brief, that may be improved with Indigenous knowledge.

7) Shared knowledge.
Develop and implement respectful methods for all levels of engagement and sharing of Indigenous knowledge (collaboration, co-creation, procurement).

8) Legal and moral.
Demonstrate respect and honour cultural ownership and intellectual property rights, including moral rights, and obtain appropriate permissions where required.

9) Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

10) Charter implementation.
Ensure the implementation of the AIDC:CD to safeguard Indigenous design integrity.

"Indigenous people are much better placed than non-Indigenous people to understand the issues in their own communities. They are much better placed to understand the priorities. They are much better placed to understand the interconnectedness of issues and take a holistic approach. They are much better placed to deliver a service in a culturally sensitive way to their clients. "

Larissa Behrendt, *16th Vincent Lingiari Memorial Lecture*[38]
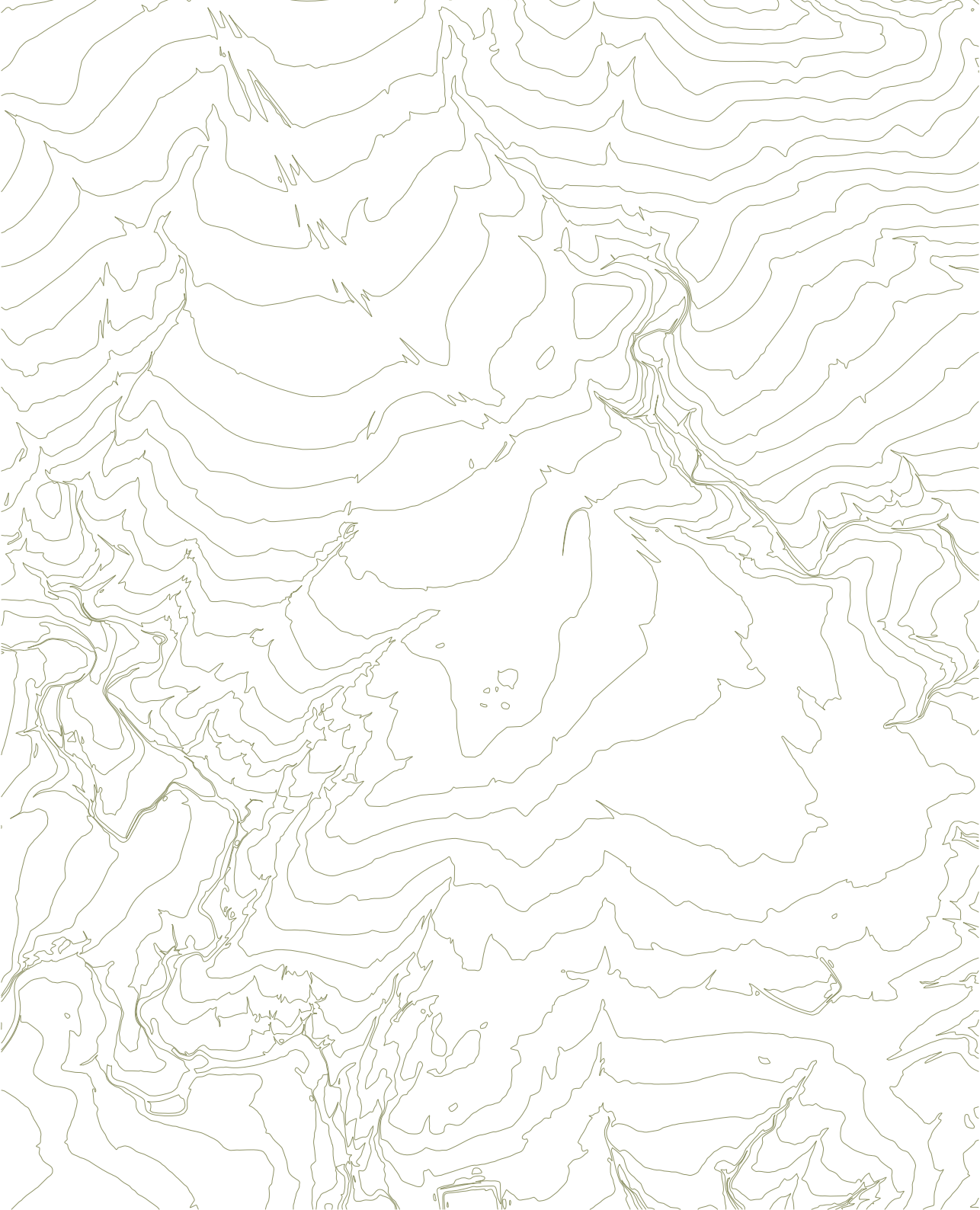
THE AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS DESIGN CHARTER

The following section proposes the necessity for an Australian Indigenous Design Charter for "Architectural Design" *AIDC: AD* as a resource that might be accessed by students and practitioners working on built infrastructure projects within remote Indigenous communities. This charter may be incorporated into the current policies outlined by the Australian Institute of Architects and serve as a set of foundational protocols to help architects respectfully navigate the complexities of practice within cross-cultural contexts.

