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**How does the work you are doing relate to *governance*?**

Like Trevor and Juli, I am working with the GroundUp team at the Northern Institute at CDU. We are working in five communities on a project called the **Indigenous Governance and Leadership Development Project**. My own particular focus is Ramingining in East Arnhemland. The description and objectives of our project pivot on phrases which include the word 'governance' or its allies: ‘increasing understanding of the principles of governance and leadership’, ‘streamlining and amalgamating existing governance groups’, ‘increasing capacity’, ‘effectively engaging with government’, ‘active involvement in service delivery’, etc.

## What interesting or different insight have you gained about *governance* in your recent research?

I puzzle over the word. One way I approach it is to try and be clear what the difference is, between say 'governance' and 'management'. But this question reminds me of a story. Many years ago there was an engaging weatherman on ABC television in Victoria. His name was Edwin Maher. He encouraged conversation with his viewers and I once sent in a question. 'What is the difference between patchy rain and scattered showers?' His answer was, 'We aren't sure but you can see it on the ground.' Maybe that's the answer to the governance/management question too.

Here on the ground I notice something whenever I try and engage people in conversations that I think are about governance. One of two things happens and I liken each to the movement of a camera lens. In one case people react as though they are *panning a lens,* swinging side to side*.* They say something about the past or the future. They are locating the conversation in a landscape. In the other case people *zoom in*. They immediately bring up a particular issue that represents a personal governance problem. Managing some aspect of their own or their family's life is difficult for them at that moment and they want to talk about it in the context of the conversation I have started.

## What theoretical or practical problem to do with *governance* are you engaging with at the moment?

I'm not trying to think theoretically at this time, but here is a practical issue, a story to illustrate what I said above.

We are planning for an elder's forum next week. I hand the flier about it to someone and point out a few of the bits of information on it. I say, it's an opportunity for the elders to talk about how they can have a räl-manapanmirri (united) voice in the future of Ramingining. The person responds by zooming in. They tell me they have a hole in their bathroom floor and they can't stay in the house because they are afraid their grandchildren might get hurt. Or they tell me about the prices at ALPA, or how they have to pay $300 just to get in the queue of the cars at the mechanics workshop and have it looked at.

I am thinking that these people can't *pan*, they have to *zoom*, because the issues they are dealing with are like obstacles they have to get around, in order to get through their day. I'm also thinking that the day to day actions we take in managing our lives and business is just that, management. And that the habits, values, rules, long term goals and policies which determine how we make the decisions which determine our actions is at least part of what we mean by governance. 'Good management' would imply that the management actions were consistent with long term goals, rules and policies.

'Good governance' would imply that habits, values, rules and policies were consistent with long term goals. Round here we continually see examples of what would be 'bad management' and 'bad governance' according to these definitions.