Key Outcomes Report of a Willandra Repatriation Forum held in Mildura 17-18 February 2015



Collated by Michael Williams - Michael Williams & Associates Pty Ltd
Natural Resource Management Strategists and Facilitators - Sydney
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Acknowledgements

This key outcomes report has been prepared and collated by Michael Williams, Principal of Michael Williams & Associates Pty Ltd, the independent facilitator of the forum. The report has been based on notes of the forum kindly supplied by Steve Meredith, Carla Rogers, Olwen Beazley (OEH) and Jess Ford (ANU).

The report has been written on a no-attribution basis that was explained at the start of the forum. This was designed to encourage participants to exchange their views in a frank and fearless way as the sometimes sensitive issues of repatriation of ancestral remains and associated cultural material of immense importance to the Traditional Owners and of universal values as part of the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area were explored.

Photos taken by Danielle Hanifin (Arts Mildura) and kindly provided by Office of Environment and Heritage.

Day 1

Willandra Repatriation Forum – an introduction

A repatriation forum was held from 17-18 February 2015 in Mildura to bring together Willandra Traditional Custodians, scientists, museum curators and NSW Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) staff to further discuss the return of ancestral remains including those of Mungo Man. These ancestral remains are mostly held (as at the date of the forum) at Australian National University (ANU), Canberra.

Over 60 people attended the two-day forum kindly hosted by the three Traditional Tribal Groups (3TTG) and Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians – Barkindji/Paakantyi, Mutthi Mutthi and Ngiyampaa - who are providing the leadership and advice on the most appropriate approach for the ancestral remains "to come home".



A copy of the forum agenda is outlined in Appendix 1 and a list of all those who attended the forum is outlined in Appendix 2.

The forum was just but one in a lengthy series of meetings, workshops, planning sessions, individual consultations and forums over many years that have consistently requested the return of ancestors to their rightful resting place. This particular forum was designed to provide clarity and greater detail as to what repatriation means in practice. It also continued the collaboration with 3TTG / Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians to ensure that their views, cultural protocol requirements and decisions are followed in the complex tasks and practices of repatriation. Moreover this forum was also the first opportunity in many years for the 3TTG / Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians and all those individuals and institutions intimately involved in the ancestral remains' removal, scientific analyses and curation to gather and work through the repatriation issues in a generous and collegiate spirit.

Purpose of the Forum

The purpose of the forum was, on day 1, to establish and develop a shared understanding of all the various aspects involved with the repatriation of Willandra ancestral remains from both a cultural and scientific perspective; and on day 2, to discuss future repatriation options. On the afternoon of the first day many participants travelled to Lake Mungo National Park where further informal discussions on repatriation were advanced.

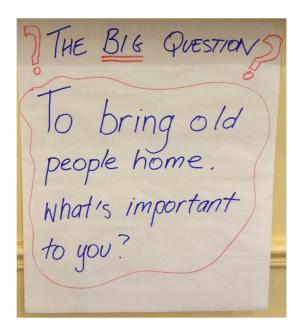
Welcome to Country

As the forum was held in Mildura on Latje Latje country, Aunty Janine Wilson provided a warm welcome to her country and wished the meeting great success. The independent facilitator Michael Williams thanked Aunty Janine for her warm welcome and acknowledged country and all Elders past, present and future.

Session 1 – A big question – what's important to you?

The forum developed a suite of protocols for the meeting which were placed onto butchers paper for all to see to remind participants of the way they wanted their forum to be facilitated – let's work together showing and giving respect, let's listen carefully and share our knowledge, let's respect our diverse views, let's not interrupt one another and above all let's focus on bringing them home. These protocols all featured prominently.

Given that a long line of meetings and previous forums had clearly said, "we want our old people home", to open the forum a big question was asked "to bring our old people home, what's really important to you?"



This bold broad question raised plenty of interest – below we have collated the responses based on the re-occurring themes.

Bring our old people back - now

- Scientists have had enough time. Scientists don't need (the ancestral remains) any longer
- What's most important focus on what is necessary to bring them home, we don't want to slow it down
- Time for less talk, more action
- Just bring them back home they need to come home



Its time for the Universities and Museums to work with us and provide resources for the repatriation

- It is time for universities to step up with resources
- Scientists can help us in sharing the story of why Mungo Man and Mungo Woman are so important
- Question How can ANU help? Response What about stepping up and helping us in a practical way to protect our people
- Scientists have become famous on the back of our ancestors
- What financial gain have universities got from our remains (we need benefits too)?

