# 1ST DRAFT TRANSCRIPT

# RECORDING: 28.08.2014 5th Lunchtime Governance Discussion

PRESENT/SPEAKERS: *SEE NOTE 2 BELOW FOR LIST OF ALL PRESENT.*

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED: 41 MIN 01 SEC

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Transcribed by: On Time Typing. [info@ontimetyping.com](mailto:info@ontimetyping.com)

*Note 1 Inaudible words indicated by ‘….’.*

*Audio Quality: Most of 0:00:00 – 0:28:00 poor to very poor. most of 0:28:00 onwards: good/reasonable, but some (when JT is speaking) poor.*

*Transcript Quality (given it is only a 1st draft): Poor/reasonable for most of the first 28 minutes; then reasonable to good for the remainder of the transcript.*

*As requested, this is a 1st Draft Transcript i.e. it has been transcribed only once against the audio recording and has not been proofread. The parts of the transcript representing the few sections of the audio recording that were of good audibility are reasonably accurate. However most of this audio recording was only partially audible and many words were not audible at all (ie of poor to very poor audibility) and so a lot of this transcript is not even reasonably accurate. This transcript requires proofreading against the audio file to produce a reasonably accurate representation of the recording.*

*Note 2 ‘MC’ indicates the speaker is Christie, Michael In person*

*‘MS’ indicates the speaker is* *Spencer, Michaela In person*

*‘HV’ indicates the speaker is* *Verran, Helen In person*

*‘MH’ indicates the speaker is Harrison, Mike In person*

*‘JT’ indicates the speaker is* *Turnour, Jim Skype*

*‘EO’ indicates the speaker is Elspeth Oppermann In person*

*‘JS’ indicates the speaker is Jan Salmon In person*

*‘LR’ indicates the speaker is Linda Rosenman In person*

*‘Matt’ indicates the speaker is* *Matt Campbell Phone*

*‘BA’ indicates the speaker is* *Beau Austin In person*

*‘DZ’ indicates the speaker is* *Don Zoellner Skype*

*‘JC’ indicates the speaker is* *Juli Cathcart In person*

*‘TW’ indicates the speaker is* *Trevor van Weeren In person*

*TRANSCRIPT:*

*0:00:00*

*Some discussion about use of telephones, snacks, weather.*

MS Hi (Don)

DZ? Hello.

MS Hi Jim.

JT Gidday.

MS And I think we’re still connected to … Can you see us?

JT No I can’t see you. I can see the schedule but can’t see you.

MS Jim, is (Ann) back?

JT Yes… I understand she’s back. The …has just come on line for me and I can see the back of something behind his head, I think it might be a computer.

*Some (unimportant) discussion about improving what can be seen via computer; whether Ann is back; technological issues.*

MS Allan sent his apologies, he has an all day meeting in Mt Isa, he’s going to try to make it … Maybe we’re ready to go? Welcome everybody, to another governance lunchtime discussion. We’ve held the meeting a bit later in the month than we normally do so that Helen can be with us, and that Julie and Trevor who has just popped out of the room can be with us... Just after the meeting Helen will also be giving a seminar, Governing the Present, so people might want to hang around for that, we’ll have about a half hour break I think and reset up the room and then everyone will be able to reconnect in either by videoconference or … to that.

MC It should be one out shouldn’t it.

MS It depends when we finish.

MC So it starts 3 o’clock our time.

MS Darwin time yeah. So should we go around the see who’s here? Juli…

JC Hi I’m Juli.

JS Jan’s here.

MH Gidday, Mike.

EO Elspeth.

LR Linda.

BA Beau.

MS Michaela.

MC Michael.

HV And Helen.

MC And Trevor’s just slipped out.

HV Trevor’s here, the cup of coffee.

MS And on Skype.

DZ Don here in Alice Springs.

JT Jim here in Cairns.

