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ORIGINAL PAPER

The Bundian Way: An Indigenous-Led Cross-Sector Partnership in Place Through Time

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Abstract
Our paper explores the complex place-based relations of cross-sector partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners. We draw on a longitudinal in-depth case study of the Bundian Way, an Indigenous-led cross-sector partnership of over 40 organisations. Through practices of listening to history and walking 'on Country', the non-Indigenous partners and our team came to appreciate the indivisibility of place and time and bear witness to the intergenerational trauma of colonially imposed divisions. By combining a 45-day place-based ethnography with a 36-month participant observation and repeated interviews with the Advisory Committee members, we explain how non-Indigenous members of the cross-sector partnership came to realise, and reverse, these place-time divisions. We contribute to an ethics of custodianship by first contrasting, and then combining, Indigenous and Western ways of knowing place through time.

Keywords Cross-sector partnerships · Indigenous peoples · Place · Time · History

Introduction

Colonisation removed Indigenous peoples from their Country[1] and led to "thousands of ways in which Indigenous languages, knowledges and cultures have been silenced or misrepresented, ridiculed or condemned" (Smith, 2012, p. 21). In Australia, the removal of Indigenous peoples from their Country was a violent affair achieved through "systematic extermination, forced labour, segregation, detention, abduction, sexual assault and starvation of Indigenous people" (Gilroy & Donelly, 2016, p. 546). Once Indigenous people were removed, the colonial project set about reallocating land to white settlers:

> The invasion also brought with it development in hamlets and towns, lanes and roads. Above all the worst incursion was the dissection of the land with fences. Divisions of alien ownership traversed both the physical landscape and the Indigenous mind, as western approaches to knowledge replaced Indigenous pedagogies and epistemology (Foley, 2006, p. 26).

Legacies of colonialism persist in Australia with many Indigenous people continuing to experience restricted access to Country and resources (Banerjee & Tedmanson, 2010); an entrenched reliance on government support (Australian Government, 2020; Schaper, 1999); and disruption of cultures, kin relationships (Foley, 2003) and language groups (Trudgen, 2000). The intergenerational trauma experienced by Indigenous Australians is a direct result of the seizure of land by colonisers and its legacy of "overt physical violence (invasion, disease, death and destruction), covert structural violence (enforced dependency, legislation, reserves and removals) and psycho-social domination (cultural and spiritual genocide)" (Atkinson, 2002, cited by Kwaymullina, 2016, p. 440).

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[1] 'Country' has a specific meaning in the context of Indigenous Australia. It refers to both the physical places Indigenous people are ancestrally connected to as well as the relationships between people, plants and animals that are intimately and spiritually linked within the ecosystems of those places (Flood 2006; Pascoe 2014).

Today this intergenerational trauma is compounded by the way in which the history of the colonial project has been 'white-washed' (Sarra, 2011). It is only in very recent years through activism of Aboriginal communities, curriculum reform by Aboriginal academics and educators (Langton, 2019), and the writing of pre-colonial histories documenting how Aboriginal people lived on and managed their lands (see Gammage, 2011; Pascoe, 2014), that non-Indigenous Australians have begun to appreciate the history and impact of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our research has been undertaken in partnership with the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council on Yuin Country of the Far South Coast of New South Wales. Aboriginal people in the Eden area were removed from their land and confined to the Delegate Reserve, Wallaga Lake Station, Roseby Park Reserve or Lake Tyers missions (Blay, 2015; Cruse et al., 2005). The concentration of Aboriginal people in these areas was not coordinated by kinship or Country and led to unprecedented dispersion of families and the disruption of traditional harvests, land management and trade (Blay, 2015). This had profound effects on the people of the Yuin Nation and has contributed to cultural dislocation and alienation from Country.

There are local stories of resistance where Aboriginal people lived outside the reserve environment, camped up and down the coast and engaged in trade along the Bundian Way (Cruse et al., 2005). Historically, the Bundian Way was a network of paths that linked people from Eden and the coast to people living in the plains and mountains beyond the coastal range. As they travelled the Bundian Way, people engaged in communal hunting, fishing, land management, yam harvests, storytelling and celebrations. Aboriginal people shared the Bundian Way with settlers, showing them how to travel across the mountains. Since that time, many parts of the Bundian Way came to be used as roadways and stock routes, and the trail took on significance for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Today, the Eden Land Council aims to link the Bundian Way into a major walk leveraging the Council's extensive land holdings, establishing a range of social enterprise opportunities along the route which will offer cultural tourism experiences (Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2008).

To negotiate land title issues and help establish social enterprise initiatives, the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council created a partnership comprised of government agencies, business entities and local community representatives: the Bundian Way Advisory Committee. Our research explores the nature of this cross-sector partnership and the ways in which the Aboriginal custodians of the Bundian Way have invited non-Indigenous partners into the story of that place. Through land-based storytelling, Aboriginal custodians also seek to redress many of the falsehoods that have been told about the history of Australia. In this way, the Advisory Committee's awakening of non-Indigenous partners to the story of the Bundian Way mirrors the Aboriginal community's invitation to all who might walk the Bundian Way.

The Bundian Way Advisory Committee is one of an increasing number of cross-sector partnerships between Indigenous organisations and non-Indigenous partners (Agius et al., 2007; Murphy & Arenas, 2011; Murphy et al., 2020; Pearson & Helms, 2013). However, too often these partnerships position Indigenous communities as stakeholders to be managed (Banerjee, 2000, 2018), rather than rightholders with historical and ongoing cultural attachments to place with rights about the nature of community rebuilding activities (O'Bryan, 2018; O'Faircheallaigh, 2017; Sarkki et al., 2020; Zurba & Bullock, 2018). Further, failure to acknowledge the role of place in which Indigenous-led cross-sector partnerships operate risks replicating past injustices (Galbraith et al., 2006) and further disempowering Indigenous peoples (Banerjee & Tedmanson, 2010). Our paper highlights the complex place-based relations of cross-sector partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous partners (Murphy et al., 2020).

We show how listening to and experiencing Country are central to a placed-based ethics of custodianship. We explore how practices of listening to stories and walking on Country enabled the non-Indigenous partners and the research team to appreciate the complexities and layered meanings of place in which the partnership operates. We unpack how these practices of place-based storytelling and listening facilitated an awareness of the indivisibility of time and place for non-Indigenous partners and discuss how such awareness can reshape cross partnership models.