Universities and Museums want to work together and assist the community in the repatriation

- ANU apologizes for all the pain that we have caused by holding your ancestral remains at the university for such a long time. We want to make that right
- ANU takes its responsibilities (in relation to repatriation) seriously. We can help with resources to achieve the repatriation vision
- We too want more action and work together to assist in a practical way and especially to assist in permanent protection of your ancestral remains

- ANU College of Asia & the Pacific is working on a significant education and employment strategy that should be able to assist in future research opportunities in close collaboration with the community. We want to partner with your community to create educational opportunity and vitality for the community
- The Museum of Australia (Canberra) is keen to work with the community to find out what you want and how the Museum of Australia can help
- The Museum of Australia might be able to help with in-kind contribution e.g. training, travelling exhibitions/stories etc
- The Australian Museum (Sydney) may be able to help with training, museums can help share your story and communicate how important the ancestral remains are, in an acceptable way?
- We, scientists have a responsibility to help, happy to help to work together to form a proposal for funding
- We believe together we could form a strong and powerful alliance to assist the repatriation service and more



The cultural protocols for the repatriation journey from where they are (Canberra) back home is really important

- Journey home should be done in a proper way, make sure transport is done well
- Should be in a casket and brought home in proper manner
- Set things up and make sure transport is well equipped
- When (remains) get here (home) make sure we have a place to store them until we
 make a decision to put them in the ground or not. The 3TTG / Willandra Repatriation
 Traditional Custodians to decide its their country their home
- Bring them back with proper cultural protocols who have we got that can do that?
- On the journey make sure proper smoking ceremony is done

- TOs must be involved in packing and bringing (remains) home with NPWS/WHA involved for security
- TOs need to make the journey with their ancestral remains bring them to put them at rest
- Acknowledge the archaeologists for the knowledge and for telling how important these remains really are
- We need to ensure respect from the media if there is media they need to know that we don't want to talk on sensitive cultural issues
- He (Mungo man) was a clever man he was covered in red ochre
- You can't touch remains if (you have) not been through lore.
- Who have we got who could handle the remains we must have correct cultural protocols to bring them back home



We need a place for sharing and learning

- Opportunity to bring two cultures together, to acknowledge the wrongs done by white people, opportunity for a special monument, the remains will be safe underground, memory of the old people and Aboriginal deaths should be honoured (raised in the context of massacres)
- The ability to keep learning a keeping place
- If we don't have a cultural place for Aboriginal people where will they learn so they don't forget about their responsibility
- Let's walk together in education Mungo Man found Jim (Bowler) not the other way round, let's tap him (Jim Bowler) on the shoulder so the whole story can be told
- Scientists can help us in sharing the story of why Mungo Man and Mungo Woman are so important
- Opportunity to bring two cultures together, to acknowledge the wrongs done by white people, opportunity for a special monument, safe underground, memory of the old people and Aboriginal deaths honoured (raised in the context of massacres)



Final resting place – where?

- World Heritage Area should be separate from National Parks, bring them home to World Heritage Area but need a separate office (ancestral remains should not be in a room in the Visitors Centre where the public go - World Heritage Area mob need to "step-up"
- Revisit the Joulni proposal near where the old people were found. Safe and secure away from the public
- Already a place (for burial) out at Joulni
- (Ancestral remains) shouldn't be in (Mungo) Visitors Centre National Parks/World
 Heritage staff should be looking after Elders (ancestral remains) but not in the same
 office
- Put Elders (ancestral remains) back in their country, have World Heritage Rangers on country for security
- We are on World Heritage List but get very little funding this is the most important place in the World with the cremation (of Mungo Man)

Final resting place - reburial?

- Back in the ground as a final resting place
- People should be put back where we found them, in the ground
- Returning home to how he (Mungo Man) was when he was taken
- Don't want ancestors in a vault, put them in the ground. What is so complicated about reburial? If not in the ground then it's not a reburial. Already a place (for burial) out at loulni
- Keeping them in a box is not a final resting place putting them in the ground is the final resting place

Final resting place – a keeping place?