MS Great and we might try Ann a bit later and see if she can come along. Matt Campbell from Alice Springs is going to join us in about half an hour. I thought we might have had some new people today but they don’t seem to have turned up. It seems to me that the theme that we’re going to talk about today is some changes happening around Indigenous governance and how our research might relate to or be present in these shifts. Jim’s going to talk to us a bit about his work, so is Michael and when Matt joins us he will also talk to us about the ATSIS Indigenous and governance conference that he’s just been to in Canberra. And we also have a copy of a book that might be quite similar to the book that we might publish coming out of this group so at the end of the meeting we’ll have a look at that.

MC Ours would be much less ambitious than that I would imagine.

? I like the photos, that’s a good idea.

HV It might be worth updating people on where we’re up to on the governance sections of the Northern Futures book to just in terms of what the overlaps or underlaps might be.

MS So we’ll do that at the end?

HV At the end.

MS Okay. Jim, Michael had been going to go first but he suggested maybe you could. Would that be all right for you to kick us off, are you happy to do that?

JT Fine, I don’t mind.

MS I’ve got your presentation here and I’ll put it up on the screen here so we won’t see you but we’ll see it and maybe you could just tell me when to turn the page.

*Most of this audio recording to 0:28:00 was poor to very poor audibility therefore the accuracy of the following section of the transcript is quite poor.*

JT I’ll just say what side of it. For the first side we’re looking at, I’m waiting for you to disappear. I’ll just start talking. So I’m working at James Cook University, (as part of) …, (do not appear actually) … … I also do some contract research work with the Cairns Institute which I’ll talk to you a bit about around Aboriginal economic policy and … more broadly. My background is in, I was a politician before I … but I was working as a manager at the … for a little while. Prior to that I worked in agriculture as a consultant but also for quite a long time with the (department) … … I just share that because I think the other issues we’re talking about you know, … … a whole lot of historical baggage, I’m 48 years old and how I see the world … my background, my family’s background and all those sorts of things. I am predominantly working with the rainforest Aboriginal people in northern Australia, I think context is very important and so the first slide, I’m just going to go through this … idea about the context that I’m working in terms of northern Australia and the Cairns rainforest region which is quite different than Cape York for example or the Torres Strait which is no doubt going to be different from the Northern Territory. So to go on to the next slide is three maps, which the first one is geography, people might know where Cairns is hopefully, Port Douglas and there’s sort of a … area which is the wet tropics. Overlaying with that is a map of the NRM region which is terrain … natural resource management … from there … across the country, there’s also the … … One is the 20 rainforest Aboriginal groups that I’m working with through some of their organisations so there are three different sort of layers, looking at the place and the context of where we’re working.

The next line then is … looks at some of the tenure. The majority of the area is national park, it’s World Heritage listed for environmental value, the Aboriginal people want to get it listed for cultural values. They have a series of networks or peak organisations over the last 20 of 30 years or so, since the World Heritage listed and those organisations have … … some have been successful and others have been unsuccessful, they’ve tried to engage with government over that long period of time to gain greater … management of the World Heritage area and for their cultural values and environmental value which they don’t see as separate, but also to try and generate more economic benefits to … and that’s predominantly about seeing the … … back on country. … separate themselves up and this is a great way that they sort of, this is basically off their way of making (a difference) in terms of talking to universities, talking to people, the sort of three subregions, … through a central group and a southern … There’s a bit of information about those different groups, the sorts of governance structure that they’ve got themselves, in … Actually did I skip over the list of … between rainforest Aboriginal people and all that?

MC Yep.

? Yes.

JT Which line are you looking at now?

MS We’ve got the heading, rainforest Aboriginal peoples and the main language groups.

JT Yes, main language groups. Go on to the next line and that shows the tenure and the way they break themselves up into those three different groups, a sub-regional summary of that, looking at the tenure of those 20 tribal or language groups. Okay that should be relatively self-explanatory. Very small area freeholds. … National parks. Wet tropics. Native land … state … tenures. There’s two, one’s called Wudju wudju, a smaller Aboriginal community which is more that you reflect on it as being like the Cape York or the Northern Territory, they are all different but it’s an old mission settlement with social …, … which is a Queensland collective tenure, and we’ve also got the Yarrabah which is quite close to Cairns about 3000 people live in Yarrabah, about 3000 people, more … plus communities. So you’ve got that mixture of … living circumstances. So we go onto the next line and it says … dex. So I’m involved in two broad projects. One’s called Indigenous … … Northern Australia and it’s my PhD, and it’s … northern teachers’ network. It’s a PhD not a Nobel Prize, if you haven’t read that paper … to read. I’m obviously doing this from the point of view of trying to make a contribution throughout regional people and policy in my area and also … … Northern Australia in my background was learn through that process. The second one is which … is what is rainforest bama culture which is an Australian government funded project which is … the rainforest Aboriginal alliance which is a peak organisation, Acare, it’s about how they strengthen their cultural, how they get listed for World Heritage list in their cultural values and strengthen their actual management of the region, and also you’ve got things like …