In doing so, I will focus on four steps outlined within the existing *AIDC:CD*. I will analyse the relevance of the recently published charter to architectural practice with reference to my recent experience working on the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre renovations and the ongoing collaboration between Bower Studio and the Kalkaringi/Daguragu community. Reflections of my recent experience will take the form of "site notes", excerpts from conversations and reflections documented during site visits to the community in February and May of 2018. Whilst analysing the charter, I will reflect upon a selection of relevant resources that engage with the notion of "consultation" in remote Indigenous community settings and the challenges of cross-cultural communication. In doing so, this research may provide a framework for critical reflection in the ongoing consultation and planning for future cultural infrastructure developments in Kalkaringi and Daguragu.

STEP 1:
INDIGENOUS LED

"Ensure Indigenous representation creation in design practice is Indigenous led."[39]

The first step in the *AIDC:CD* recognises the right of Indigenous communities to oversee representations of their cultural heritage. It reminds practitioners that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a right to share in the benefits from the use of their culture. In doing so, they must "seek to provide local communities with opportunities for them to oversee the creative development and design process."[40] This accords with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People which asserts the right to maintain, control, protect and develop cultural heritage and traditional cultural expression.[41]

When considering the position of non-indigenous practitioners working on built infrastructure projects within remote Indigenous communities, Behrendt states "Indigenous people are much better placed than non-Indigenous people to understand the issues and priorities in their communities."[42] In doing so she asserts the importance of collaborative relationships between predominantly 'white metropolitan architects' and remote communities to support opportunities for local ownership, training and entrepreneurship where possible.

Transferred to the context of Kalkaringi/Daguragu, the Gurindji's historic struggle for sovereign ownership of traditional land reveals that, "the Gurindji understood in 1965 that they were best placed to determine their own future and to use the resources that could support their community."[43] In line with this vision, Aboriginal owned organisations such as the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation and the Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation serve

Ernest Frank and Gurindji Corp construction crew help mix concrete for structural foundations.

as key bodies in the aspiration towards financial self-determination. The collaboration between Bower Studio and these organisations has underpinned the outcomes of built projects, whereby design planning is mediated by the decision making of local corporations, best placed to understand the capacity for local involvement.

As consultation continues at Kalkaringi for the development of arts and culture infrastructure, the AHURI report, *Best Practice Models for Effective Consultation* serves as a relevant resource for consideration. The report accords to the first step of the *AIDC:CD* by highlighting the importance of facilitating solutions that allow communities a sense of ownership, "best practice occurs when the project is identified as a local project, and where capacity building for local people can engender knowledge and confidence."[44]

KALKARINGI SITE NOTES:
24/04 Working with CDP crew:
Kerry Jimmy (Jimmy Wavehill's son) –

While waiting to use the angle grinder, Kerry mentioned that he has been working in the CDP program for the past 3 years. They work on a variety of projects within the program, most recently they completed a workshop making furniture out of old palettes and crates. Kerry also described the difficulties of progressing towards employment with Gurindji Corp, due to the technical qualifications required. He would like to work for Gurindji Corp in the future.

The construction of the Art Centre Extension and the Bus Shelter Bough Shed in 2018 relied upon a collaboration with the local Community Development Program (CDP) and the Gurindji Corp construction team. This collaboration provided an opportunity for continued training in construction for a range of local community members, and has the potential to be strengthened by planned infrastructure developments to the local reserve, "Central Park" by the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation.

58   Claire Kopietz, Nat Keynton and Rhonda Rankin prepare for the Bus Stop 'Bough Shed'.

My experience working alongside the CDP crew, allowed me to hear about the aspirations of many of its members to work for Gurindji Corp, including Kerry Jimmy. This reinforced for me the importance of this organisation as a key avenue by which the community may access opportunities for employment. Such organisations offer direct links to community members to participate in the maintenance and development of infrastructure and cultural heritage within the community.

Kerry Jimmy, part of the Community Development Program crew helps grind weldmesh panels.

View into Karungkarni Art Centre from new covered art making space.

STEP 3:
COMMUNITY SPECIFIC

"Ensure respect for the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture by following community specific cultural protocols."[45]

Step three of the *AIDC:CD* acknowledges the diversity of Australia's remote Indigenous communities as dynamic and perpetually evolving.[46] As Kevin O'Brien contends, "the dynamics of each community's population and cultural context must shape the outcome of design projects."[47] Accordingly, the charter outlines a number of general protocols for respectful community engagement, recognizing that socio-cultural structures may differ vastly between communities in different regions across Australia. Some relevant examples include:

- *Check with the relevant Land Council as to whether a permit is required to enter a community. Be considerate and respectful by sending an initial letter of intent, stating the purpose of your visit. (Oxfam 2007)*

- *Be aware that kinship systems are complex and will impact on how you can interact with members of a community. (Oxfam 2007)*

- *Be aware that "women's business" and "men's business" relate to gender specific knowledge and practices. Gender specific relations may impact upon who you may be able to interact with and many community members may prefer to deal with people of their own gender. (Oxfam 2007)[48]*

These protocols guide the practice of obtaining permissions and behaviours that may shape ongoing interactions between a practitioner and members of a remote Indigenous community. This is acknowledged by Lee and Morris who state, "from a cross-cultural perspective, often the difficulty is in ascertaining who to speak to and who is entitled to speak... *time* is needed in the community to

Perforated plywood panels featuring designs from six Karungkarni artists.

gain this information."[49] Conversely, limited budget allocations for projects often do not accommodate the flexible timelines required to establish appropriate community sensitivity.

