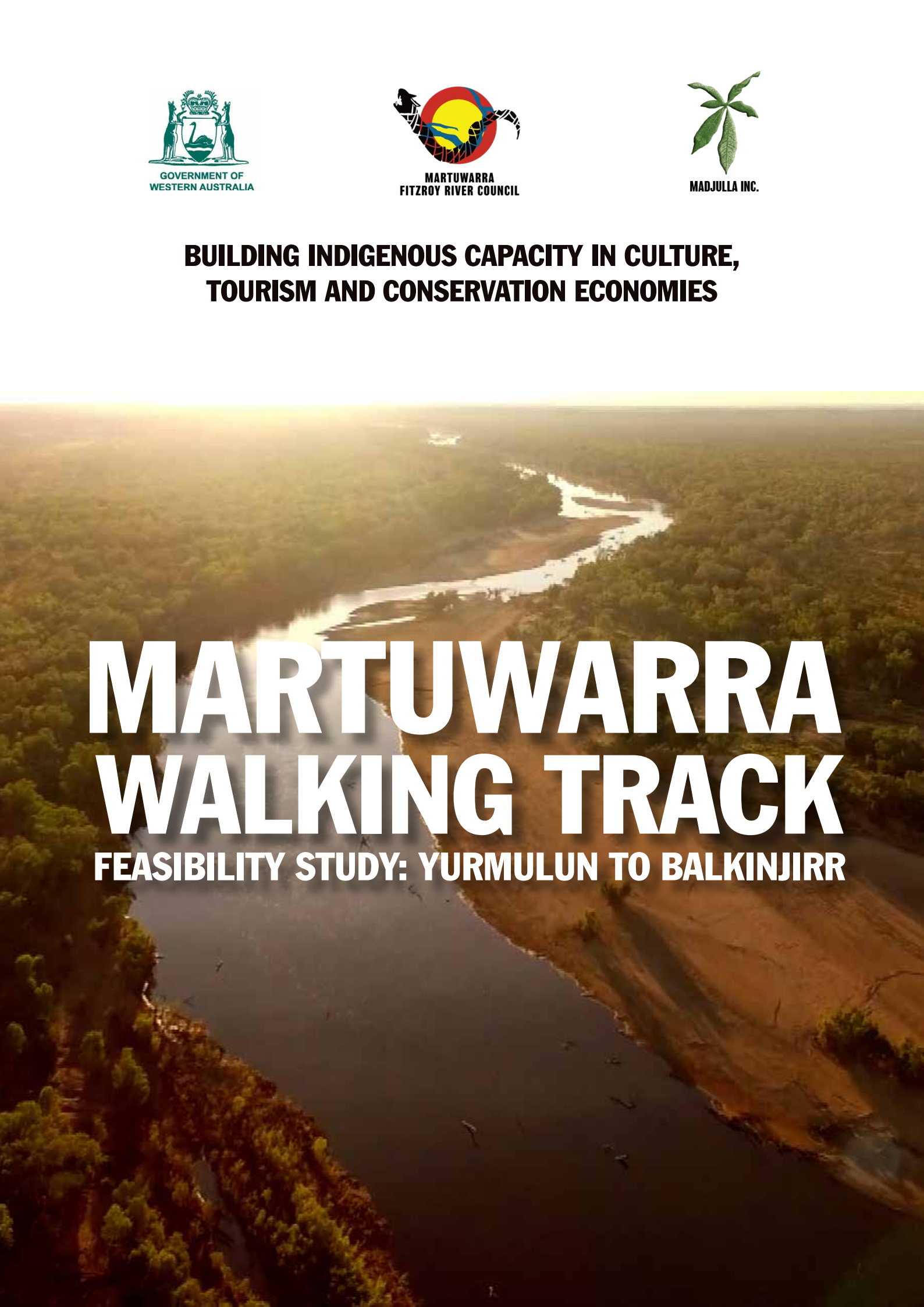




**BUILDING INDIGENOUS CAPACITY IN CULTURE,
TOURISM AND CONSERVATION ECONOMIES**

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a dense forest at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. The river reflects the light, and the surrounding forest is lush and green.

