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‘Acknowledging Sense of Place through art innovation’

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Aviva Reed
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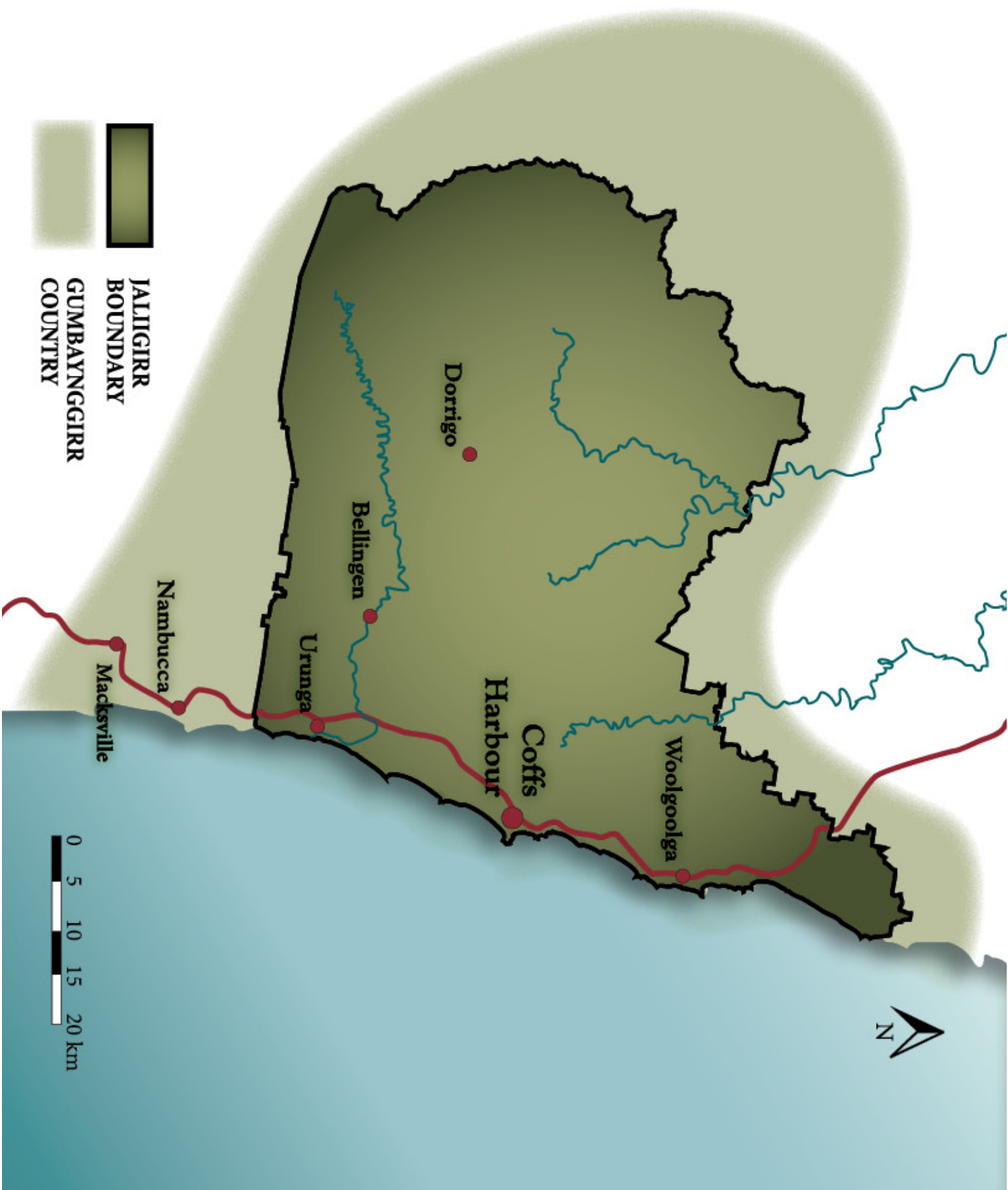


'Rattling the cage'

- This presentation focuses upon innovative artistic exploration as a means to both acknowledge and to explore sense of place
- Of different communities in a particular conservation context
- This artistic exploration was a final act of larger 'Jaliigirr Developing Sense of Place' project in the Bellingen & Coffs Harbour area in the Mid North Coast of NSW
- This was funded by the Jaliigirr Biodiversity Alliance, Great Eastern Ranges initiative & NSW Environmental Trust

The cage needs rattling!