As such, *Working with Aboriginal People and Communities,* a resource developed in 2011 by DOCS NSW, reminds practitioners to be aware of the subjectivities that may arise when "consultations are generally held with only a representative group of its members, not the whole population."[50] Fundamentally, the resource suggests that acknowledging Traditional Owners, information that may be obtained through the local Land Council, is key to developing an understanding of community structures.

KALKARINGI SITE NOTES:
25/04 Working with CDP crew:
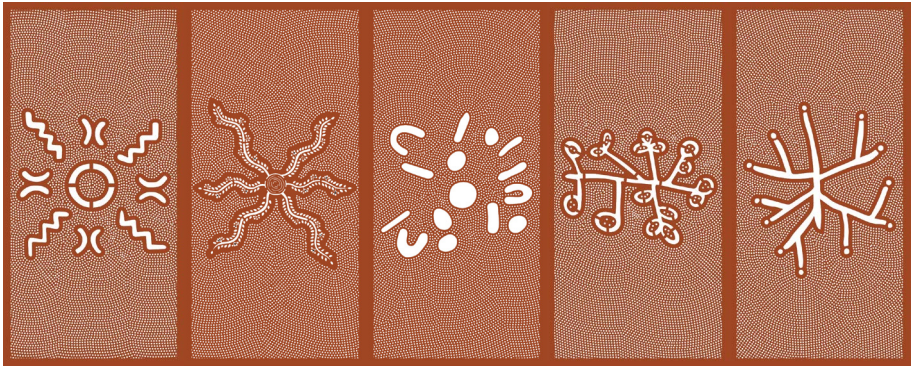*Kerry Jimmy (Jimmy Wavehill's son) –*

Kerry spoke with pride about his mother and father's (Biddy and Jimmy) role in the Walk-Off, and the sacrifice his elders endured to establish the community at Daguragu. Nevertheless, he reminded me that his father is not a TO here, and that while Kalkarindji is made up of varied collections of language and family groupings, (Gurindji, Bilinarra, Mudburra, Malgnin, Ngarinyman, Warlpiri) it is important to always acknowledge the Gurindji as Traditional Owners of Kalkarindji in decision making for the community.

The communities of Kalkaringi and Daguragu are governed by a multifaceted web of socio-cultural structures that are unique to their particular context. The importance of respecting these specificities was revealed to me during the planning and installation of six perforated art panels in the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre in May 2018. This was a process that I took direct responsibility for, within my role as a student mentor in the Bower Studio team. During this process, original designs created by six local artists, Biddy Wavehill Nangala, Jimmy Wavehill, Kathleen Sambo, Timmy Vincent

and Violet Nanaku Wadrill, were translated for digital fabrication onto plywood panels. The digital translation of these designs underwent a number of iterations to ensure culturally appropriate representation. This process was guided by Art Centre Manager Penny Smith, who was able to act as a mediator, ensuring culturally appropriate representation specific to the unique socio-cultural context of the artists.

Learning gained from this process was further developed for me during on site discussions for the arrangements of panels to be installed. Here, cultural protocols in respect to gender relations necessitated the placement of the panels according to married couplings amongst the five artists. These experiences, guided by the advice of Penny Smith to enable culturally appropriate representation, highlighted the specific cultural context of Kalkaringi/Daguragu and thus the relevance of this step in the *AIDC:CD* charter to architectural practice.

Jimmy Wavehill   Biddy Wavehill   Violet Nanaku   Kathleen Sambo   Timmy Vincent
   Nangala   Wadrill

66   Original designs by six Karungkarni Artists. Photograph by Henry Chen.

Karungkarni Artist Rachel Morris and student Henry Chen eat lunch at the Art Centre.