Place and Time in Cross-Sector Partnerships

Cross-sector partnerships involve collaborations between partners from the private and public sectors that are focussed on delivering societal and environmental solutions to complex problems (Caldwell et al., 2017; Clarke & Crane, 2018; Clarke & Fuller, 2010; Seitanidi & Lindgreen, 2010; Selsky & Parker, 2005). Indigenous organisations and institutions are increasingly partnering with private and public sector players to develop entrepreneurial initiatives and community-based enterprises to create value for their communities (Henry & Dana, 2019; Hindle & Lansdowne, 2005; Murphy et al., 2020; Peredo & McLean, 2013). Cross-sector partnerships are claimed to enable Indigenous communities to mobilise power and political support (Agius et al., 2007), implement community development projects (Lertzman & Vredenburg, 2005; Murphy & Arenas, 2011), and generate income and employment opportunities through collaborative entrepreneurial endeavours (Banerjee & Tedmanson, 2010;

Pearson & Helms, 2013). Cross-sector partnerships can assist Indigenous groups to overcome resource constraints by partnering with resource-rich, non-Indigenous partners (Hindle & Lansdowne, 2005; Murphy & Arenas, 2011).

However, there is growing recognition that Indigenous and non-Indigenous cross-sector partnerships are influenced by the evolving nature of entrepreneurship practice and changing policy landscapes which tend to prioritise economic development over social and communal goals (Banerjee, 2018; Banerjee & Tedmanson, 2010; Peredo & McLean, 2013) and impose practices on Indigenous communities that do not align with Indigenous values and culture (Croce, 2017; Murphy et al., 2020). Peredo and McLean (2013) provide an example of a community-based agricultural initiative involving Quechua and Aymara peoples and non-indigenous partners in the Andean highlands which failed due to the imposition of entrepreneurial practices and lending mechanisms that did not align with the life of the Indigenous community. Similarly, Cahn's (2008) research with Indigenous entrepreneurs in the Pacific islands of Samoa shows how incongruence between Western business concepts and the Samoan way of life failed as Indigenous communities were not willing to pursue economic business success if it compromised family status or social identity. In both cases the entrepreneurial model being proposed undermined the legitimacy of communal custodianship of Indigenous lands and territories (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004, 2013). The imposition of Western ways of doing things reminds us that cross-sector partnerships are frequently shaped by the power dynamics inherent to colonisation which can result in the exclusion of key groups (Kuokkanen, 2011) and stifle the ability of the partners to think and act towards a common goal (Caine & Krogman, 2010). Recent studies on partnerships between Indigenous communities and corporations have called for new forms of community-led governance arrangements which place Indigenous communities at the centre of decision-making processes (Banerjee, 2018; Hindle et al., 2005; O'Faircheallaigh, 2017; Zurba & Bullock, 2018).

In Australia, any attempts at cross-sector partnerships are constrained by the ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are "placed by power" (Allen, 2003, p. 2). This placing began when colonisers declared Australia *terra nullius.* This pronouncement conjured a powerful imaginary in which pre-settlement Australia was devoid of human connections to place, enabling place-based meanings to be (re)created by colonisers (Agius et al., 2007; Flood, 2006; Pascoe, 2014). This false imaginary persists today and is used to deny Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' custodianship of Country and to justify occupation and exploitation of their landscapes and places. As Howitt et al., (2009, p. 361) write, these "imaginaries also reinforce dominant discourses which represent Indigenous people as being possessed by, rather than in possession of, their country". The effect is that Indigenous claims to place can only exist in a past time and other places than the here-and-now (Howitt et al., 2009).

There are many inequities for cross-sector partnerships to redress but, unfortunately, research suggests that too often partnerships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous parties have failed to deliver because of the denial of communal custodianship of land or territories for Indigenous communities and attempts to separate culture and governance from place (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004, 2013; Banerjee, 2000). Settler-colonial states, such as Australia, continue to rely on a singular sense of the past where that singular past's relation to the present becomes assumed in order to close down areas of contestation or debate (Massey, 1995). Dominant histories are used to build particular futures and, in this way, "places stretch through time" (Massey, 1995, p. 188). As a result, a political struggle over place "involves time as well as space and their inseparable connection" (Massey, 1995, p. 189). Recognition of the indivisibility of time and space has led Massey and others to argue that places are never finished; they are always the result of the ongoing interaction of internal and external processes and practices which are shaped by power relations (Cresswell, 2004; Massey, 1995). From this view, Massey (1995) argues that places are "moments in time", "slices on a map", "shifting articulations of social relations", "envelopes of space–time" maintained by the exercise of power and "temporary, uncertain, and in process" (pp. 188–190). Yet, for Indigenous peoples struggles over place are fixed within colonial timeframes and "situated in the geographies of slow violence and the uneven temporalities of colonial durabilities" (Radcliffe, 2018, p. 437). Howitt et al. (2009) argue that Indigenous peoples' persistent geographies and presence within the cultural landscape requires us to rethink many of the key themes in human geography. We suggest that the indivisibility of time and place is one of those key themes.

The indivisibility of place from time is central to Indigenous conceptions of place. As Yunkaporta (2019, p. 66) has noted, "time and place are usually the same word in Aboriginal languages—the two are indivisible". However, in contrast to Western understandings of the connection between time and place as multiple, tenuous and shifting, Indigenous understandings of the indivisibility of time and place emphasise reciprocal relations and ongoing connections to the land (Gieryn, 2000; Wright et al., 2012). Indigenous concepts of place are shaped by collective interactions, draw on historically contingent cultural understandings, and maintained over time through images and storytelling (Gieryn, 2000). These ongoing connections between time and place are captured in the Aboriginal concept of Country which "signifies a place in which everything belongs and is sentient and active, continuously weaving life through

different relationships and interdependencies" (Wright et al., 2012, p. 54). Practitioners of Indigenous research find Western conceptualisations of place limiting and have drawn on Indigenous understandings of 'being in place together' to develop novel research practices that emphasise reciprocal relations and connections, including to place itself (Larsen & Johnson, 2012; Wright et al., 2012).

Given the ongoing consequences of settler-colonial narratives of place and the disconnect between Western and Indigenous ways of 'being in place', it follows that the cross-sector partners in our study would confront differences and experience tensions in the way they conceptualise the Bundian Way, including how it connects and is related to the past, present and future. Accordingly, we ask how do partners in a cross-sector partnership recognise and reconcile place-based tensions?

