

### Traditional Knowledge Protocols

Traditional Knowledge Protocols have been communicated by Kuku Thaypan Elders and TKRP co-creator and described as they apply to research through their co-generative action research fire management project PhD “The Importance of Campfires to Effective Conservation Communication.” *“It’s always been this way its not new”* (Victor Steffensen 2008). The Kuku Thaypan Elders Dr. Tommy George and the late old man Musgrave through their Fire Management Research Project (KTFMRP) have been securing, demonstrating, applying and communicating these protocols enacted and described through their TKRP as they apply research *“on their own terms.”* In effect supporting their TKRP is their protocol for engagement.

### Research Protocols

Research should recognise and respect peoples inherited Traditional Knowledge systems by supporting communities to demonstrate their Traditional Knowledge formula for doing it. *“You have to understand the three sides to Traditional Knowledge to know how to use it as the baseline for applying adaptive management.”* (Victor Steffensen 2008) see Figure 1.1.

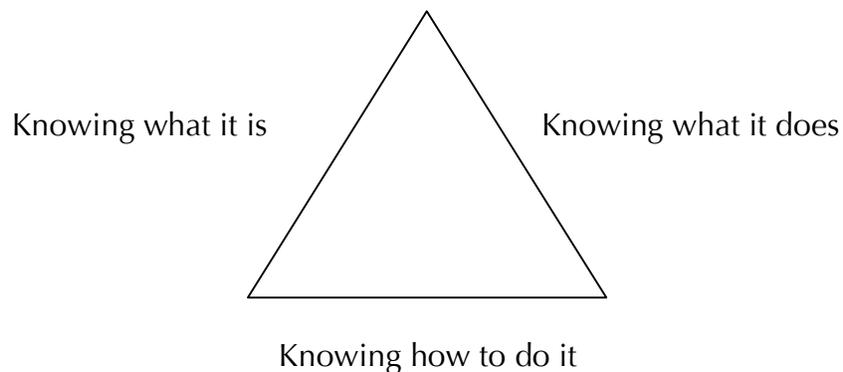


Figure 1.1 Traditional Knowledge Formula

The action research methodology of the Traditional Knowledge Revival Pathways Project enables communities to fulfil the expressed wishes of the Elders to transfer and record as much of their Traditional Knowledge (TK) as possible to the clan youth before it is lost, to secure, demonstrate, apply and communicate this knowledge to contemporary issues of community concern, see Figure 1.2

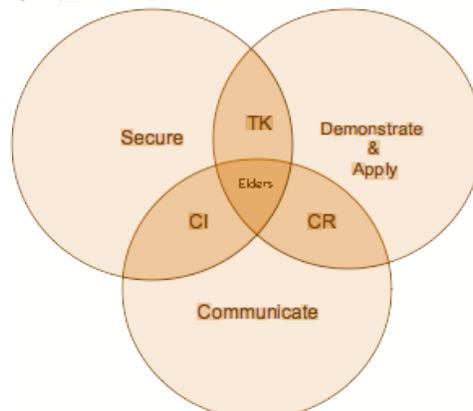


Figure 1.2 Conceptual model of interactive components of the TKRP methodology

CI = community informatics CR= Co-generative research, TK – Traditional Knowledge  
By supporting this methodology the survival of cultural knowledge is ensured through traditional transfer on country within and between communities; providing an Indigenous methodology to inspire communities to engage and develop themselves. It also provides the opportunity to demonstrate and apply traditional practices that have the ability to innovate and contribute to contemporary management solutions; demonstrating the values of traditional knowledge to the broader community.

The following priority areas are interlinked parts of the methodology used by the project, each helping to strengthen outcomes of the other.

#### *Demonstrate TK*

Elders are on country transferring TK to younger clan members applying their inherent adaptive management knowledge, thus securing and communicating their TK to kin and with country. In doing so they are able to demonstrate their knowledge within and between communities and provide elements of shared knowledge to interested external agencies.

#### *Secure TK*

Being out on country demonstrating and transferring knowledge practically secures TK. Using digital multi-media, scientific instruments, creative communication technologies and applying community Informatics ((CI) -training in the use of multi-media technologies) empowers communities through the use of these tools in securing, demonstrating and communicating their TK.

TKRP in field training methods applied where trainees are recorded in front of the camera while being guided by Elders and project mentors provides an action learning experience. The footage is used to develop multi-media community specific training products where new community participants are able to view themselves demonstrating, communicating, applying and reinforcing their TK, securing it for future generations. See Plate 1.1 below



Plate 1.1 Dr. Tommy George demonstrates his knowledge on sugarbag to Lizzy Lakefield being recorded by Djerami Callope and being guided off camera by Victor Steffensen.

#### *Communicate TK*

Communication between country and people enabled through the action research methodology. (CI) Training - in the use of digital technologies and in-field training methods of TKRP where (CR) co-generative action research case studies identified and designed by Elders and younger clan members are recorded while being implemented on country. Training is delivered within and between clan groups supported by western scientists and practitioners creating shared knowledge case studies - training others in TK based cultural and natural resource management. Communities are supported to develop communication products sharing elements of TK and issues of community concern using digital technologies.

Communicating and applying research protocols that enable the contribution of Traditional Knowledge to contemporary research theory and practice through a culturally appropriate framework. For example TKRP Research program case studies are contributing old and new knowledge to fields of Indigenous research, Natural Resource Management, Biodiversity Conservation, Fire Ecology, Participatory Action Research, Communication Design, Co-generative Action Research, Action learning and environmental education, Digital Design, Community Informatics and Health to name a few.

### **Research Principles**

Protocols are community specific and are enlivened through the building of relationships. In general the following principles apply to the development of research projects, they should:

- Support Indigenous led and identified projects
- Address issues of community concern
- Co-generate solutions applying the law of reciprocity
- Contribute to the identification of solutions to issues of wider contemporary concern
- Respect peoples cultural and institutional obligations, knowledge systems and ways of being and doing
- Understand different ways of undertaking research

In this way equitable research partnerships are enabled where community can identify and design projects, engage in participatory projects and inform collaborative approaches from their own point of view, retaining lore and laws relating to their knowledge system. Through this formula different ways of knowing, being and doing are recognized and supported empowering communities to contribute solution to social, environmental and economic concerns.