So in terms of how I’m going about looking at this next … is the theoretical frameworks. So this is a learning journey for me and as I said bringing my values from my past, and … … working with my supervisor and Ann Stephens is my primary supervisor, … Gallegan who people may know used to be the director of the Cairns Institute, and another fellow by the name of Ricardo … … supervised, and I’m working with a reference group made up of a range of Aboriginal people and it’s been selected through the people…. Forum … I’ve been learning about post-colonial theory and the need for us to, you know, whenever you get up to present to an Aboriginal group, the feedback I’m getting is people are tired of research … sorts of things in one instances. … … group … positive but there’s that … there, there’s a recognition that research hasn’t always advanced their needs in the same way it might have advanced research’s needs. I’m sure I’m not telling anybody anything they don’t know but that is the context here. Neoliberalism, just trying to get an understanding and you see it written in a lot of different places, but getting an understanding about what that is from the point of view of an ideology or a governmentality a policy framework, and the sustainable … approach. Now, drawing from … development literature, been using it a little bit in the Northern Territory, and central Australia, Jocelyn Davis and others have used it, it’s not as though it’s community development but it’s more of a dis… round up approach, but … saying these are the three different … which I am looking at in approaching my work. I’m … doing … …, … case study methodology, and that is important from the point of view of understanding the context of looking at things in situ. In doing that in terms of the place being electronics, region, and within that … so we’re looking at an organisation, … pretty much … access, … documentation, Indigenous land use agreement, all the kind of … that, northern … the … community development, mainly a plethora of government and research and community consultants who have gone through over the last 20 or so years, and the guys are a bit sick of sitting down and talking about these things, from a … and … perspective. And I’ve been going through a lot of their documentation and pulling that out and mapping that as an evidence base as much as talking to people on the ground. Then the idea being once I learn, so that’s one page, I think … another …. And also a private Indigenous business …. The case. Now … with Aboriginal people my main focus is government policy so while we’re in this context my main focus is about how government policy engages with Aboriginal people in terms of economic development. they have an aspiration to … for agenda items for the peak group, there are the subgroups that make up that … on development. When you pull that apart in terms of their documentation and talking to them really about how they get support for going back onto country, engaging … That doesn’t necessarily mean living on country but it means essentially working in more of a country based role, engaging with their culture and sharing that … So that’s the sort of thing, government talking about economic development within those different context, particularly about mainstream jobs and business, one that I keep hearing from Aboriginal people on the ground which is supported by the literature, a lot of …, it’s more about a livelihood with … …. Economies by sort of livelihood … Then the idea being to take that generalisations from the region that I’m working in … policy and look at developing a correction, a … more broadly across Northern Australia, … generalisations but … from this area. From this area, the generalisation I’ve learnt from the Wet Tropics is how … … … are the generalisations that can improve policy. Governments tend to take a wider … … general approach to policy setting so you can actually argue the case, it’s not just about the Wet Tropics, but some of these issues follow across other areas, and you go in … get a much more stronger evidence base for arguing about policy change. There hasn’t been any more work done in the Wet Tropics region in terms of economic development, … stable livelihoods, there’s been stuff … Northern Territory and the … work done in the Wet Tropics so that’s unique in its own self, and they’re keen to engage work with us through a partnership with the Cairns Institute.