The Bundian Way

Despite the significant disruption to Indigenous social, cultural and economic practices which accompanied colonisation, stories of the Bundian Way endured in the local population (Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2021). Local Aboriginal Land Councils were established under the *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983* (NSW) as bodies responsible for land use and management, community and enterprise development, and provision of community housing and support (New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, 2021). Under this legislation, Aboriginal communities can make claims on land as compensation for historical dispossession, and when successful, land is transferred to the Land Council to be held in freehold (New South Wales Office of Aboriginal Affairs, 2021). The establishment of the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council came at a time of conflict related to the use of forests with the region. Participants in this research made several references to the 'forest wars' which erupted in the 1980s and 1990s. The forest wars resulted in the destruction of a series of sites of cultural significance for the local Aboriginal population. Following on from this conflict, in 1999, the Land Council signed the Regional Forestry Agreement with the New South Wales Government. The Regional Forestry Agreement promised the Land Council use of the State forests within the Land Council's catchment for the social and economic benefit of the local Aboriginal community. As a part of this endeavour, a commitment was made to improve shared use of the forest in Eden and surrounds. Drawing on this commitment over the next 10 years, the Bundian Way became seen as not only a cultural pathway, but also a potential piece of enterprise infrastructure which could leverage the extensive land holdings of the Eden Land Council while concurrently contributing to Aboriginal community socio-economic advancement (Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2008).

Today, the Aboriginal community of Eden invites non-Indigenous people to walk parts of the Bundian Way with them and to "listen as they breath[e] life into the stories of the Country. The stories of the people. Learn the history of the Bundian Way" (Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2021). When fully operational, the Bundian Way will incorporate numerous income-generating activities such as guided walks, cultural training, accommodation and an art gallery. However, the Bundian Way project involves much more than delivering a piece of tourist infrastructure and income-generating social enterprise.

Given the length of the trail and the Land Council's small permanent staff, it was recognised in the early 2000s that input was needed from a broad range of partners to support the Land Council in achieving its enterprise goals. In 2007, the Bundian Way Advisory Committee was established to be led by the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council and with membership from across the three tiers of Australian government, representatives from three Universities, private corporations and landholders, the Eden port, tourism operators and small business owners.[2] The organisation chart below shows the leadership structure and makeup of the Advisory Committee (Fig. 1).

Methods

In our research, we were guided by the Indigenous Australian author, Ambelin Kwaymullina (2016), who recommends three threshold considerations for non-Indigenous researchers when conducting research alongside Indigenous communities. First, there is a need to understand that research by non-Indigenous researchers works to silence Indigenous knowledge; therefore, researchers need to listen to and "highlight and support Indigenous voices" (Kwaymullina, 2016, p. 440). Second, researchers need to reflect on their positioning as researchers and acknowledge their

[2] Federal Government stakeholders represented the interests of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; Education, Skills and Employment; Social Services; Industry; and Regional Development. At a State Government level, the Department of Premier and Cabinet was represented through staff employed in the Social, Economic and Regional Development policy groups. The State Departments of Education, Planning, Infrastructure & Environment and Communities and Justice were also involved. Additional State Government agencies involved included Aboriginal Affairs NSW, Infrastructure NSW, and Destination NSW. Local Government councillors, planners and economic development officers also participated in the Advisory Committee. The private sector was represented by both large corporations, including a large consulting firm, port and forest authorities and private sector peak body, and smaller local businesses including tourism operators, lawyers, architects and trades.

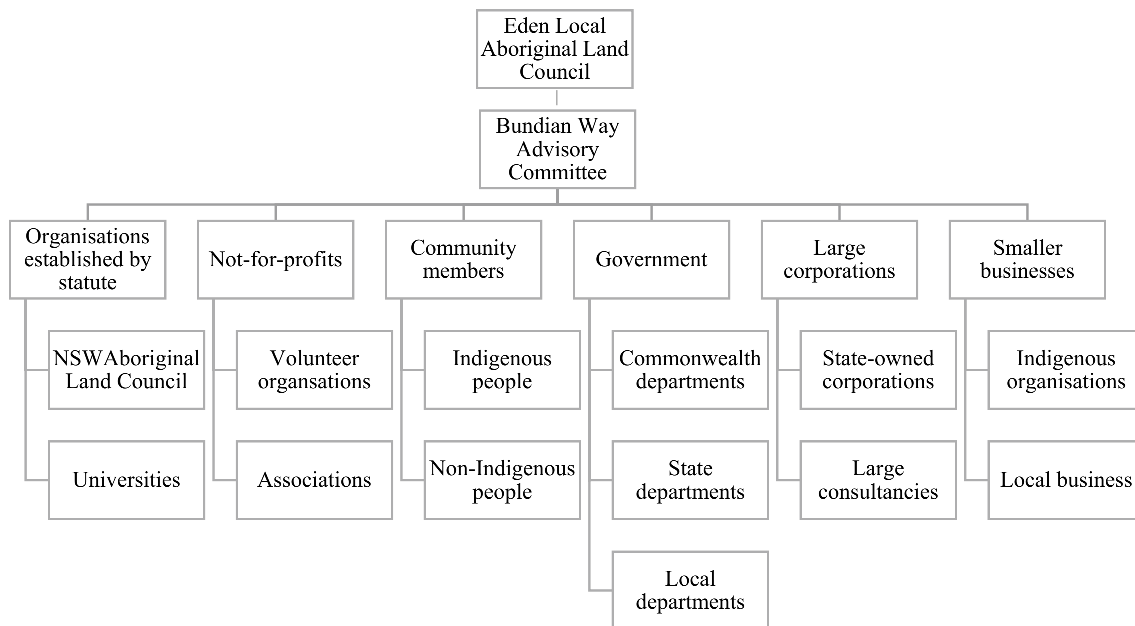

Fig. 1 Organisational structure of partners involved in the Bundian Way

own limitations as non-experts. Third, researchers need to embrace the imperative to follow international and local ethical protocols. We set out below how following Kwaymullina's (2016) guidance has shaped the approach we have taken in our research and what we have learnt about our roles as researchers.

We begin with the recognition that the processes of colonisation have attempted to delegitimise and silence Indigenous knowledge (Foley, 2003; Kwaymullina, 2016). As Foley (2006, p. 27) explains, "increasingly, Indigenous knowledge is interpreted by non-Indigenous academics and governments as a commodity, something of value, something that can be value added, and something to be exchanged, traded, appropriated, preserved, excavated or mined". This has resulted in Indigenous people being positioned as 'known' not 'knowers' (Kwaymullina, 2016). As Indigenous scholar Nakata (2007, p.182) writes, this silencing of Indigenous people's knowledge is the result of Indigenous knowledge being "ignored or suppressed; and as a result of Indigenous peoples' dispersal and dislocation from land and way of life, much of it was lost" (Nakata, 2007, p. 182). Kwaymullina (2016) warns against non-Indigenous researchers rushing in to fill the silence because doing so perpetuates the colonial project that has disembodied and dislocated Indigenous knowledge from the 'knowers'. As non-Indigenous researchers, we acknowledge our position as outsiders, recognising we can never explicitly understand the lived experiences of Indigenous Australians (Foley, 2003; Minniecon et al., 2007; Nakata, 2007). As outsiders we also acknowledge the limits of our ability to understand Indigenous ways of knowing which are deeply connected to Country, and we recognise the limits of our capacity to "feel what is it is like to be a 'knower' of this world" (Nakata, 2007, p. 11).