STEP 4:
INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

"Ensure respectful culturally specific personal engagement behaviours for effective communication and courteous interaction are practiced."[51]

The fourth step in the *AIDC:CD,* entitled "Deep Listening", advocates the development of a clear methodology for communication in cross-cultural contexts. In doing so it recognises that limited communication skills practiced by architects may act as a barrier to inclusive consultation. As Paul Memmott reflects, "cross-cultural communication problems arise when misunderstandings on the part of well-meaning architects, (builders or bureaucrats) occur due to differences in language, assumptions, and beliefs."[52]

The sentiments embodied in the concept of "Deep Listening" refer more generally to the practice of inclusive communication in contexts where English is often the second, third or fourth spoken language. Conversely, when a practitioner engages in any cross-cultural encounter where the local language is relatively unknown, the capacity for interpretation becomes dependent on the mutual trust of both client and architect.[53] As such, the *AIDC:CD* recognises that building trust between practitioners and many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may be a slow and ongoing process. The temporal importance of this process is further described by Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann as "*Dadirri* – a quiet, still awareness,"[54] who acknowledges the practice of listening as one that may involve periods of talking and periods of silent and mutual reflection. Responding to this concept, *The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols* developed by Oxfam

Indigenous Language
Spoken at Home

0   1000km

0-1% 1-5% 5-21% 21-70% 70-100%
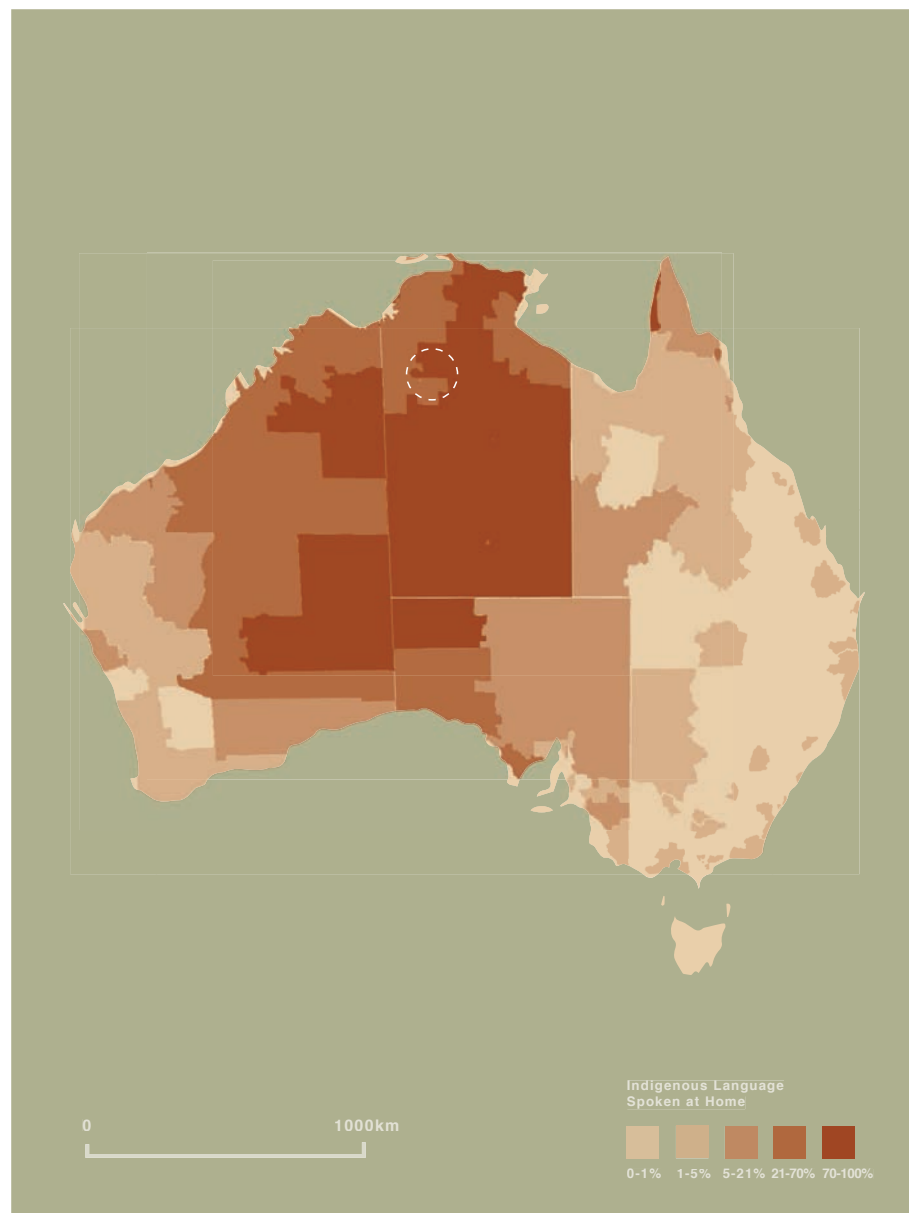
Australia in 2007 provide a set of guidelines to encourage inclusive communication within remote Indigenous community settings. These guidelines can be directly applied to the context of Kalkaringi/Daguragu, whereby the predominant languages spoken include a mixed variety of Gurindji and Gurindji Kriol.[55]

- *Be aware that English is often a second, third or fifth language in remote locations. If necessary use an interpreter, keep technical terms to a minimum, do not mimic Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander speech patterns. Try to learn a few words of the local language. (Oxfam 2007)*

- *Be sensitive to non-verbal cues. Silence may have a multitude of meanings, it may mean that people are listening, remaining non-committal or waiting for community support. (Oxfam 2007)*