The third thing in relation to economical is in terms of that second part, the Indigenous Heritage project, it was … funded, working with Allan … on contact research as part of this, and taking obviously some of the learnings I’m getting from my PhD, but … a discussion paper which is much more, not theoretical but …, what Aboriginal people in the Wet Tropics region want in terms of management, a greater say in the management of the Wet Tropics region, and what they want it in terms of the economic benefits that might … from that, and write it up in a discussion paper that we’re starting a process of … Allan called it structured negotiation, but basically supporting the local Aboriginal people to actually enter into a negotiation with government. Do we writing the discussion paper based on their information, knowledge and the like, they see …, and then working with them, engaging in negotiations about what their aspirations might be, … might change the way it works. Because one of the things we see when you look at it, … like the one we’ve got on the Wet Tropics where you’ve got World Heritage listing and you’ve got all these national parks and you’ve got a lot of research going on, all these values that are … internationally renowned, people come here for … There’s actually a lot of people working and making a living out of this, there is Aboriginal people working and making a living out of this, and most of the money’s actually going to maintenance, going into … So national parks has got their rangers, you’ve got Wet Tropics …, you’ve got research …, you’ve got rainforest … going on, and very little involvement by the Aboriginal people. Even though Indigenous language … it says that they’re supposed to tick off on national park planning, they’re supposed to tick off on financing, they’re supposed to be involved in the whole consultation about all of these sorts of activities, they are actually not really … effectively engaged … And most engagement is … … way they work with people. So that’s the context of … discussion paper. Supporting and advocate politically, for greater engagement in the region in terms of … values and then the … … and so even though government …, business is mainstream jobs, what they’re really talking about is yes, there may be opportunities for tourism businesses but that’s pretty much, there’s some .. .players in that game. There are a lot of opportunities … important, government management of the area … to government. Governance jobs …, …. Aren’t supported for the work …. Legislation on the native title examination as well as just one … to manage those sorts of activities. Or the … or productive development to negotiate with … All those are opportunities that they see they can get greater economic engagement, community … to work on country for livelihood, they currently aren’t effectively engaged. And one of the … is the governance of the region, the way that government governs itself and also their own capacity in terms of governance. Because a lot of organisations have been asked … … sit down and work out what they want. And they haven’t actually ever been … practice, brought back, governance … and that’s also a requirement to do … traditional owners, and why they’re around … …

So just to finish up, a few references. Neoliberalism, … these are very general but neoliberalism, I was reading about it and it often talks about it in Michaela’s stuff and you see it there, you see it talked about a bit more generally, I was involved in discussions where it’s getting talked about a fair bit in terms of post politics and the whole of … So I need to go back and get a clearer understanding in my own mind about what it was in terms of an ideology or a governmentality so I have a picture of … neoliberalism and this sort of governmentality, … and … I found … very useful. Again is a… Elspeth sent me a paper that I think goes back to some of the roots of neoliberalism and pulled it apart and it talks about … in terms of colours, presentation, asking a question and … and Patrick … probably wouldn’t like me to put his book there on neoliberalism because he doesn’t mention the word in his book, it’s all about the public sector management of … and some of you would know Patrick I am sure. I don’t know if anyone’s read his book. And looks at new public sector management is driven out of this sort of governmentality neoliberal … as a way to … contact it… useful references for me to get a broader understanding. The same with livelihoods and then case planning your theory and I enjoyed your paper, Michael, … in Arnhem Land and would relate that to my experiences working in Cape York and Torres Straits … generally … intended. This gives a … understanding of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people and the western world and how this sort of … the relationship between those … doesn’t effectively see much. For the engagement to work effectively in the end, Aboriginal people tend to be marginalised and having their view of the world seen and often things don’t progress or don’t happen, and those are the, that post … theory, Indigenous methodologies have also, things that I have learned that have informed the paper, I’ve tried to engage around this, is the work that I’m doing. So they’re the three … … phase in terms of the arguments for … working within a context and a place and I’m using … … economic point of view. I hope that’s useful. Michaela asked me to talk a bit about what my work was and I thought I’d try to get you a few slides and talk about it in that context and I’ll leave it at that.

MS Thanks Jim, really fantastic, maybe we’ll have discussion and questions now in relation to that as I know you raised a lot of issues that have been coming up with …, the ground up discussions we’ve been having for this whole week … ourselves. So yeah. Any questions to Jim or to.