MARTUWARRA WALKING TRACK

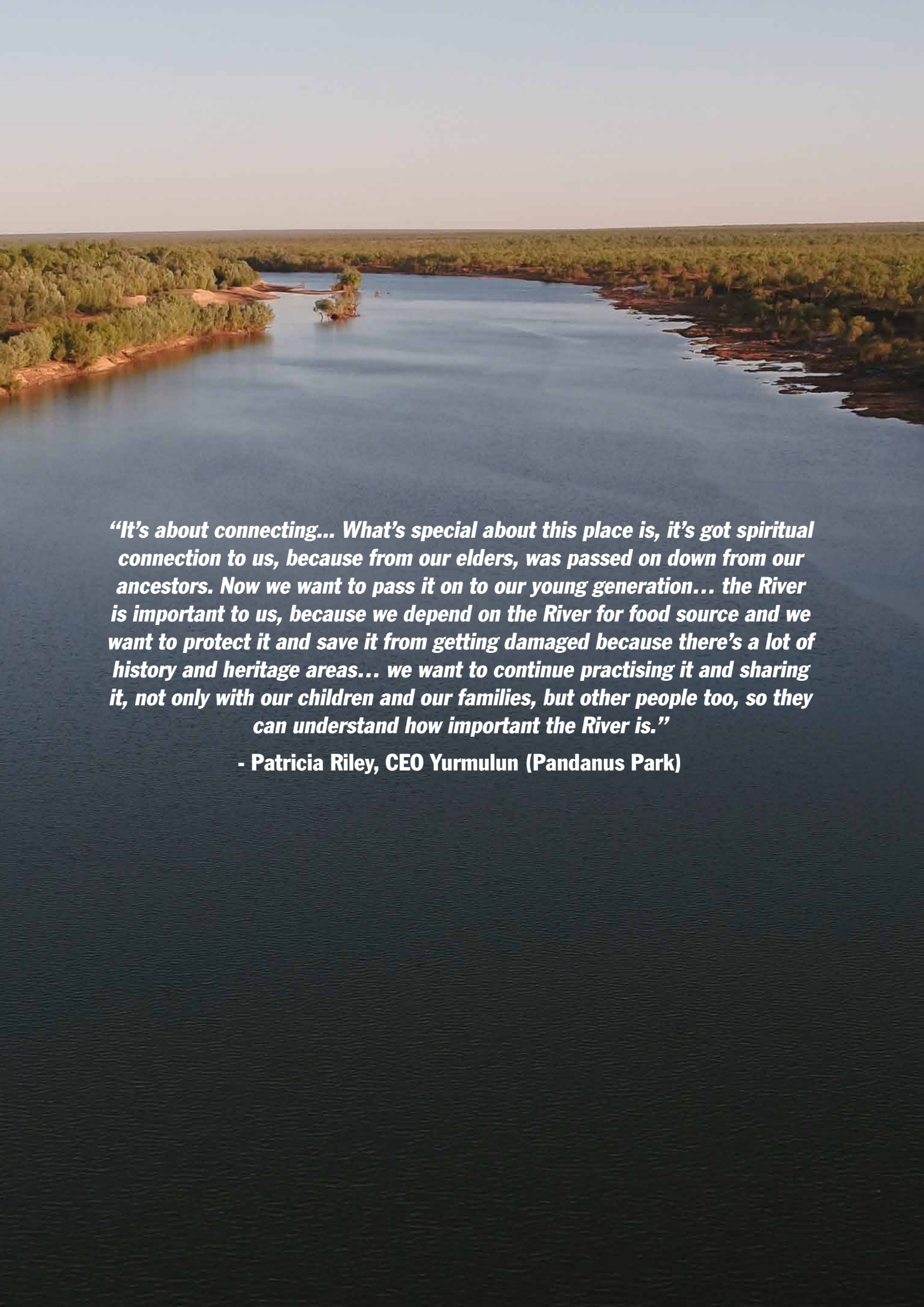
FEASIBILITY STUDY: YURMULUN TO BALKINJIRR



natural resource
management program



This 'Building Indigenous Capacity in Culture, Tourism and Conservation Economies' project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State Natural Resource Management Program.

A wide, calm river flows through a lush green landscape. The banks are lined with dense vegetation, and the water reflects the clear sky. The scene is peaceful and scenic.

“It’s about connecting... What’s special about this place is, it’s got spiritual connection to us, because from our elders, was passed on down from our ancestors. Now we want to pass it on to our young generation... the River is important to us, because we depend on the River for food source and we want to protect it and save it from getting damaged because there’s a lot of history and heritage areas... we want to continue practising it and sharing it, not only with our children and our families, but other people too, so they can understand how important the River is.”

- Patricia Riley, CEO Yurmulun (Pandanus Park)



The Martuwarra Walking Trail Feasibility Study Team

TWO-WAY SCIENCE

In July 2022 Professor Stephen Muecke and his doctoral Research Assistant, Jennifer Eadie from the University of Notre Dame, spent time on the River Country with members of Yurmulun (Pandanus Park) and Balginjirr communities to conduct the Feasibility Study of the Martuwarra Walking Track. They hold an Australian Research Council grant to research and set up Indigenous walking trails.

Indigenous tourism plays a major part in the national Australian tourism industry, and within that Indigenous-led walking trails represent significant opportunities for Aboriginal communities. There is a growing number of Indigenous-led walking trails across Australia. They have multiple functions:

- They are unique ‘tourism products’ as small business ventures for Traditional Custodians.
- They enable Aboriginal culture and heritage to remain on Country and keep young people involved.
- They are learning experiences, explicitly so if students are participating as part of coursework, for whom they offer new perspectives on academic knowledges.
- They are immersive experiences for guides and participants, that enable cross-cultural knowledge transfer.
- They enhance health and well-being.
- They enable TOs to care for and protect Country.



CO-DESIGNING NEW ECONOMIES

The idea for a Martuwarra River Walking Track was discussed with the Pandanus Park Community (traditional name, Yurmulun, on the Fitzroy River near Willaire Bridge) in July 2022. About 20 community members were in attendance, and the meeting was chaired by Professor Anne Poelina, Chair of the Martuwarra River Council with support from Ian Perdrisat Madjulla Inc. Project Manager and Evaluator.

The Feasibility Study will be presented to the Martuwarra Fitzroy River Council to support the work of the Yurmulun Martuwarra Fitzroy River Keepers to secure investment for training and development and the development of this diverse workforce in their regenerative economies to sustain their lifeways and livelihoods, now and into the future.

The WA Government's investment, through the State Natural Resource Management Program, in this Building Indigenous Capacity in Culture, Tourism and Conservation Economies Project has strengthened the 'Community Research Practitioners' confidence and competence. Through the 'Boab Science' learning and sharing Traditional Custodians have strengthened their capacity to co-design this work in partnership with Professor Muecke.



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