



**Territory
Natural Resource
Management**



**Innovation – exploring new ways
to use our resources sustainably**

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No Bushfoods without the people

Rayleen Brown

Kungkas Can Cook



Central Australia and Barkly perspective

Firstly I would like to acknowledge:

- The traditional owners, the Larrakia people, those past and present on whose land we stand on today
- The large group of women in Central Australia and the Barkly region who have been busily harvesting a range of bush foods to supply the bush foods industry over the last 38 years
- Bush harvesting occurs on country in the bush and not in a commercial environment. This harvesting activity has enabled the supply of large volumes of Akatyerr (bush tomato) to manufacturers through the value chain who then make value added products

Time

Relationships

Trust

Respect

Knowledge



Key Points

I will touch on:

- Perspective of the Bush Foods Industry from Central Australia and Barkly
- Innovation in Bush Harvest
- Innovation in Research
- Importance of Relationships
- Working with harvesters
- Kungkas Story
- Our Approach to Best Practice

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Innovation in Bush Harvest

- Today I am talking about bush harvest
- It is also known as wild harvest
- In some circles, wild harvest infers that Country is not being looked after
- Bush harvesting is not just about the physical aspect of collecting seeds from important plants. It is about practising culture, passing on knowledge to young people and looking after Country
- Bush harvesting is complex

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Innovation in Bush Harvest

- Bush harvesting enables:
 - Women to practice culture and looking after Country
 - Transfer important cultural knowledge to younger generations
 - Value indigenous ecological knowledge
 - Harvesters have a deep sense of pride and cultural strength
 - Use of literacy and numeracy skills e.g 1 flour bucket = 10 Kg
 - They have conversations with Traders 'buyers' to set 'fair trade price'
 - Bush harvesting, generates income and livelihood for some families in remote communities

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Innovation in Research

- Bush harvesters are driving research
- Over 15 years, lots of research has been focused on the bush foods industry in Central Australia e.g the importance role of Aboriginal people in harvesting, cultural practice, knowledge sharing and intellectual property
- Women have been very generous with sharing their knowledge with researchers and industry
- The CSIRO and Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre funded research in 2005 – 2011, on bush foods in Central Australia and the Barkly





Innovation in Research

- Report 71 was published in 2011
- This report: Ethical guidelines for commercial bush food research, industry and enterprises
- This was endorsed by the full Central Land Council in 2008
- 300 Council Members agreed to the principles that were written in this report
- It is an important body of research (2005-2011) with all major language groups represented



Aboriginal people, bush foods knowledge and products from central Australia:

Ethical guidelines for commercial bush food research, industry and enterprises

Merne Altyerre-ipenhe (Food from the Creation time) Reference Group

Josie Douglas

Fiona Walsh

2011



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Importance of Relationships

- I place a strong importance on having strong relationship with harvesters. I respect their knowledge, culture and expertise
- It has taken me 15 years to develop long lasting relationships with women, families and communities
- Women are very strong on their land and Country
- Women drive the trade of bush harvest
- Harvesters contact traders when the time is right e.g when each seed species is ready to be harvested
- Strong culture = sustainable livelihoods on Country

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Working with Harvesters



- Other people, in the bush foods industry might talk about managing the value chain
- Aboriginal harvesters are managing the production end of bush harvest
- They manage production by:
 - Watching Country, weather and plants
 - **Harvesting seed, cleaning and drying seeds (about 10 different sp)**
 - They contact traders to say 'I've got that Ilkert seed and its ready'
 - Then I have to translate what it is and I have to get it right
 - It will be ready e.g cleaned and dry in a week
 - Follow up phone call to check with trader
 - Seed makes it way from community into town

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So what's involved in Bush Harvest?

- Travelling to Country with the right people
- Setting up
- Teaching and sharing knowledge
- Collecting
- Cleaning
- Winnowing
- Packing up and travelling back to Community
- Washing
- Drying
- Storing



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Kungkas Can Cook Story



- Kungkas Can Cook was founded in 2000 by two aboriginal women
- In Pitjantjara Kungka means women
- We have a strong commitment to supporting ethical supply of bush harvest of bush foods and paying a fair trade price per kilogram
- We have always supported harvest by Aboriginal women on Country
- I have been heavily involved in guiding research and industry
- Director on the national ANFIL Board
- Advocating and being a voice for aboriginal women harvesters

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Kungkas Can Cook Story

- Business has diversified to include; catering, café, value added products; and
- We also work in tourism, training of young people to build confidence, gain skills, knowledge and experience leading to employment opportunities



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Challenges of bush foods industry

- When other buyers contact Kungkas, they often ask about price
- They ask me to lower my price
- If I lower my price, in effect, they are asking me to pay the aboriginal harvesters less. Is this fair?
- Ladies on Country would like to learn more about the size of the current bush foods industry; where their bush foods go and what happens with their product?
- Aboriginal harvesters would welcome support from Industry

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Our approach to best practice



I am committed to supporting the growth of the ethical supply of bush harvest through innovation, research and most importantly relationships with women on Country, who continue to drive the bush foods Industry.

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Thank You

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