



Individual research paper

Analysis and summary

Presented by M.Kerinaia



THE TURTUNI FRAMEWORK

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ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY REPORTS

This assignment talks about the Turtuni Framework and will explain the concepts behind how it can be used as a tool to help with developing a shared understanding between Tiwi community members, researchers and other stakeholders.

As a Tiwi co-researcher working with the ARC project focused on Tiwi sustainable development, I was interested in conveying what this research was about in a way that was relevant to today's Tiwi people and which talked about the great importance of caring for country. I was also interested in creating a tool for engagement with Tiwi land groups and other stakeholders working with the research team. For example, as a conversation starter during research activities such as fieldwork, with interviews and participatory mapping, or for educational purposes during engagement with Tiwi schools.

I came up with the idea of the Turtuni Framework (see Figure 1 below) based on the Turtuni pole and as a way of introducing a Tiwi worldview when compared to the usual western science approach. It was based mostly my personal experience towards caring for country, culture, and people, and by responding to what caring for country and people looks like from a Tiwi perspective.

Figure 1 - The Turtuni Framework © (Copyright Mavis & Fiona Kerinauia 2020)



In the Turtuni Framework, presented above in Figure 1, there are a number of different parts:

- **Turtuni** pole that runs through the middle, and which represents the past, present and future and includes different generations of Tiwi and the looking after of country
- **Malapwarra** – footprints represent the people/country/journey and pathway of land-owner groups and other stakeholders
- **Katakuni** – the leaves used for smoking ceremony and represent healing and growth

- **Yirrikipayi** – crocodiles' tail and which represents the barbed spear
- **Paminjini** – head/arm bands and which represents Tiwi identity and culture
- **Ngirrimpi** – the 4 main skin groups and which represents relationships, governance, social/cultural structures, and the land as people-places
- **Yirrara Tiwi Ratuwati** – the two islands
- **Yiminga** – the pulse/time and the country's spirits with safeguard the land and sea with the ancestor hands holding the Tiwi and Tiwi Islands

Tiwi perspectives and approaches to land management are based on caring for country and culture and include an awareness of Tiwi cultural and natural values of each of the land-owning groups on the Tiwi Islands. It is important for Tiwi to make sure that the land & sea resources are protected and healthy and safe from diseases, over hunting or killing, over land development, mining, climate change especially coastal erosion and high sea levels etc. Tiwi hold knowledge within each of our land-owning group therefore the Turtuni plays a major part in broadening the minds and the insights of what can be achieved from the research project and enables communication between the land-owning groups.

The Turtuni Framework is my way of thinking about how Tiwi and the Western science can be brought together in partnership and work collaboratively together. This new way of collaboration talks about how the aims and objectives of Tiwi land-owning groups can work together and share a common interest in terms of research on the Tiwi Islands. For the ARC project, this is reflected in the collaboration between project partners and the Turtuni Framework also reflects my role as a knowledge-broker, acting as a conduit between the community and researchers. It talks about setting us on a shared pathway or journey. Turtuni can open more ways of working together especially for cultural awareness on when and how to speak, and what type of approaches to undertake because of cultural norms such as avoidance relationships and sacred sites, as well as different Tiwi histories. With the Tiwi researcher, they can be another way to approach the situation to get the message through, usually through the other Tiwi representative, a reliable person who mediates and relays the message or subject of the matter to scientist and researchers.

The Turtuni Framework can also be used as Tiwi cultural compass, an indicator, and a reminder of the Tiwi vision for caring for country as well as Tiwi fundamental values and how can we work together collaboratively – **ngarrawanajirri**, which means getting together and working together. **Ngarrawanajirri** can be rewarding especially when Tiwi traditional knowledge and Western science are brought together. By exploring the Turtuni Framework through **ngapangimarri** (shared understanding), Tiwi have the opportunity to make good decisions for **murrakupuni** (country).

Another part of the Turtuni looks towards the future and reflects the importance of including the next generation of Tiwi as we take turns driving the direction of the research projects and be part of the decision-making process. In this way, the Turtuni expands on the philosophy of caring for country to include caring for culture and people.

The outcome within the land-owning groups and the stakeholders who are now taking more interested in the field of land management and working with researching organisations such as Menzie for bush medicine plants, and for me the high light is bringing the Turtuni model as a **purrunjirti** message stick, and through the Turtuni story as a model used for delivering educational talks about the ecosystem, and about how we can better ourselves more by looking after country and culture.

My recommendation to future research is to see the use of the Turtuni Framework as a guide that can also be used as a tool think about the future of caring for country on Tiwi land. The use of the Turtuni

Framework includes principles for ethics so that all cultural ties are happy with outcome; all is checked and balanced, level, right, understood, and in fairness and there is equity for all land-owning groups when discussing Western scientific concepts using traditional knowledge system.

Therefore, using the scientific concept with traditional knowledges that ties to cultural values to ensure better results to improve business opportunities for Tiwi such as data, culture, investment, land development and research work and employment on country.

I feel that the Turtuni can open new avenues, for more open discussion points for my research with each diverse land-owning groups and other researchers especially when measuring outcomes and prospects. Turtuni concepts relate to the ethical principles combined with traditional knowledge and cultural values all in one context working together collaboratively and to conventionalise the essence of caring for country through the Turtuni Framework and through including Tiwi perspectives and cultural aspect by the implementation plan and by through the Tiwi lens.

Turtuni can also act a buffer zone, a Tiwi map and guidelines, a pathway that bridges western science of research and Indigenous ways of researching in a fusion of collaboration of both worlds. One aspect of collaboration is the partnership with ARC, Tiwi Resources, and the Tiwi Land Council representing the Tiwi community by having a Tiwi researcher who acts a conduit for the community and researchers.

The Turtuni Framework aims at collaborative research work, and acts as a buffer zone, a Tiwi map and guidelines, a pathway that bridges western science of research and Indigenous ways of researching in a fusion of collaboration of both worlds working together collaboratively in the conventionalised way with the essence of caring for country through the Turtuni story seen through the Tiwi lens, and through Tiwi perspectives especially about implementation of the cultural models, protocols and traditional knowledge to be respected and protected by everyone involved through the implementation plan before research work done.

I am hoping that the Turtuni story can be utilised as a model and used by the land-owning groups and stakeholders such as the schools, training centre, land management resources for community, as an educational activity for family time at home.





Artwork by Mavis Kerinauia & Fiona Kerinauia



Tiwi Resources Board meeting, December 2020