- Conservation has moved from community based Landcare of 90's to top-down technical approach
- Especially with advent of connectivity conservation & defunding of Landcare & devolution of government services to cross-sector alliances. Technical, science, bureaucracy, wrong discipline area ...
- Unintended displacement of narratives, experiences, identities, practice based and experiential
- Sense of Place rattles through asking...



JALLIGIRR
BOUNDARY

GUMBAYNGGIRR
COUNTRY

0 5 10 15 20 km











Place-based approach

- A place-based approach acknowledges the ambiguity and complexity of identity and belonging
- Literature searches
- Dialogue within the biodiversity alliance
- Media
- A group familiar with place methodology and set about applying the project methodology
- & Reporting.....
- In-depth interviews of key people in conservation
- Cognitive mapping of over 200 community members



sense of place Questionnaire

This Place

Semi structured and to be recorded

1. What do you do in this place?
2. Where do you go in this place? Why is it special to you?
3. What is your sense of place here? How does this place feel to you? Describe any good or difficult feelings.

Early Experience

4. How does this place and what you do in it relate to post/childhood sense of place?
5. Do you have any photos/maps/imagined memories that would help convey this?
6. How do these relate to what you are doing now?

The Jaligrr Area

7. How do you feel about the JBA area/landscape in this region?
8. This area has a complex history. How do you feel about this? Is it important?

Conservation and Environmental Issues

9. What is your perception of environmental/land issues in this area?
10. What should be done about these ? What do you want to do about these ?
11. How do we bring different groups together to achieve these outcomes?

Other Questions

12. What will be happening here in the future 50 years, 5000 years...?
13. Finally, what would your ideal place be? i.e you can design it!

Optional Questions

Is there a message about this place you would like to express?

Do you do things to care for this place? If so what?

What do the following words mean to you: Belong, grief, threatened, corridor, connectivity.....

 sense of place

 **JALIGRR**
Biodiversity
Alliance

 **THE GREAT
EASTERN RANGES**
connecting people...connecting nature



sense of place

mapping sense of place

What is Sense of Place?

"Sense of place" arises through our knowledge and experience of a location: knowing its stories, history, geology and geography; experiencing its flora, fauna, climate and weather, its land, buildings and community. Over time all of these elements contribute to a person's sense of place in a particular area. Such relationships with places are deeply important to most people and are bound with identity and feelings about belonging to the land.

The Jaligirr 'Acknowledging Sense of Place' project aims to get a better understanding of each of our experiences of this area. By participating in this project, you are contributing to better understanding all of our connections with the land, in the hope that together we will be better able to protect the land which supports us, now and into the future.


Please draw something that represents.....

1. A place that is special to you
 2. A place of your childhood or early experience
 3. The landscape in this region
 4. Environmental or land issues in this area
 5. Your ideal place
- Is there a message about this place you would like to express?

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 sense of place

 JALIGIRR
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 THE GREAT
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connecting people...connecting nature



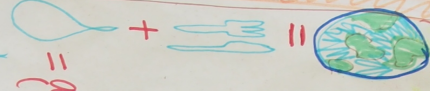






NEED → "ORGANIC DESIGN"
 (materials, production, food, infrastructure, love, lifestyle)

WE ARE ANIMALS
 ...YES!
 = animals (life)
MAIS +00



The environment is my life history, memories, love, happiness. I study 'Enviro Science' because the Earth has given so much to me... it's time to repay the favour!
WE ARE ANIMALS TOO!