- When they (ancestral remains) arrive here, we need a place to store them
- We need something to bring them home to, to protect them
- We need a special place to bring them home that is only known to Traditional Owners
- The ability to keep learning need a keeping place
- Keeping place but back in ground where people came from
- They (ancestral remains) tell us how long we have been on this land, they help teach us how to survive in this landscape
- Bring the keeping place/centre proposal back to life, re-ignite the conversations, we belong to the remains
- It would have to be very secure, protected from the elements, in a keeping place but in the sand

What about a cultural – learning – education centre?

- A cultural centre for Aboriginal people to learn
- Current economic climate, hard to get dollars for large visitors/cultural centres
- A grandiose keeping place incorporating a visitors centre will require a very large investment. Unlikely that such funding would be available especially in the short term.
 We probably need to think of a more modest proposal if a keeping place is the preferred option.
- Maybe better to have a cultural centre separate from any keeping place

Temporary resting place – while 3TTG and Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians make a final decision

- Bring them back home they belong at home but there is (currently) no place to put them so need a place to protect and keep them safe until we decide where to put the remains back in the ground
- When (remains) get here (home) make sure we have a place to store until we make a decision to put in the ground or not. The 3TTGs to decide its their country their home

Should repatriation allow access to the ancestral remains for learning, education and scientific purposes?

- Could be possible to extract more DNA for later research. New DNA sequence techniques becoming available. Complete genome sequence of ancestral remains (WLH 4) found very close to Mungo Man have been undertaken and published
- Application of technology issues in health, disease, and susceptibility to disease.
 New technology could assist in answering questions like how does the immune system evolve over time, why does diabetes develop over time? This work wasn't possible previously. Over the years (if access were available) no doubt could provide more information and knowledge
- Access protocols need to be developed and approved by WRTC and 3TTG if current ancestral remains are allowed to be accessed and should be put in place for any future access to any future

We the community want jobs, training and resources

 We need the repatriation process to provide jobs, training and resources so we can tell the story in our way

A visit to Lake Mungo National Park within the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area

After lunch on day 1 many of the participants travelled by bus out to Mungo National Park to the Lake Mungo Visitors Centre within the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area. The visit was an important opportunity for a more informal exchange of views in relation to repatriation and World Heritage management.







Day 2

Developing a suggested way forward – what are the pros and cons of the suggested repatriation options

After a recap of the key outcomes of day 1 the forum split into small groups each assisted by a small group facilitator to explore the pros and cons of the two main options that had been advanced on day 1 – reburial or a keeping place. Given that many participants had suggested the need for learning, scientific research and education as part of the repatriation outcome, this option was also part of the small group discussions. Each small group presented the outcomes of their discussions and these are tabulated according to the small groups below.

Small group 1 - facilitated by Dan Rosendahl and Olwen Beazley (OEH)

Options	ns Good Things Concerns		Ideas/things to talk about	
Reburial	 Bringing them home Respectful No future research Spiritual connection Put them to rest Positive flow on effect for science and traditional owners collaborating Iconic 	Stable Landscape	Men's Business	
Keeping Place	 Potential future access opportunities for future research Empowering Traditional Owners to tell their own stories Keeping place on country reflecting the WHA to small scale Not for Mungo Man and Mungo Woman 	Ownership (tenure of land)		
Other	 Scientific Research Area – research on Country Not for research on Mungo Lady and Mungo Man Work together (Scientists and Traditional Owners) International recognition Opportunities for Aboriginal People to tell their story – do the research 		 Research Agreement/Research Treaty Evidence – research facility 	



Small group 2 facilitated by Rob Evitt and Tracey Avery (OEH)

Small group 2 facilitated by Rob Evitt and Tracey Avery (OEH)				
Options	Good Things	Concerns	Ideas/things to talk about	
Reburial	 Bringing people together Ceremony/ celebration Teaching younger generation cultural practices/business Best thing about reburial is that we are putting their spirits to rest Subterranean reburial place, they are on country, in the ground 	• Concerns over security	 Part of previous PoM for WLRWHA which informed the Joulni PoM needs to be revisited Whatever happens, plans need to be finalised 	
Keeping Place		 It comes back to dollars, how much money is available Location Construction of a keeping place is top priority ahead of a cultural centre/visitor centre – keeping place is more important 	 Younger generation need to be employed to run the keeping place Keeping place should be built on WH lands Part of previous PoM for WLRWHA which informed the Joulni PoM needs to be revisited Was always proposed for Joulni Offers were made in the past, such as in-kind contributions and 	