In our paper, we have had to listen and lay aside our previous ways of engaging with our 'data' and of producing 'knowledge' to avoid speaking for others (Ardill, 2013). We have also had to lay aside the practices of translation and interpretation in relation to the knowledge shared with us by our Indigenous research partners, to avoid discursively bounding, ordering and organising that knowledge for our own purposes (Nakata, 2007, p. 191). Instead, our approach has been to engage in dialogue with the local Aboriginal Elders and community (Barth et al., 2015).

Ethical Principles and Consent

In line with Kwaymullina's (2016) third recommendation, our research adopts the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS] *Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research*. These guidelines foreground the issues of Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, and state that at every stage of a project, research with and about Indigenous peoples must be founded on a process of meaningful engagement and reciprocity and all participants must be regarded as equal partners in a research engagement (AIATSIS, 2020). In abiding by these guidelines, we aimed to follow best practice internationally and locally by conducting research with,

alongside and for Indigenous people (Moreton-Robinson, 2013), aligned with the principle of free, prior and informed consent articulated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007).

Our approach to the research is underpinned by a respect for Country and acknowledgement of the Aboriginal custodians "who speak for and hold knowledge for Country" (AIATIS, 2020, p. 21). The first author has a long association with the area around the Bundian Way having lived on the South Coast of New South Wales for 8 years, from 2006 to 2014. She also had a professional association with the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council from 2011 to 2014 and developed a case study of the Bundian Way in partnership with the Land Council for her Masters' degree project in 2015. This long association with the Local Aboriginal Land Council was crucial to building the relationships and early contextual understanding of place needed to undertake this larger research project.

In April 2016, the first author attended the official opening ceremony for the 'Story Walk Trail', participating in the events and tours that accompanied the launch. Initial discussions about a larger doctoral research engagement led to the first author's invitation to travel to Eden for a workshop on the Advisory Committee's terms of reference. However, on arrival, an Elder from the Land Council explained that before seeking to implement governance mechanisms, it was more important to develop an understanding of Country and the aims of the Bundian Way as a whole. The Land Council hoped that documenting this process through a long-term research project would capture key learnings of the partnership, and that sharing the insights and learnings might encourage and assist other Indigenous communities in developing social enterprises. By respecting the views of Indigenous Elders in the project through ongoing discussion, we were able to collaboratively set a research direction that was led by their views.

Once guiding principles for the research were agreed, we sought permission to engage in the research in a meeting of the broader group of the Bundian Way Advisory Committee, explaining to them the reasons behind the approval processes we had determined in consultation with the Land Council. Since the initial agreement, we have attended Advisory Committee meetings and provided insight into trends observed in the research. Throughout 2017–2019, the first author travelled to Eden to participate in meetings and interviews with partners, explore additional sections of the trail such as the 'Whale Dreaming Track' and participate in community events, such as the Giiyong Aboriginal Cultural Festival. We have also consulted and deferred to the expertise of these Land Council representatives throughout the research listening to their explanations about the context and where to locate relevant documents and information, all the time seeking to ensure that the research reflected the Land Council's interests and concerns.

Research protocol and methods for this project were designed in consultation with the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council who facilitated multiple opportunities for feedback from the local Aboriginal community on both the research process and findings, including drafts of this paper. Table 1 highlights how we abided by the four principles outlined by the most recent version of the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (AIATSIS, 2020).

Data Collection

Data collection took place over thirty-six months, from June 2016 to June 2019. In total, the first author spent 45 days on site developing an understanding of the many meanings and histories associated with the Bundian Way. Overall, we collected thirty-one hours of formal participant observation from seventeen Advisory Committee meetings and planning sessions. We also undertook informal observations outside of the meetings and planning sessions. Reflections on these informal interactions were written up in a field note journal. We conducted twenty-four semi-structured interviews with regular Advisory Committee meeting attendees. Interview questions focussed on identifying personal and organisational views of the project, and canvassed project priorities, relationships, opportunities, challenges and success indicators. We also collected 157 documents including project plans, meeting records, news articles, historical records and policies from across the partner network. We are not able anonymise the case and have permission from the members of the Advisory Committee to make reference to their organisational role but not their names when quoting them in the paper. Further details of our data are set out in Table 2 below. Table 3 provides details on the Advisory Committee members who engaged in the interviews.

Data Analysis

Each of us came to the analysis with pre-understandings of Indigenous knowledge and practices that had, as Nakata (2007, p. 190) points out, been developed "via the interpretations and representations of it in the England language by Western knowledge specialists or scientists". The first author grew up in Canada and came to the project with fewer preconceptions and misunderstandings than the two authors who grew up in Australia and were taught a 'whitewashed' history, which excised "unpalatable parts of our history (the illegal occupation of land and the slaughter of the occupants, for instance) as well as "elements we never knew existed" (Pascoe, 2018, p. 224). We have all been confronted by both our own ignorance, including for one of us

Table 1 Alignment of research with the AIATSIS code of ethics

Principle	Responsibilities	How enacted in this project
Indigenous self-determination	• Recognition and respect • Engagement and collaboration • Informed consent • Cultural capability and learning	• Alignment with UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples • Elder-nominated staff from Eden LALC engaged in project design, data collection, interpretation • Ensuring free, prior and informed consent from all participants • Taking responsibility for our own cultural learning
Indigenous leadership	• Indigenous-led research • Indigenous perspectives and participation • Indigenous knowledge and data	• Elders and LALC nominated staff guides having genuine decision-making responsibility for project • Prioritising the voices of Indigenous participants and Indigenous academic in research design, interpretation and outputs • Acknowledging and ensuring Indigenous oversight and control of project data
Impact and value	• Benefit and reciprocity • Impact and risk	• Project designed to create positive impact for Eden LALC by raising the profile of the Bundian Way • Project designed to create positive impact for other Aboriginal communities, Land Councils and partners by identifying and sharing creative approaches to overcome enterprise development challenges in cross-sector partnership contexts
Sustainability and accountability	• Indigenous land and waters • Ongoing Indigenous governance • Reporting and compliance	• Project respects, and is guided by, Indigenous partners connection to, Country • Indigenous participants approval of quotes and use of data • Sharing drafts and findings with Indigenous participants in formal and informal settings