*0:28:00 – The remainder of the audio recording was reasonably good audibility.*

MH Jim, Mike Harrison. I just wonder whether you’ve had a look at the in the context of the work you’re doing, in the work topics there, would you have a look at some of the so called joint management models that apply on World Heritage sites here in the Northern Territory like Kakadu. There’s been a fair bit of work done over the years on the extent to which that’s a true or not true joint management arrangement. Obviously there’s a whole structure and process in place there. And there’s also a couple of smaller parts here, the Gurig National Park up on Coburg Peninsular was established back in the 1980s and it’s supposedly a joint management arrangement as well and there’s probably some other layering in there; obviously a lot of the issues that you’re talking about in terms of what Indigenous people’s views are about what sort of economic development they want on their country and the mix and match between mainstream economic development and livelihoods is alive and kicking certainly in at least those two places.

JT Just to pick up one of the things that you were saying; I think there’s a whole another couple of PhDs in … this area around the management issues. And … PhD has been a pretty broad canvas so now I’m focused down a bit more around the economic employment or business opportunities in some of those areas. But I pick up …, people that are working around … here, I don’t know if you know who the people are and I’ve got a mental block, but the CSIRO is working around that, we’ve also got … PhD … analysis with some of the stuff in the …, but I have taken those names there and I’ll pass them on to you as well.

MH But in terms of jobs and economic development there’s certainly been plenty happen in certainly those two Top End parts that have had some similarity in terms of country at least.

JT Yeah sounds good.

MC I’ve got a question. When you were talking about the useful readings you’ve done in the neoliberal area and the ways in which governments are changing, are you able to say anything about how those readings or those insights actually changes what you think about when you’re doing the case studies or the interviews or what you’re thinking about when you’re talking to government?

JT Yeah. First of all it sort of made me aware of the broader … First of all you get an understanding that there’s sort of this ideological … view of neoliberalism and that’s sort of been steamrolled around the world, even in China people have got the neoliberal ways of operating. So that’s understanding that there is a broader framework … in the world, that I wasn’t really aware of even though I was a neoliberal practitioner in my time in politics. … to a certain extent. And on the liberal values that I from a Western … I’ve got. You know, express through my values and it’s making me more aware of those … The other thing is from that … with the governmentalities about how those teach my … user world then rolled out in the way that you know, agencies and there was a good paper sent around by Alistair, I think … the way that Caring for Country worked. I wasn’t aware of that in that structure. All I was really thinking about, was how do I support Aboriginal people who get these aspirations and not really thinking about the whole, the way that we think about the world … , the way that people engage with all the history, is actually … can be driven by these broader structures within society or within government, and that’s given me an understanding that I didn’t have before. And therefore one of the … I’m thinking about is how do I make that more explicit for people that I’m engaging with, whether they’re policy makers, also if they’re Aboriginal people as well. and I sort of found this view of the world where I’ve spent a long time wanting to fix things and I’m no doubt fixing things but I am about trying to understanding things and then help other people understanding things; and then it’s up to people to make decisions in their own rights about how they might want to move forward and that might be in terms of their own world view or it might be in terms of how they engage with another world view in terms of the Aboriginal space. Does that answer your question?

MC No that’s a good answer thank you.

MS Hi Matt, I think you’ve just joined on the phone?

Matt I have yes.

MS Hi, Jim’s just given us a presentation about some of his work and we’re just discussing it.

JT The only think Mike I think that’s important from where I’ve got to … starting to do my field work and I’ve been reading and what not and most colonial period stuff was just, … is an Anglo Saxon politician’s understanding of …, but just going out and working with leadership … with these organisations but also talking to people on the ground; I’ve spoken to a lot of people on the ground over the years, but people are pretty fed up in Queensland. I don’t know what it’s like in the Northern Territory with … coming out on the … and the like. And they have through native title examinations through a lot of work, they’ve been consulted around pastoral … , documented all this information. So I’ve been conscious of not actually trying to focus on the interviews … but trying to think about how it might add value to them in what they’re wanting to fill in knowledge gaps and that’s sort of another thing that deep down …, how they’ve brought a frame of, … post-colonial period sort of informing one …

LR Jim it’s Linda. Can I just ask you a question because I wrote something down and I’m not sure whether it’s actually what you said. You said one of the things you were hoping to do was develop governance support to help the different groups, Indigenous groups interact with the government departments they are dealing with. Was that what you actually said?