- *Be aware that questioning can be seen as challenging. "Why?" is virtually absent from conversations in remote Australian communities and observation is used instead.[56](Oxfam 2007)*

An awareness of the importance of taking time to talk, listen and reflect was developed for me during my participation in the design-development visit to Kalkaringi in February of 2018. Whilst measuring and documenting the existing site conditions of the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre, many hours were spent sitting at the long trestle tables of the old powerhouse, drawing and preparing models for discussion. During this time, we sat alongside a number of local artists such as Timmy Vincent and Kathleen Sambo, as they worked. Whilst relatively scant conversation occurred, the practice of sitting side by side allowed mutual observation and quiet consideration. Formal conversations, which involved the discussion of proposed design ideas for renovations to the Art Centre, were held with Penny Smith as mediator. In her role as Art Centre manager, Penny was enabled to help guide and interpret discussions across English and Gurindji language, helping to facilitate mutual understanding in a cross-cultural setting.

Data translated from ABS 2011 "Indigenous Language Spoken at Home."
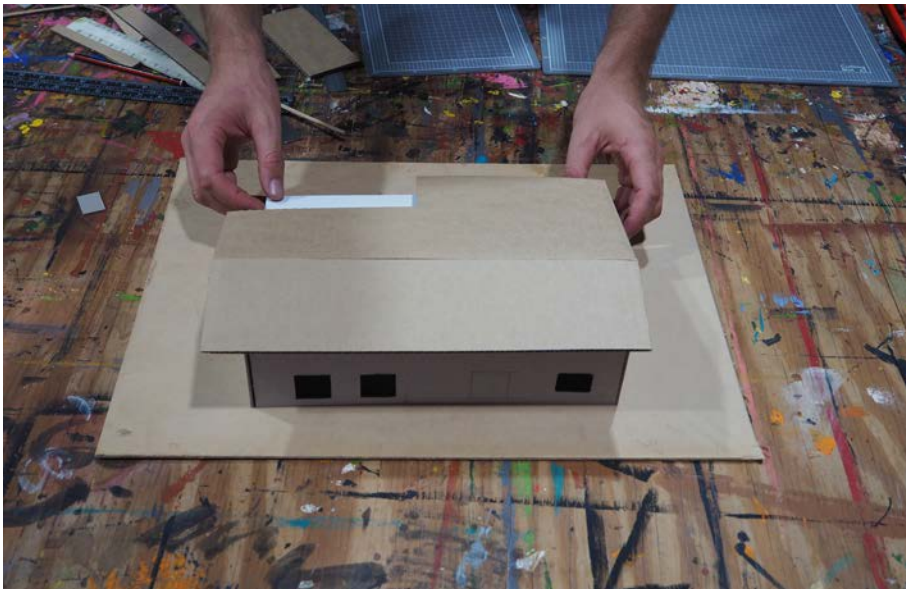
Supplementing inclusive cross-cultural communication methods, *Best Practice Models for Effective Consultation* advocates the importance of immediate and tangible visual materials when engaging in design discussions. This practice may help to clarify expectations by a wider range of community members, appropriately accommodating varied capacities for communication in remote Indigenous community settings.

Practitioners such as Andrew Broffman, managing director at Tangentyere Design,[57] incorporate the use of models as key method in the design development process. Broffman states "physical models remain an effective means of demonstrating physical space, allowing roofs to be removed and the rooms inside to be revealed."[58] Accordingly, the construction of a scale model became a key communication tool during the February site visit in 2018. The model clearly and tangibly highlighted the proposed renovations to the Art Centre and was an object that was able to be left at the site to stimulate discussion and interest by members of the art centre and the broader Kalkaringi/Daguragu community.

Whilst these practices elucidated insightful and relevant conversations, it must be noted that the restricted time frame of the site visit in February may have impeded the opportunity for more developed and sensitive cross cultural dialogue to occur. To develop inclusive dialogue, the Australian Government *Protocols on Indigenous Language Interpreting* highlight that "Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have a basic right to understand and be understood when communicating with service providers."[59] In doing so it recommends that interpreters fluent in local languages should be present when possible to facilitate informed decision making by clients. As such, the sentiments of "Deep Listening", recognized as inclusive communication in the fourth step of the *AIDC: CD* prove pertinent for continued consideration by architects to ensure ethical cross-cultural practice.

Building a scale model of the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre in February 2018.

STEP 7:
SHARED KNOWLEDGE

"Develop and implement respectful collaboration, co-creation and procurement methods for sharing of Indigenous Knowledge."[60]

The seventh step in the *AIDC:CD* advocates that a culture of reciprocity arises from inclusive design practices; "designers must operate with patience and sincerity supported by a methodical process of transparency and inclusiveness."[61] In doing so, the charter reminds practitioners that collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is an ongoing process that helps to build shared knowledge of physical, cultural and environmental conditions.