Table 2 Data collection summary

Key Actors	Cross-sector partnership between over 40 partners representing 9 different types of organisations •Land Council Staff (3 interviewed) •Commonwealth Government (observed but not interviewed) •State Government (4 interviewed) •State Agencies (1 interviewed) •Local Government (2 interviewed) •Corporations (observed but not interviewed) •Local Business (1 interviewed) •Not-for-Profit (observed but not interviewed) •Local Community (3 interviewed)
Interview data	24 interviews with 14 interviewees (average 50-min duration), totalling 309 pages of transcribed data: •First interviews (14) •Second interviews, 1 year later (10)
Observation	17 meetings observed over 31 h*, totalling 110 pages of data: •Advisory Committee meetings (8; average duration 2.5 h) •Planning meetings (9; average duration 1.25 h) **An estimated additional 30 h of deliberately unrecorded informal interaction was also involved in this research to build trust and promote engagement. This interaction included attendance at community events and celebrations, pre- and post-meeting debriefs and discussions, lunch and coffee catchups, and phone conversations*
Documents	157 records collected, totalling 2219 pages of data from the following document types: •Agreements (7) •Emails (46) •Funding applications, project plans and strategies (30) •Local history, research and statistics (16) •Advisory Committee meeting documents (47) •News articles (11)

Table 3 Details of advisory committee members participating in interviews

Organisational role	Organisational focus							Length of involvement			Aboriginal-focussed organisation			Living near the Bundian way		Working with LALC on other projects		Interview details	
Organisational Role	Land Management	Education	Community Development	Economic Development	Services and Coordination	Tourism	Not Applicable	1–5 Years	5–10 Years	10 + Years	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Yes	No	Yes	No	First Interview Participant	Second Interview Participant
Chair of Eden LALC			✓							✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	
Chair of Bundian Way Advisory Committee			✓							✓	✓			✓		✓		✓	✓
Employee of Eden LALC			✓						✓		✓			✓		✓		✓	✓
State Government Representative					✓			✓			✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
State Government Representative	✓									✓		✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
State Government Representative	✓							✓				✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
State Government Representative				✓				✓				✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
State Government Representative					✓			✓				✓			✓	✓		✓	✓

Table 3 (continued)

Organisational role	Organisational focus							Length of involvement			Aboriginal-focussed organisation			Living near the Bundian way		Working with LALC on other projects		Interview details	
Organisational Role	Land Management	Education	Community Development	Economic Development	Services and Coordination	Tourism	Not Applicable	1–5 Years	5–10 Years	10 + Years	Yes	No	Not Applicable	Yes	No	Yes	No	First Interview Participant	Second Interview Participant
Local Government Representative			✓					✓				✓		✓		✓		✓	
Local Government Representative				✓						✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Local Business Representative						✓		✓				✓		✓			✓	✓	
Non-Indigenous Community Member		✓							✓			✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Non-Indigenous Community Member							✓			✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
Non-Indigenous Community Member							✓	✓					✓	✓			✓	✓	
Totals	2	1	4	2	2	1	2	7	2	5	4	8	2	10	4	10	4	14	10

(until very recently) the knowledge of her own Aboriginal ancestry, but also by our white privilege and the benefits that have flowed to us from colonising practices. Given this our analysis involved interrogating our positionality and adopting a posture of vulnerability in which we were receptive to the limits of our knowledge, did and not expect to grasp the full meaning of what we were hearing, and a preparedness to question our long held ways of thinking (Page, 2017). As the Chair of the Bundian Way Advisory Committee explained: "People have to go from being aware of Aboriginal culture to having a level of empathy for it… You can be aware, but it doesn't mean you understand". Our analysis was centred on listening to the stories of our Indigenous partners told on their own terms and in their own ways. Listening to stories of the Dreamtime, "when Ancestral Beings created the landscape and all living things" (Flood, 2006, p. 24) helped us to understand that in Indigenous knowledge systems time and place are indivisible, as captured in the Whale Dreaming song line:

> We rise before Gugunyal (kookaburra) wakes to lead the morning bird song. Soon we will leave Turemulerrer for Maneroo, and the Bogong moth ceremonies of Targangal. As the sun rises we look out over the bay and in the distance see the Beowas, the killer whales—ancestors of the Katungal—who bring the baleen whale into shore for us to eat, for healing the elders and for new tools, during the Jaanda (whale) and springtime ceremonies. As we travel the Bundian Way our ancestor spirits sing to us. The Bundian Way is an ancient Dreaming songline. For thousands of years, since the Dreamtime, this has been the way, taking care of our land, connecting country, taking care of each other (Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council, 2021).

It also involved us listening to Indigenous academics and activists who were telling the story of pre-colonial Australia and the effects of separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples from their Country. It meant challenging each other about assumptions we brought to our understanding of the stories we were hearing and sitting with the shame and discomfort this listening evoked. The first author was also privileged to walk parts of the Bundian Way and captured these experiences in her field journal reflecting and sharing with the other members of the research team how "hearing the stories where they occurred… knowing there were fishers who could see shoals from the clifftops, and families who would gather shellfish on the beaches where I swam, and people whose millennia of footsteps had worn the paths I followed… makes me appreciate things in a different way… like all your senses are a part of it and you start thinking about how that place is both changed and unchanged". As Country and stories worked on us, we came to understand that we were connected to the Bundian Way and that our retelling of that story hinged on our listening and openness to the Other.

The experiences of our non-Indigenous respondents mirror our own experiences of listening to the Indigenous stories of the Bundian Way and being confronted with Aboriginal history. Just as they had been for us, the two practices of listening to the stories and walking on Country were key to shifting the perspectives of the non-Indigenous partners as they reflected on the "history of this place", talking about the need to "listen". Our fieldwork extended over several years and this enabled us to observe shifts in the partners' discourses away from a focus on economic activity to an emphasis on the cultural aspects of the Bundian Way. We observed a gradual awakening that the cultural tours and walking trails were offering something more than a source of employment and income and that, for members of the Advisory Committee, listening to the stories was about "education", "reconciliation", "recognition", "healing" and "growing together". Our analysis of the data generated an understanding of the indivisibility of time and place for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and this allowed us to capture the growing awareness of this indivisibility for the non-Indigenous partners on the Advisory Committee. We have captured these shifts in Table 4.

The Advisory Committee members and our research team were developing a "two-eyed" way of seeing which acknowledges that Indigenous and Western knowledge systems are "two separate but parallel paths", learning to see the strengthens of each knowledge system and "weave back and forth between separate but parallel ways of knowing" (Colbourne et al., 2020, p. 72). In the sections that follow, we outline how listening and walking on Country fostered this 'two-eyed way of seeing' and how it shaped the work of the Advisory Committee.