JT My … is a slither of the work that sort of stays, the aspirations that I’ve worked with is starting to be developed through the Cairns Institute partnership with the … people. We had them here yesterday, they’ve got a steering group and … here, and I … some other … researchers. They’ve identified that strengthening their own governance is important to them achieving their aspirations. It’s not, there are issues around what the roles and responsibilities are at different levels. So they’ve been forced into structures that are western liberal, neo-liberal … how native title frameworks where there are different governance structures. That’s great, it … within their own groups and recognise the need to actually work through those issues and one of the things that we’re talking to them about in terms of the institute and some of the things that I’m obviously observing in my research, is how we might go about supporting … … That might not happen through my PhD but it might happen through some other work that we at a university more broadly … partnership. Does that make sense?

LR It does, it’s just that it’s a fair number of people here have been picking up on different aspects of that too and because governance is such a broad term, it sometimes, everyone’s talking about doing governance support but they’re often talking about doing quite different things. Whether it’s working with communities to identify how they might set up the appropriate ways of interacting with the outside, the white world, or whether it’s actually working with them in terms of sorting out their relationships and their ways that they may want to organise themselves, or whether it’s helping to understand the structures that they’re interacting with and the different levels of government and private sector and the processes that happen in terms of approvals. So yeah there’s a lot of different things when you talk about governance support. I understand that’s not what you’re doing but. Yeah.

JT One of the things I’m picking up from what you’re saying there is that often government would resource them to do their accountability governance but they won’t, they don’t support … who actually … their own … in terms of the governance of how they want to work within the structure they’ve been forced into in terms of their relationship with … And that’s something I can’t necessarily spend a lot of time on in my PhD apart from making the observation of that and working with people as much as I can, to try and help sort out that. And … identify the need to talk through some of those issues. And just … example, there’s a quarry in a particular native title area which three broad language groups were involved in that determination. That … is conflict because they’ve rolled into place through the native title … but … thought out how they would manage their distribution of those resources. So they sit there and there’s conflict around that. Similarly, about how the ranger programs, who get more … , are their desire for my work to get involved in economic development but they haven’t actually had the opportunity to think about how that works within their own … logical understanding of what they want to do in terms of the opportunities that are arising for them, if that makes sense.

LR Yeah it does.

MH? And I think that example’s a good one too Jim because there’s not much discussion that happens with those groups in terms of active and passive investment strategies so our royalties might be used to build a whole range of other things other than people just getting royalty distributions and that’s an area that is certainly here in the NT; with a number of organisations that’s only starting to really strongly emerge in the last five to ten years whereas previously it was very much about the passive distribution of income from mining or other enterprises occurring on country.

JT In terms of that and I agree with you, the thing with our … is … and this is one I’m floating around in my head, is to actually just try and also remember that to focus on what’s actually happening and what people are saying, what the phenomena is, and can also be, being inducting not deducting about anything I’m doing in the world. So I’ve got this … and respect them but letting things emerge out of that and not judging it in a way, because I think some of the things that, you know, royalties …, if I was in that line of argument … or nobody questioned this money coming to me, there’s a whole lot of welfare and a whole lot of … issues that flood into that. So there are issues around that. And I think it all needs to be thought through in terms of the way that people have passive … them but it’s not really passive, if in your own world you … country and … have the money so. It’s probably … all the social problems that are in existence in some of these communities that then lead to a whole lot of other issues around liberal based human rights and other world views that make that very complex.

LR Actually Him there was a really interesting talk here last week, I think Jan went to it, from one of the Maori leaders from the South Island. Did anybody else go to that?

MC I heard him the time before when he came, yeah, … O’Reagan. Is that …?

LR Yeah.

MS …

LR Yeah, … It was actually about how, they’ve actually had all the … had all the Maori tribes.

*End of Recording.*