When considering the ongoing consultation and planning for future cultural infrastructure developments within the communities of Kalkaringi/Daguragu, a collective body of shared knowledge between Bower Studio and the community has been developed. The outcomes of this collaboration include the Wave Hill Walk-Off Pavilions completed in 2016 and the Art Centre Extension and the Bus Shelter Bough Shed in 2018. These projects may be seen as stages in a collaborative continuum which and aspires towards the construction of a new Arts and Culture Precinct by 2025, the Fiftieth Anniversary of the 'hand-back' to the Gurindji people.[62]

KALKARINGI SITE NOTES:
27/04 Meeting at Gurindji Corp office:
Rob Roy – (Gurindji Aboriginal Corp Board Member / TO)
Rob Roy (RR) spoke about what he would like to see in a new Art Centre.

Working through design ideas at different times and scales. Upper photograph by Penny Smith.

Rosemary Johnson and Rita Mallia sit at the new Bus Stop 'Bough Shelter'. Photograph by Henry Chen.

He described the celebration of Gurindji History as a strong influencing element, "how can we use the past (the remnants of life at Wavehill Station) to recreate a vision for the future". RR further described the merging of old and new at the current art centre as an important precedent for future design ideas.

As Pieris states, "each community responds uniquely to its own history of dispossession, their desires and aspirations defining very different programmatic and aesthetic built outcomes."[63] This was revealed to me in some of the conversations I had with members of the community, including Rob Roy, a Gurindji Corp Board member and Gurindji Traditional Owner. Accordingly, the *AIDC:CD* states that appropriate representations of cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can only be achieved when respectful partnerships are established.[64] As the partnership between Bower Studio and the Kalkaringi/ Daguragu community continues, shared conversations with members of the community reflect the diversity of opinions and community engagement with existing cultural infrastructure, in particular the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre. These shared conversations help to develop a collective body of knowledge of existing conditions and community aspirations that may guide informed design considerations for future cultural infrastructure development.

KALKARINGI SITE NOTES:
*27/04 Lunchtime Conversation:*
Rita Mallia – (Violet Wadrill's niece, works in the Health Clinic):

Rita spoke about the Karungkarni Art and Culture Centre and the park in front of the Art Centre as a popular space to hang out during lunch breaks. Rita mentioned that she will often come down to the Art Centre to have a look at the TV, usually there is something playing from ICTV (Indigenous Community Television Network). Other times, Rita said that she will go and sit in the shade of the trees out the front of the Art Centre to eat her lunch.

Best Practice Models for Effective Consultation reflects the sentiments of the *AIDC:CD* in its evaluation of consultation as an ongoing and cyclical process that, "facilitates the evaluation of built environment projects, from inception to completion, continuing through to maintenance programs and post occupancy evaluation."[65] This cycle promotes continuity whereby shared knowledge is able to be collectively developed, building mutual trust across time. To do this, the report proposes the establishment of a shared database of knowledge between client and practitioner to facilitate transparent sharing of information. This resource could document "existing conditions including the histories and physical conditions of projects and places"[66] and would be readily accessible to communities.

This practice presents one way in which the complexities of cross-cultural communication may be navigated to ensure transparent and mutual sharing of information. When considering the collaborative relationship between Bower Studio and the communities of Kalkaringi/Daguragu, such a method may prove useful in strengthening respectful relationships between key stakeholders such as the Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation and the Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation. Incorporating and documenting the shared conversations between various between students and community members (such as Rob Roy and Rita) may act as one way help to build a collective body of knowledge, encouraging mutual understanding and the precipitating further community input.