Divided Notions of Place

Early in our engagement with the Advisory Committee we observed contested notions of place centred around two competing conceptualisations of the Bundian Way. For the Aboriginal members of the Committee, the Bundian Way as an interconnected network of paths reaching back into the past and forward in time. However, other members of the Committee, who did not have a cultural connection to the Bundian Way, envisaged the track as a series of development sites. These different views created tensions within the Advisory Committee as members needed to balance the pragmatic requirements of developing social enterprises along the route while ensuring the cultural significance of the Bundian Way was not lost.

Table 4 Shifts in perspective of place by non-Indigenous partners

Early perspectives of place by non-Indigenous partners -Not imbued with history -The Bundian Way as economic opportunity -Imposing approaches and timelines	Later perspectives of place by non-Indigenous partners -Imbued with history -Confronting history -Appreciation of cultural reclamation
It could be an amazing place if they fixed up a few of those little things. But again, that takes money, and time. So I think that's really an issue. I think not having an overarching plan for the Bundian Way that is kind of logical, sequential, can be funded bit by bit… I think doesn't help. (State Government Representative) Just have a clear project plan—that's my advice. It could be as 'undetailed' as you like, or a number of project plans for distinct, discrete aspects of the project. Yeah. I mean, they sort of have a little bit of planning but it's just not clear enough. And you do need and end-frame, and that comes from being well-planned, because you're always chasing money. And funders always want an end-point. Whether that's right or wrong, that's just how it happens. (State Government Representative) The idea was, we could open [campsites] even as primitive ones first, and then slowly introduce facilities into them and as people pay more as facilities were introduced, we thought it was better to open these things gradually but to get the Bundian Way open as soon as possible. But there are certain things which slow down the progress. (Local Non-Indigenous Community Member)	I don't think we have a good understanding of the cultural and heritage aspects of Aboriginal culture. I think it's important for recognition of the Aboriginal people that were here for 60,000 years before white fellas came and claimed the land. And I think that as a nation we need to be more aware and to share that story. And I think that by also sharing the story of the interaction that helps to just create a better understanding of the history of the land. (Local Government Representative) When I talk to [the Chair of the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council] and when I talk to [the Chair of the Bundian Way Advisory Committee]—you feel like you are contributing something that could have a long-lasting impact for that community. But I think there's also a whole heap of things around that too that are all very much tied to their place, their stories, their histories because it's connecting with their families, their communities and their culture, but it's being able to tell that story in a broader sense. (State Government Representative) [The Bundian Way] draws on Indigenous cultures of sharing, but also has a very long history that predates European colonization. I've been listening to what [the Indigenous activists and Elders] say about sharing. A lot of it is about thinking about sovereignty and how we can both—Indigenous and non-Indigenous people—move forward, think about a shared sense of place and what that might look like if we start to think about Indigenous sovereignty. What that shared sense of place might look like if we acknowledge Indigenous sovereignty. (Local Non-Indigenous Community Member)

Today, the Bundian Way crosses many types of land tenure resulting from the colonial redistribution of Aboriginal lands. Navigating those borderlines has been a long-term challenge for the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council. An employee of the Land Council explained how the boundaries of colonisation persist:

> [The legal boundary] wasn't determined by the Aboriginal people, that was determined by non-Aboriginal people… it makes it all so complicated, because you've got these white man's rules laid over the top of the old traditional boundaries and law. Aboriginal people identify with those traditional boundaries. You know, it complicates things. (Employee of the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council).

The Chair of the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council shared how resolving land agreements was an intergenerational issue:

> [In] 1983, I asked [my dad] for advice on how to make the land rights work. And I was waiting for a long-drawn-out lecture. And he just said to me, 'you've got to become a professional negotiator'. And that was my learning on how to make land rights work. But it took me 15 years at least to understand the strength of those words. He was right.

Re-establishing the Bundian Way promises to reconnect the local Aboriginal communities to their Country and culture. As the Chair of the Bundian Way Advisory Committee explained:

> The development of the Bundian Way and the promotion of the Bundian Way is a means of cultural reclamation and maintenance. It becomes a physical representation of the culture that we can utilise to redevelop the cultural connections and identities of the youth within the communities associated with the Bundian Way.

Maintaining culture was important for "creating social change within the Aboriginal community. They'd be able to celebrate their culture and be proud of their culture, you know, these young kids growing up" (Employee of the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council). Re-establishing and maintaining these cultural connections was therefore imperative for the local Aboriginal community as custodians of the Bundian Way. They shared how being connected to Country is a "cultural right, our cultural necessity. It informs our identity" (Chair of the Bundian Way Advisory Committee).

In contrast, most of the non-Indigenous Advisory Committee members were focussed on the economic benefits that could flow from the development of social enterprises along the track:

> Our ideal concept was a Bundian Way where various agencies are helping the Land Council to set up tours along the Bundian Way—helping develop business opportunities that would feed back to local farmers and communities but that would also, of course, feed the Bundian Way business (State Government Representative).

From this perspective the Bundian Way was a "valuable asset" that needed to be "capitalized in a culturally sensitive way" (State Government Representative). There was an emphasis on employment both in terms of "a means of employment for their community", and also "employment that would actually build the Bundian Way" (State Government Representative). When the Bundian Way was seen as a site for economic development, a focus on project management of discrete sites became more prominent because it meant that "there could be a start and end point" to each stage of the project (State Government Representative) and a way to set deadlines and to maintain a sense of "moving forward" (State Government Representative). This focus on economic opportunity was influenced by the partners' work histories in large government departments or corporations.

These competing notions of the place were exacerbated by the work of a consulting firm that was hired to develop a business case for the Bundian Way. The consulting project came about when a large government grant application was rejected because the government funding body wanted to see a detailed business case for the Bundian Way. The funding agency subsequently awarded funds for the Land Council to employ a large Sydney-based consulting firm to develop a business case that could be used in future grant applications. The consultants flew down from Sydney to Eden spending a few days before returning to write their business case which emphasised the economic viability of the project and divided the Bundian Way into four discrete nodes. The first node, from Jigamy Farm to Bilgalera, would connect the Land Council with the township of Eden and the base of the Bundian Way. It also divided the work needed to complete node one into 34 steps, with an estimated completion time of 1 year.

While dividing the work of the Bundian Way into discrete nodes allowed the Advisory Committee members to focus on practical phases of work, the approach was focussed on delivering monetised experiences of place as quickly as possible. The business case did not make links between the sites proposed for development and what it would take to understand the deep temporal connections of these places to the Aboriginal community. More specifically, the business case did not include provisions for developing cultural awareness, ensuring alignment with community priorities, or understanding how the different places it proposed to develop were connected to each other. Rather than concentrating on how to develop a project that would restore cultural connection, this approach served to replicate the colonially imposed divisions of place and time.