COAST ISLANDS
 Curlew Home ISLANDS
 EXPORTS VIEWED AS A CHILD



PROTECT

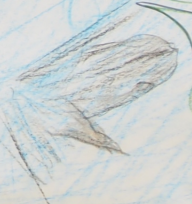
WATERWAYS

LANDS

ENVIRONMENT

OCEAN

PLANTS



- quiet
- natural
- undeveloped
- few weeds

① Relations Farms

- country lifestyle
- well managed natural environment in conjunction with productive agriculture
- A balance

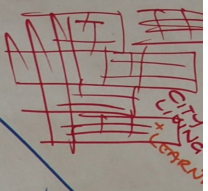
② Great natural environment threatened by - over-development

- poor Council/State Govt decision making when considering development
- more weeds - loss control

③ Keep in mind the areas history - both natural & man-made

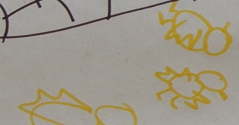
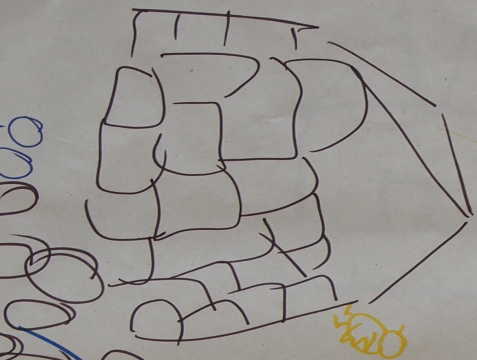
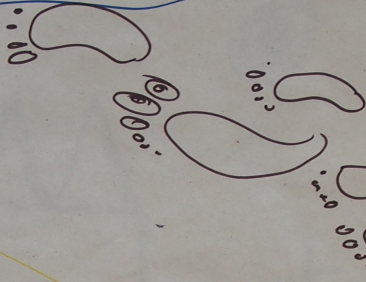
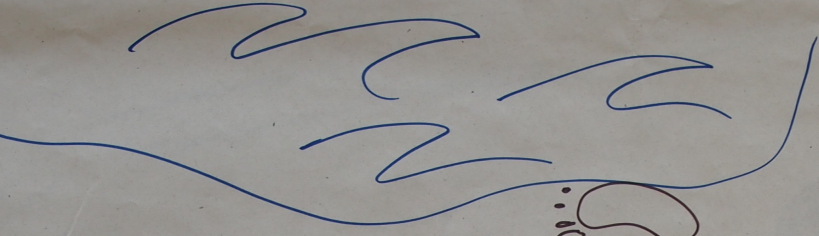
Love Coffs & the north coast/ranges but do not over-develop it - we like it because it is

④ Keep supporting groups which look after the environment
Support initiatives which look after the land, but natural environment ~~of~~ farms

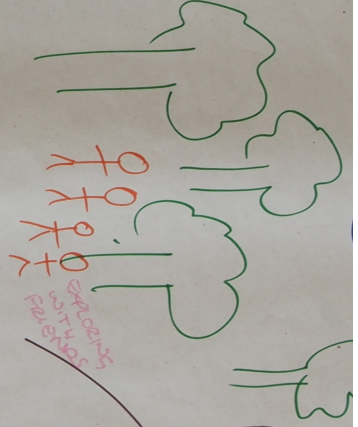


CURRENT HOME

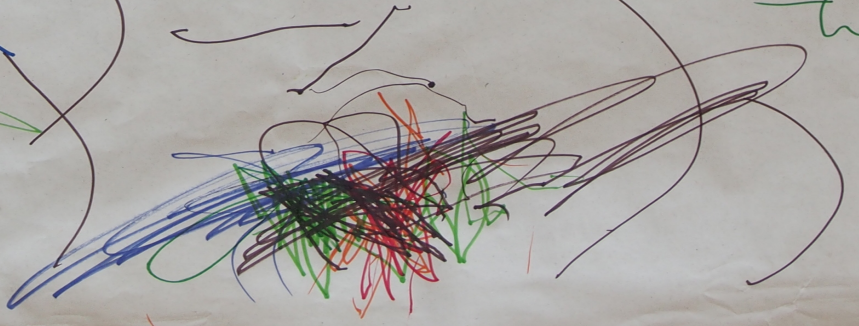
6 years
First home
lots of work
& love.
piece of
family.



idea!



spreads
with
power



Artistic process beyond 'reporting'

- Narrative reporting alone did not do sufficient justice to rich information and impressions emerging from the project
- Artists Aviva & Bede (both contributed to the inaugural Eco-Arts Conference in 2014) joined the team
- Information, impressions and emerging themes were sent through to them throughout the 12-month project
- Their brief was left deliberately open
- Slowly, through a process of trial, error and dialogue, old maps, historical images, interview quotes, photographs and fine line drawings were brought together into multi-layered digital montages..
- Compassionate portrayals of place relationship of 'Gumbaynggirr', 'Land producers' and 'Environmentalists'





Handwritten text on the top sheet of paper, including a circular diagram and a list of items.