James Oberin and Ernest Frank at the Wankurr Sports Club in Kalkaringi.
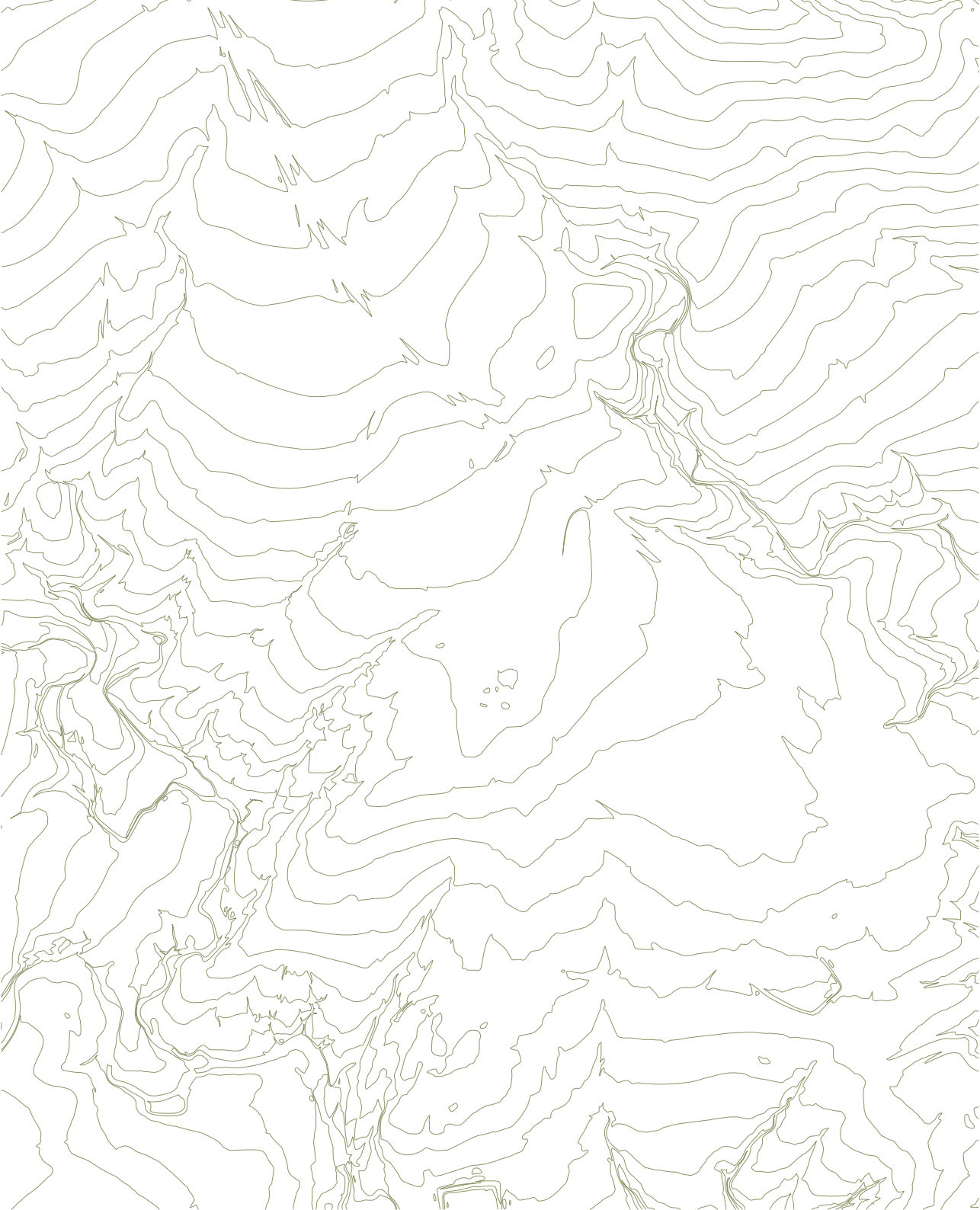
CRITICAL REFLECTION AS A RESOURCE FOR FUTURE PRACTICE

The research and reflections presented in this body of work are open ended and have the potential to be supplemented with feedback and input from community members and relevant stakeholders within the communities of Kalkaringi and Daguragu. As collaborative planning between Bower Studio, Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation and Karungkarni Art and Culture Aboriginal Corporation continues, the importance of maintaining ethical cross-cultural practice becomes apparent. Reflecting upon the relevance of the recently published *Australian Indigenous Design Charter: Communication Design*, cultural protocols can be seen to provide foundational resources for architects and students engaging with remote Indigenous communities as the end users, clients or contributors of architectural projects. Protocols such as the *AIDC:CD* are indispensable resources that help practitioners to facilitate "a context for informed decision making as well as individual and collective agency."[67] Revealed by an overview of relevant published literature, Pieris contends that the successes and failures of professional engagement with Indigenous communities offer "illuminating precedents on how Australian architects have contributed to 'closing the gap'."[68] This may provide a framework for critical reflection for students and practitioners navigating the complexities of cross-cultural communication and practice. The *AIDC* has provided an important resource for me to critically reflect upon my participation in collaborative projects in remote Indigenous community contexts thus far. Correspondingly, there remains a vital opportunity for the *AIDC* to be adapted for "Architectural Design".

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Notes from conversations in Kalkaringi
19.04.18 - 02.05.18

23/04 Troopy Trip to Daguragu:
Sandra –
Spoke about the fact that there are no facilities left in Daguragu, there used to be an arts centre, a bakery, and many more amenities. This means that both communities solely rely on the services within Kalkarindji.

Gracie and Sandra –
Spoke about good fishing spots along the river junction between Wattie Creek and Victoria River. Fishing appears to be a significant and popular activity.

24/04 Sitting in the Art Centre:
Gracie –
Spoke about the way that artmaking can be dependent on the weather conditions, paintings are usually made inside, although if it is too hot paintings can be made outside in the shade. Coolamons and boomerangs are made outside in the shade between the art centre and the public shade structure.

24/04 Working with CDP crew:
Kerry Jimmy (Jimmy Wavehill's son) –
Spoke about loss of the art centre in Daguragu. He mentioned that the Rec Hall remains in Daguragu. It is a big open-air structure similar to the one at the school. This space is used by the kids in the afternoons until 8pm most days (note that this is the same time as the pub closes).

Kerry had strong memories of the flood in 2001, the way that it engulfed the old power station (now arts centre) and the destruction that it caused to a lot of housing and public amenities. He noted that the old housing in Kalkarindji is not suited to the climatic extremes they experience, and that if

it were up to him, they should be demolished and rebuilt, potentially above the ground.