Recognising Divisions

For some members of the Advisory Committee, dividing the track into nodes was a way to focus the Committee on achievable, staged goals:

> I think the decision that we made to divide it up into the nodes was a practical and good decision. And I think that it's quite feasible: the work can be carrying on in different nodes at the same time. (Local Government Representative).

For some time, this view of the Bundian Way as a set of separate nodes influenced the thinking and work of many members of the Advisory Committee with several grant submitted using the business case. However, after numerous failed grant applications, many Advisory Committee members began to realise that focussing on individual nodes was getting in the way of developing an inclusive plan for the Bundian Way as an interconnected cultural site. As one State Government Representative explained, the grant applications lacked a "consistent narrative". Another member of the Advisory Committee observed:

> We haven't had a full regional plan done for the Bundian Way. If it had been done, I think it would have shown the value of developing the whole Bundian Way and not just Node 1 (Local Non-Indigenous Community Member).

This was a difficult time for the Advisory Committee because the Bundian Way could not proceed without seed funding from grants. In 2018, there was another opportunity to secure funding to develop an alternative business case for the Bundian Way. This time, a government partner on the Advisory Committee facilitated the engagement of a different consultancy firm with more expertise in Indigenous projects. This consulting firm worked closely with the Land Council, reimbursing a Land Council employee to act as their local liaison person. The State Government representative who helped facilitate the engagement of this consulting firm observed that one of the first things they did was to walk part of the track together:

> He walked the node with them, so about 34 kilometres, they walked a number of times. So they talked about

> the stories and everything, and then they all between them worked out what the engineering solutions would be and put together the business case. (State Government Representative).

The efforts of the new consulting firm were appreciated by the Aboriginal partners. As the Chair of the Bundian Way Advisory Committee commented, the relationship with this second consulting firm was very different from the first because "they're enthusiastic about it. It's not just a contract for them—they are, to a level, emotionally invested in it".

Respectful relationships between the business case consultants and the Land Council meant the Land Council's Liaison Officer was better informed about the business case development, and better equipped to share the details of the business case with the Advisory Committee members. As the business case developed, members of the Advisory Committee were able to observe how it created a holistic view of the project plan. We observed how this cautious optimism reflected a shift in the way partners interacted. In 2017, meetings were heavily focussed on providing detailed updates to the Advisory Committee on work that had already been done (Field notes 30 May 2017; 25 July 2017; 7 November 2017). However, by 2018–2019, the narrative was more focussed on collaborative problem solving and consolidating pieces of work that would support the new business case and subsequent funding applications (Field notes 7 August 2018; 21 September 2018; 4 June 2019; 21 September 2019). We observed that as the planning for the new business case progressed, it resulted in "good conversation with a lot of participation and input from committee members… people providing meaningful updates and advice where relevant… [and] a lot of new material for discussion and far less focus on rehashing issues—something I had previously felt was the case in other meetings I'd attended" (Field notes, 4 June 2019).

The new business case approach, involving strong engagement with the Land Council, was able to shift perceptions amongst the broader Advisory Committee members in a way that reignited their enthusiasm for the project and encouraged them to reflect on their own participation and the participation of others. This new business case promoted the cultural significance of the Bundian Way, in contrast to the first business case the emphasis was on dividing the work—not on dividing the track.

Walking on and Listening to Country

The process of developing this new business case helped to shift the thinking of many partners of the Advisory Committee. They came to understand that dividing the track, even conceptually, created borderlines that did not acknowledge the connection between the past and place and the future of place. These Advisory Committee members came to understand that the track represented Aboriginal people's continuous connection to Country:

> [When we understand] how Aboriginal people occupied the Country, then we come to understand Australia better… The Bundian Way can awaken people to the thought that there is a continuum of views across the countryside, and we should recognise how they all connect to each other (Local Non-Indigenous Community Member).

Aboriginal Elders and members of the Land Council sought to promote this cultural understanding through storytelling and walking the track together. The stories were confronting, but for the Local Aboriginal Land Council members, there was a moral imperative to tell the confronting part of the Bundian Way story and for non-Indigenous people to sit with that story and let it work on them:

> We do ultimately touch on some of those negative parts of the history, but we always qualify it by saying that we don't expect anybody today to feel any type of guilt for those past actions… But it's important that we recognise these things did occur, because what you're not realizing is that there is an intergenerational trauma associated with Aboriginal people that leads back to some of those initial actions… and it's still happening today. So it is important that we understand where it comes from. You know, they're talking about bridging the gap. Well, you have to understand where that gap started. (Chair of the Bundian Way Advisory Committee).

As an employee of the Land Council reflected, telling the story of the Bundian Way could create "an opportunity in which we can find a common ground to talk and with that would come with reconciliation" (Employee of the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council).

Aboriginal partners in the project made ongoing efforts to involve Advisory Committee members in different experiences that would expose them to Aboriginal perspectives of the Bundian Way. Several members of the Advisory Committee took up the invitation of the Aboriginal partners to walk the track. They shared how these experiences were instrumental in changing how they understood the Bundian Way:

> I think that's why the Bundian Way project is really quite inspirational. I think it's quite amazing that you can think that you're walking in the same area that people have walked for 40 or 50,000 years. And I think that the walk, by walking, you have time to really kind of consider all that. I think it could make a fundamen-

> tal difference to some people. (Local Government Representative).

For others, walking the track allowed non-Indigenous partners to see the Bundian Way's potential to reshape understanding for future generations through the experience of the journey through the place:

> The walking, and thinking, and reflecting on where we've been and where we're going is a big part of that. And the trail has great capacity to be representative of that, not only locally, but nationally as well. And perhaps, you know, provide that opportunity for people to think about themselves and others as they walk along the trail, and as they enjoy the space… and figure out what happened beforehand, and what might come ahead. (Local Government Representative).

Advisory Committee partners spoke about how the stories were crucial to their engagement with the project:

> It's been the stories that make up the complexity and dynamism of this project. There's lots of different stories that have been generated. There was this flurry of conversations about the Bundian Way: what it was, where it was, how various people in the community were connected to it in many different ways… it's been about an actual physical space and a long-distance place, but it's also been about the stories and narratives that have kind of started to accrue… And they're ongoing. (Local Non-Indigenous Community Member).

Listening to the stories of the Aboriginal history of the Bundian Way meant Advisory Committee members had to confront the past and to sit with the emotions that generated:

> There're the hideous massacres that occurred and… there is also the dispossession and disenfranchising [of] Aboriginal people… [so while] we're trying to get people to understand and recognise the aspirations of what Aboriginal people want… we can't do that until we educate people about what actually happened. (State Government Representative).