Handwritten text on the top sheet of paper, including a circular diagram and a list of items.

Handwritten text on the bottom sheet of paper, including a circular diagram and a list of items.

Handwritten text on the bottom sheet of paper, including a circular diagram and a list of items.

Sense of Place Findings -

Provides a different lens

Is an invitation for nuanced/
intimate stories of place
connection & disconnection

Gives people &
organisations the means to
express how they care for
Country, land, environment

Gives insight into peoples'
motivations

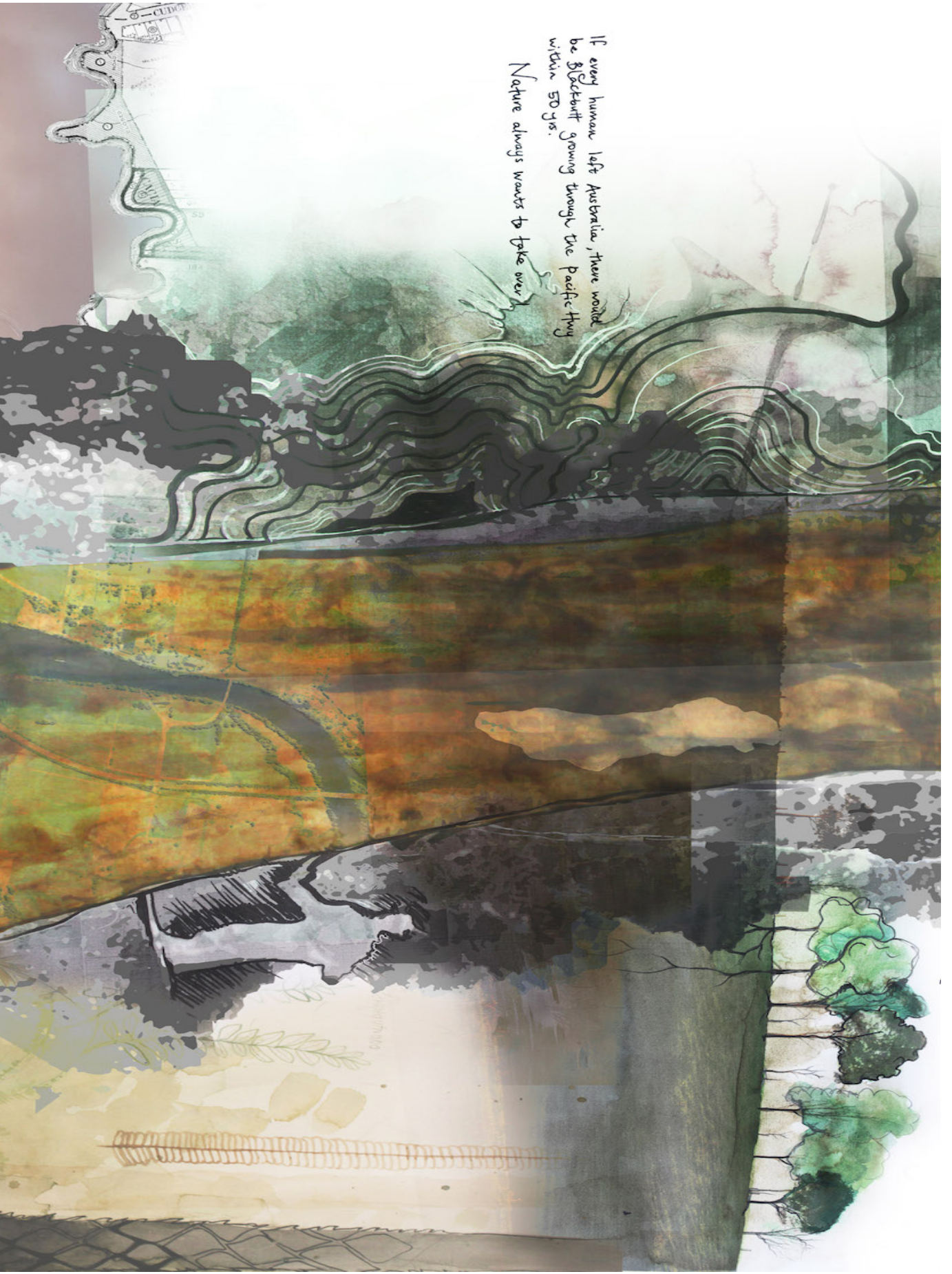
Importance of place
connection in their childhood
or youth & family