Kerry spoke with pride about his mother and father's (Biddy and Jimmy) role in the Walk-Off, he spoke with great reverence about the sacrifice and courageousness that his elders endured to establish the towns of Kalkarindji and Daguragu. Nevertheless, Kerry firmly mentioned that his father is not a TO here, and that while Kalkarindji is made up of varied collections of family groupings, it is very important to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Kalkarindji in all decision making for the town. Kerry has been working in the CDP program for the past 3 years, he talked about the difficulties of progressing towards employment with Gurindji Corp, due to the technical qualifications required. Kerry's daughter, Biddy, is 15 and no longer at school, she has just gained employment at the Club, which has just started opening in the mornings from 8-10am for breakfast. The opening of the Club during the day forms an interesting movement away from the sole association of the Club as a space for drinking and the development of social hang out spaces during the daytime.

24/04 Evening at the Club:
Rob Roy (Kalkarindji TO) –
Spoke about what he would like to see in a new art centre. RR talked about tourism, "putting Kalkaringi back on the map", building upon the success and celebrations of the Freedom Day Festival, encouraging more people to come and spend time in Kalk, learn about its history and art and to see what it has to offer. RR talked about notions of a building "blending into the landscape", developing a place that people from Kalkarindji and Daguragu can work in and use comfortably should be the first priority. He described the celebration of Gurindji History as a strong influencing element, "how can we use the past (the remnants of life at Wavehill Station) to recreate a vision for the future". RR further described the merging of old and new at the current art centre as an important precedent for future design ideas.

25/04 Sitting in the Art Centre:
Penny –
There are 70 artists currently in the books at Karungkarni Arts Centre. Anyone can join to work there, however, they must be Aboriginal, living in

Kalkarindji, and over 18 years of age.

26/04 CDP Women's Workshop (Beside the Shire Council Office):
Sonya –
Runs the CDP Women's program. Spoke about how the current space that is used for them CDP programs is also a multipurpose space for community services (e.g. The courthouse) This means that the women's workshop has to constantly be vacated. The space is within a heritage listed building (with aluminum weatherboard cladding) and as such, cannot be altered to suit the purposes of the CDP program. This means that permanent facilities can never be put in place, for example a permanent kitchen facility, a space for sewing machines, a place to wash things, and dedicated workstations for multiple activities to occur at once.

Some of the activities undertaken through CDP include, sewing, jewellery making, photography, handcrafts and cooking. Sonya spoke about how cooking is the most popular activity that occurs, they always have the highest attendance during cooking workshops. Healthy eating and cooking appears to be an important and popular activity. Sonya spoke about the potential to develop retail and hospitality certification skills through workshops run within the CDP program. This could be linked to the Freedom Day Festival and may even be able to stimulate small business enterprise opportunities for women within the community. Currently, some handmade cards produced within the CDP Women's workshop are on sale at the art centre, what other spaces could facilitate business enterprise for CDP women?

Cassandra –
Mentioned that there is no Women's centre in the community, no permanent space for women to occupy and work in.

27/04 Gurindji Corp office:
Rob Roy (Gurindji Aboriginal Corporation Board Member / TO) –
Spoke about how people from other communities outside of Kalk, (e.g. Lajamanu or Halls Creek) don't necessarily stop and have a look in the arts centre when they pass through. He mentioned that it would be interesting to create a building that stimulated curiosity for not only tourists but those that live in surrounding towns.

RR mentioned that he would visit the art centre once or twice a week. He said that whenever they have big meetings in the shade structure next door, he might go and have a look inside the Centre, to read some history panels and take a look at the art. RR talked about bringing elements of the old Wavehill station into the town, elements of the station that remind people of what life was like out at Jinbarrak. Again, RR talked about the notion of blending old and new.

27/04 Lunchtime Conversation:
Rita − (Violet Wadrill's niece, works in the Clinic):
Spoke about the art centre and the grounds around the art centre as a popular space to hang out during lunch breaks, Rita mentioned that she will often come down to the art centre to have a look at the TV and sit in the shade to eat her lunch.

Jimmy −
Spoke about cultural continuity through storytelling and the sharing of knowledge across generations.

28/04 Art Centre:
Penny −
Spoke about some of the broader cultural activities that occur in and around the art centre. In 2016, popular dance classes took place in the grassy space in front of the art centre, Ceremonial dance classes were on offer for young people, taught by the elders. This was an incredibly popular event, with an overwhelming number of young men showing interest and dedication to attend the classes. The dances taught during these classes were performed at the Freedom Day Festival.

Penny also talked about how school kids often come into the Art Centre to do workshops, and in the past intensive days of art making with school kids have taken place. Over the past few years, Penny has run International Women's day events, big communal lunches with art making preparation, sewing and handcrafts occurring to prepare for the event. Penny also talked about the space under the mezzanine within the art centre, typically this space is set up with a large TV that displays ICT and other relevant videos. It appears to be a space for information, displaying of artefacts and for people to hang out.

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