Other	We need to establish	• The 3TTG are entitled to	resources Research centre could be attached but for 3TTG only or with permission Cremation
Other	partnerships to move forward Need to look at this as a business model, in a business case scenario Socio-economic independence for all our people	 The STTG are entitled to compensation Landowners got money, TOs got nothing It was originally agreed that each tribal group was to get their own land AWHIN is another body that needs to be involved. AWHIN is a potential partner/support You must be connected to country to genealogy and through Elders Elders to get their own land to construct keeping place/reburial place Concerns about handling remains needs to be done in culturally appropriate way There's rich cultural heritage on the ground but who has benefitted from this – only NPWS, OEH, landholders and scientists 	 Mungo Lady was cremated Cultural reasons for cremation There may be different considerations for what to do with Mungo Lady WRTC to consider PoM for WLRWHA A modest solution in terms of funding available. This means the goal is more achievable How can TOs benefit from cultural heritage including land and ancestral remains Need letter written to lobby for compensation Need to encapsulate all the issues



Small group 3 facilitated by Carla Rogers (OEH)

Options	oup 3 facilitated by Carla Good Things	Concerns	Ideas/things to talk about
Reburial Keeping Place	Should be buried where they came from, all other remains except Mungo Man and Mungo Lady Bring Mungo Man and Mungo Lady back to life, show respect	 People disappearing into the landscape Security from grave robbers Duty of care to protect remains They will come back out again because they haven't finished talking to us Done in a way that there is no damage done to the place 	 In touch with the landscape The energy of spirit Where nature and people
	 A place where people can go and pay respect Come to educate us all There is a consensus coming out offering help, a focal point 	 It will take time, significant factors that will affect approach Who you take the money from spiritual/respect 	 come together The energy comes to life, something special Mungo Man and Mungo Lady hold the carriage of the story We need to move quickly Go for a modest design of a keeping place so that we can move quickly A research/science centre could be elsewhere To heal the situation, Mungo Man and Mungo Lady need to be in a place with respect The keeping place may have a role in future research Mungo Man and Mungo Lady to be treated separately DNA research A learning centre Should it be a memorial so people can come to show respect? Keep learning centre separate from keeping place. Don't mix business and teaching and burial together.
Other		 How long will things stay at the museum, what's the timing to bring home from Canberra? There has to be a time limit Everything has to be done in a spiritual manner 	



Small group 4 facilitated by Rob Quirk (OEH)

Small group 4 facilitated by Rob Quirk (OEH)			
Options	Good Things	Concerns	Ideas/things to talk about
Reburial	 A continuation of traditional practice They are going back in the ground Put ancestors at peace Spirituality Need to bring them home 	 Erosion of the dune may mean burial is reexposed Security - could the remains be stolen/disturbed? If a future generation want to do further work, will we lose this opportunity 	 Secret location for reburial Murray Black collection
Keeping Place	 Cultural focus providing safety, security and learning A shrine of remembrance for people to come, learn and remember A place to go 	Cannot have repatriation without a keeping place focus at the same time	 Research hub A place to bring people For new finds and learning Narrangerii – 300 held, Commonwealth report. Aboriginal Archaeological Review There are examples e.g. Kimberley Law and culture centre and one in Torres Strait We have to have 100% control



What were the highlights of the forum – some individual responses

At the end of day 2 participants were asked to speak on their highlights of the forum. The following is a summary of individual responses.