Most conservationists are
not confident about future

All passionately care
about what they do for
conservation, though how
this is practiced varies
widely

Sometimes clichéd and
adversarial stories of
people in relation to
conservation are much
more complex, rich and
unpredictable when
explored through a deep
conversation about Sense
of Place

If every human left Australia, there would
be Scleroth growing through the Pacific Hwy
within 50 yrs.
Nature always wants to take over.





Plants and animals are the fabric...

Systems tend to fall over if you keep extracting.....

Practicing what you believe in....

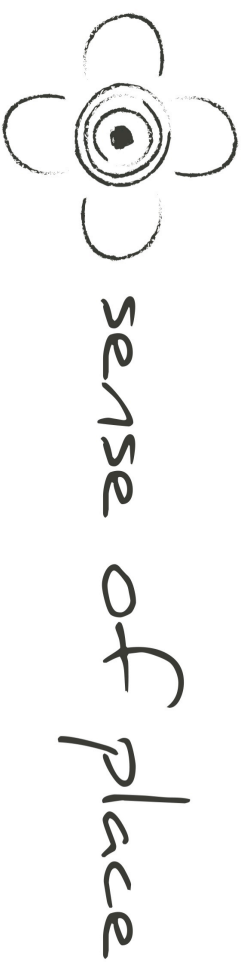
It's such a special spot. I cycle in the morning past there, it's really a pretty spot, there's flying foxes, it's past the flying fox colony and there are also rainbow bee eaters



We want to establish good deep roots in the face of climate change.

"Humans are our own worst enemy, because they have the power to survive on this planet and they have the power to destroy as human beings..."





Deepening Sense of Place - Jalligir Biodiversity Alliance

Artists: Aviva Reed & Bede Brennan

Why the artistic process is important in interpreting Sense of Place?

Our artistic process involved tapping into the emotions and sensory experiences evoked by the Sense of Place materials gathered by the project team in Bellingden. We listened to, read, and interpreted the consultations, interviews, cognitive mapping and research materials gathered. We then carried out our own research into historical documents and images. During the process we were in dialogue with Dr Charlie Brennan.

As Sense of Place is emotional, imaginal and to some extent unconscious, the artistic process gave access to, and the opportunity to express, aspects of Sense of Place that written, linear and rational approaches could not. This allowed an alternative layering and interpretation of thoughts that may not have been possible if the data had only been collated in a written form.

The artistic process required us to produce symbolic imagery that was representative of both the literal and emotional qualities of the Sense of Place materials gathered. Choosing these images took much deliberation and trialing of artworks. This constituted a deepening process and required much investigation into symbolism implied by gathered Sense of Place materials.

What was found through the artistic process?

This process helped us reach clarity in recognizing the different dialogues and practices of different community groups in the Jalligir area. We found (with guidance from Charlie) that there were three distinct dialogues: A Gumbaynggirr voice, a 'producers' voice, and the voice of conservationists. This process was difficult, as there were many similar threads of thought, yet some underlying emergent differences and commonalities in peoples' sense of place were found.

Collaborative artworks allow the contemplation and interpretation of these complex multi-faceted, trans-disciplinary Sense of Place materials. Three art works have been produced in the hope that they enrich a process of acknowledgement and respect for differing Senses of Place which in turn help us care for the beautiful biodiverse places we inhabit.

Ethical use of the artworks

Sense of place is an approach to environmental matters, perspectives and feelings in a way that is intimate, personal and requires particular sensitivity.

The sense of place project was able to create trust and openness. The resulting artworks reflect this.