- Ancestors have bought us together, white people too, to make a decision
- First day of forum was full of peace and harmony we are coming together
- I learnt a lot from scientists talking about Mungo Man
- Our culture is our spirituality
- We have been given opportunity to learn and share from each other, education is so important
- On the first day of forum we had a show of real unity
- The conversations are bringing everyone together, its nice being with a bunch of people that love Mungo – gives a real sense of camaraderie
- All Aboriginal people are born scientists we got it from the land

- Reconnecting, learning from each other
- First day of forum we were walking together on the land, there was quite a presence,
 land and people coming together
- As you walk on land we came together
- Constructive, everyone coming together
- The real issues are around the scale of burial simple or more elaborate
- Interesting views feel people coming together through the process
- It's been great, got a few issues ironed out, we got agreement
- Its great sitting here with the three tribal groups, listening to our aunties and uncles,
 listening to the scientists too and knowing that the scientists support what we are
 doing
- Being exciting to be around old mates and friends, love listening to old stories, been good to get out and look around
- Glad there has been a lot come out of the last two days, Aboriginal people have had their say, hats off to Isabel McBryde (from ANU)
- Walking together on country in a spiritual way
- Inspiring to see scientists and Elders talking together hearing peoples different views,
 we (scientists) were made to feel welcome by the TOs it was really inspiring dialogue
- Going out to Mungo hearing spiritual values being there with people on the land getting our (uni/scientists) mob sorted out, getting us in a supportive direction
- Seeing positive spirit that I have not seen in donkey's years, we have achieved a lot.
 Hopefully a new beginning
- An emotional occasion for me after 48 years. I never imagined that we would be sitting here today. A cross-cultural collaboration our strength and bond has survived. We have survived and overcome tribulations. Health has emerged as a joy and smile on people's faces. The spirit of Mungo Man and Mungo Lady is alive and well. A passing on of the baton. The spirit of Mungo will rise again with a new generation of young Aboriginal and white people working together.

So what were the key outcomes of the forum?

What we are saying

We the Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians and 3TTG should make all the decisions on the repatriation process

We want the ancestral remains bought home as soon as possible and in a culturally appropriate manner

We want the Australian Government, NSW Government, Universities and Museums to help us and to bring commitment and resources including financial resources to get the repatriation completed

We recognise that learning and education are important opportunities for the future. In partnership with museums and universities, we should be able to tell our story and present our culture to visitors

We haven't decided exactly where and how our ancestral remains should be repatriated. We are still talking together to work out if a reburial or some kind of modest keeping place is the best option. We are still working out if there should be access to the ancestral remains and if we need a temporary but secure place to store our ancestral remains while we come to a final decision

Appendix 1: Agenda - Willandra Repatriation Forum

Forum venue for day 1 and day 2: Grand Hotel Mildura (Quality Hotel Mildura Grand – Seventh Street Mildura)

Dates: Tuesday 17th February and 18th February 2015

Purpose of Forum: Establish and develop a shared understanding of all the various aspects involved with the repatriation of Willandra ancestral remains from both a cultural and scientific perspective (day 1) and discuss future options (day 2)

Independent Facilitator: Michael Williams - Michael Williams & Associates Pty Ltd - Sydney

On arrival: Monday 16th February 2015

Meet at dining room of Commodore Hotel (intersection of Deakin Avenue and Seventh St Mildura) at 6pm for informal conversation and dinner.

Day 1: 8:45am-12 noon Tuesday 17th February 2015

Time	Agenda
8:45am	Registration, tea and coffee on arrival
9:00am	Welcome to Country, opening, purpose and context of forum
9:30am	Introductions and forum agenda – Michael Williams, Independent Facilitator
9:45am	When, how, where and under what circumstances will the Willandra ancestral remains be returned - a facilitated discussion including short sharp presentations on key information needs and key issues identified at the start of the forum
10:45am	Morning tea
11.15am	When, how, where and under what circumstances will the Willandra ancestral remains be returned – continued - a continuation of the facilitated discussion including short sharp presentations on key information needs and key issues identified at the start of the forum
11:45am	What have been the key messages from our discussions?
	Synthesis and distillation of key messages and shared information
11:55am	Thanks and close of day 1 of forum
	Logistics and planning for bus trip to Mungo
12:00pm	Board buses to Mungo and lunch on buses
1:30pm	Arrive at Mungo Lookout – informal discussions
3:00pm	Afternoon tea at Mungo Visitor Centre with landholders
4:30pm	Depart Mungo
7:00pm	Formal dinner at the Commodore Hotel

Day 2: 8:45am-1:00pm Wednesday 18th February 2015

Time	Agenda
8:45am	Tea and coffee on arrival
9:00am	Opening and purpose of day 2. Michael Williams
9:15am	Development of suggested way forward including options for repatriation of Willandra ancestral remains
10:30am	Morning tea
11:00am	Report back from each small group
11:45am	Bringing it all together, distillation and synthesis of key outcomes and achievements
12:15pm	Where to from here
12:45pm	Thanks and close of forum
1:00pm	Lunch

Appendix 2: Workshop participants & apologies

First name	Last name	Affiliation
Alf	Kelly Snr	WRTC – Mutthi Mutthi
Anne	McGrath	Historian & film maker
Beryl	Kennedy	WRTC - Ngiyampaa
Bree	Wakefield	Banoon Station
Carla	Rogers	OEH
Cheryl	Charles	Mutthi Mutthi
Clancey	Pappin	Gary and Cynthia Pappin's child
Claude	Mitchell	Paakantyi
Colin	MacGregor	Australian Museum
Cynthia	Pappin	Gary Pappin's wife
Damien	Kennedy	OEH
Dan	Rosendahl	OEH
Daryl	Pappin	OEH
Daryl	Reyland	WRTC – Mutthi Mutthi
David	Kaus	National Museum of Australia
David	Lambert	Griffith University
David	Smith	·
	Mitchell	WRTC - Ngiyampaa WRTC - Paakantyi
Doreen		· ·
Dwight	Pappin	Gary and Cynthia Pappin's child
Eric	Murray	Ngiyampaa
Gary	Pappin	Mutthi Mutthi
Geoff	Simpson	OEH
Harvey	Johnston	OEH
lan	Wakefield	Top Hut Station
Jean	Charles	WRTC – Mutthi Mutthi
Jeannette	Hope	Archaeologist & historian
Jessica	Ford	ANU
Jim	Bowler	Uni Melbourne
Jo	Gorman	OEH
Joan	Bowler	Attendee
Joan	Slade	WRTC - Ngiyampaa
Jodi	Charley	OEH
John	Mulvaney	ANU
Joyce	Smith	Mutthi Mutthi
Junette	Mitchell	Paakantyi
Kenny	Clark	OEH
Leanne	Mitchell	OEH
Lee	Burgess	National Museum of Australia
Lottie	Williams	WRTC - Paakantyi
Mal	Ridges	OEH
Marie	Mitchell	WRTC - Paakantyi
Martin	Westbrooke	Federation University - Ballarat
Mary	Pappin	WRTC – Mutthi Mutthi
Mary-Ann	Marton	WRTC - Paakantyi
Maureen	Reyland	WRTC - Mutthi
Maureen	Taylor	WRTC - Ngiyampaa
Michael	Williams	Independent Facilitator - Michael Williams & Associates Pty Ltd
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First name	Last name	Affiliation
Michael	Westaway	Griffith University
Mick	Kelly	Ngiyampaa
Mike	Pickering	National Museum of Australia
Molly	Walker	OEH
Myrtle	Pappin	Gary and Cynthia Pappin's child
Olwen	Beazley	OEH
Patricia	Winch	WRTC – Mutthi Mutthi
Peggy	Thomas	WRTC - Paakantyi
Phil	Gordon	Australian Museum
Rainer	Grun	ANU
Rex	Smith	WRTC - Paakantyi
Rex	Smith Jnr	WRTC - Paakantyi
Ricky	Handy	OEH
Rob	Quirk	OEH
Rob	Evitt	OEH
Roy	Kennedy	WRTC - Ngiyampaa
Simon	Haberle	ANU
Steve	Webb	Bond University
Steve	Meredith	OEH
Tanya	Charles	WRTC – Mutthi Mutthi
Thomas	Winch	Attendee
Tim	Denham	ANU
Tracey	Avery	OEH
Val	Kelly	Mutthi Mutthi
Veronica	Taylor	ANU
Vicki	Clark	Mutthi Mutthi
Warren	Clarke	OEH
Wilfred	Shawcross	ANU
Yarra	Pappin	Gary and Cynthia Pappin's child

WRTC – Willandra Repatriation Traditional Custodians

Apologies

First name	Last name	Affiliation
Isabel	McBryde	ANU
Jack	Fenner	ANU
John	Magee	ANU
Nicola	Stern	La Trobe University
Noel	Johnson	WRTC - Paakantyi
Steve	Millington	OEH