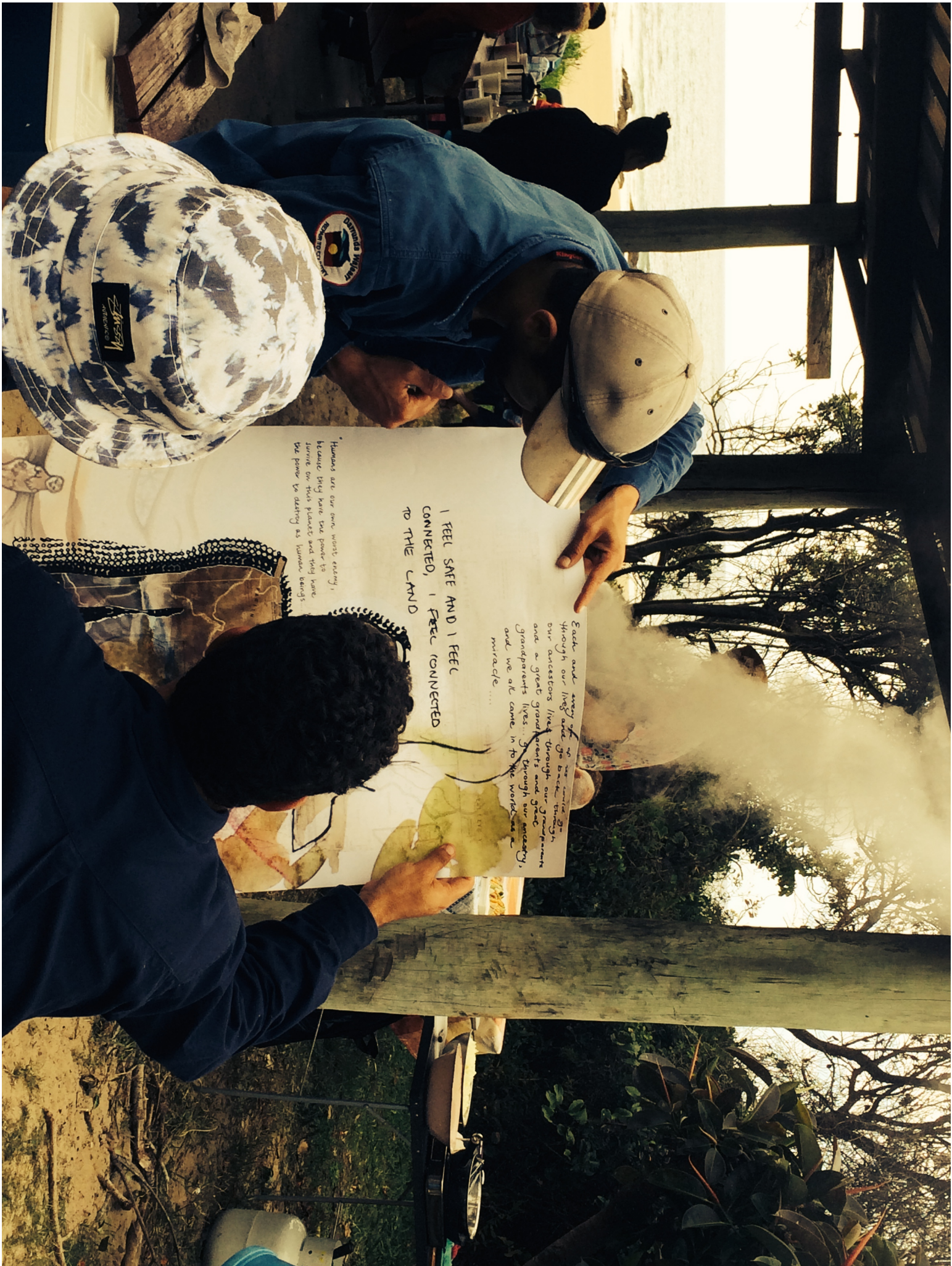
It is important to ensure that the artworks are used sensitively and appropriately in the spirit of the Sense of Place project

Acknowledgement of the artists, project contributors, funders and the process that led to their creation

The artworks should be used (sparingly) after consultation with the artists.

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Humans see our own worst enemy,
because they have the power to
survive on this planet and they have
the power to destroy as humans.

I FEEL SAFE AND I FEEL
CONNECTED, I FEEL CONNECTED
TO THE LAND

Each and every one of us connects
through our lives and go back through
our ancestors lives through our grand
parents and great grandparents lives...
and we all came in to the world as a
miracle through our ancestry,
miracle ...