For some it meant confronting their ancestors' past:

> I'm [a descendant] of German settlers that came to the Bega Valley and displaced and dispossessed Indigenous people. I'm very much part of the story of this area, which the Bundian Way is a part of. And I will always be part of that story. I can't remove myself from it. (Local Non-Indigenous Community Member).

Although the Chair of the Land Council welcomed non-Indigenous people to engage with the Aboriginal history of the Bundian Way without feeling guilt, listening to that history did raise feelings of guilt and shame for some partners:

> I think there's some deep-seated spiritual feeling within all of us that we want to somehow compensate for what we've done, whatever it is we've done, because we don't even know what we've done. Because we were not allowed to talk about it, we were never taught about it at school -what actually happened. And there's a big hole in people's consciousness that they need to fill. There's a guilt. It's sort of subliminal. And that's why I reckon people want to see the Bundian Way happen. (Employee of the Eden Local Aboriginal Land Council).

Another partner reflected on "how little Aboriginal history you're taught in school or exposed to" and how important it was to "do a deep dive" because you may not appreciate "how rich the stories actually are until you immerse yourself in it" (State Government Representative). She explained how this engagement with the stories of the Bundian Way was important to her from "a history perspective, an understanding perspective and a reconciliation perspective". It is important to note, as a local community resident explained, that this shared understanding of history could not replace deep, cultural history, or "the knowledge that is passed on from generation to generation of Aboriginal people". Storytelling and walking the track also fostered a shared vision of the track amongst the Advisory Committee members which incorporated both cultural connection and economic opportunity:

> The Bundian Way is just so inspiring on a whole lot of different levels. It's got the economic development side of it, it's got the tourism side of it, it's got the social development side of it, it's got recognizing the Indigenous culture… To me it's about offering opportunities and giving something back. It touches me on all sorts of levels. (Local Government Representative).

This partner went onto explain that the deeper, cultural engagement with the Bundian Way also sustained the partners commitment to the work of the Advisory Committee:

> I think that's the reason why people have stuck with it for so long. You know, there's been quite a lot of obstacles, but people still have a real passion for it [the Bundian Way], and really want to see it done and succeed, and it's that emotional aspect—people become emotionally attached to the project. (Local Government Representative).

The partners' commitment was sustained by a shared vision for the Bundian Way. As another partner explained, seeing how this shared vision contributed to a sense of community pride reinforced the importance of engaging with the stories of place:

> It's about the whole area and it's about our whole community, it's not just about one part of the community. It builds the respect about Aboriginal history, and about the Aboriginal community. And seeing those young men that had worked on it, and then took us as tour guides that day... just being so proud about the work that they had done. Everybody had a story to tell about how these workers wore their uniforms with pride, could engage about the project, and were really just very pleased and proud to be part of it. I think it spoke volumes to me about the value of what that sort of involvement can do for any community. (State Government Representative).

Storytelling and walking the track enabled the members of the Advisory Committee to imagine a shared future the Bundian Way as "a pathway that represents reconciliation and journeys towards that. From previous times and previous experiences towards the future and how we move together collectively" (Local Government Representative). The relationship between place, the past and the future was articulated by a local businessperson who explained, "the Bundian Way story will stand up on its own. The important part of the story is that the future of the Bundian Way depends on the sharing for the future". As other Advisory Committee members became more aware of the Bundian Way's cultural meanings, they also engaged in future imagining of the project that incorporated place as the critical link between the past and future.

In sum, our findings chart the beginnings of a reorientation to the Bundian Way: away from a series of development sites to an integrated cultural network. This reorientation is the result of a growing understanding by the non-Indigenous partners about the indivisibility of place and time. These new ways of understanding were the result of interdependent and ongoing practices of place-based storytelling and listening between the Aboriginal partners and the non-Indigenous members of the partnership. For the non-Indigenous members of the partnership, engagement with the Bundian Way led to an awakening of their understanding about Aboriginal peoples' long connection to the land and a realisation that the history they had grown up with was woefully incomplete. Aboriginal partners involved in the Bundian Way were generous in working with the non-Indigenous partners through place-based storytelling. In part, this was because they wanted other Australians to understand the truth of their history which they saw as a necessary first step in the journey towards Indigenous recognition at a national level. As the Chair of the Advisory Committee reflected, "this greater appreciation and respect for Aboriginal people is the key to bringing about reconciliation by way of cultural awareness".

Discussion

We have explored how the non-Indigenous partners responded to the invitation to be part of the Bundian Way and how, over time, they moved from understanding the Bundian Way as a series of social enterprise locations to a cultural pathway that connects the past, present and future. We also reflect on how listening to the Aboriginal stories of the Bundian Way—and for the first author walking parts of the Bundian Way—has acted on us, including how we have responded to the invitation to listen and to connect with place, and what that has meant for our research practice as we confront the "boundaries of knowing" (Kwaymullina, 2016, p. 439). By listening to and sitting with the stories of Aboriginal people, our paper seeks to make some small redress for the positioning of indigenous peoples in research as the "known" and never the "knowers" (Moreton-Robinson, 2004, p. 75). We recognise that the partners and our knowing is only a partial knowing, and we must sit with not knowing what it is like to be a 'knower' of the Bundian Way (Kwaymullina, 2016; Nakata, 2007).

Aboriginal Australian cultures are deeply connected to oral traditions of knowledge-sharing (Cruse et al., 2005; Flood, 2006; Langton, 2019; Yunkaporta, 2019). As Langton (2019, p. 126) explains, "storytelling is culture". Local songs and stories were handed down through generations as a way of sharing cultural practices and maintain connections to land. This is what happened in our case; land-based storytelling enabled the cross-sector partnership members to understand how that place, its past, and *all* their pasts were intertwined with the future aspirations of the community (Tuan, 1979). The generosity of the Aboriginal partners to tell their stories on Country and the willingness of the non-Indigenous partners to listen has facilitated shifts in understandings of place and fostered a shared vision for the Bundian Way. These shifts in understanding were crucial to the work of co-constructing the Bundian Way which needed to be undertaken by all members of the partnership because new connections to "song lines or real places" cannot happen unilaterally, they must "occur in deep relationships between land, spirit and groups of people" (Yunkaporta, 2019, pp. 70, 71). Through walking the track, being on Country and appreciating their shared connection to place, the individuals involved in the partnership were able to shift their perspective about what was at stake, which in turn encouraged them to reflect on their role in the partnership.

Listening lies at the heart of this paper. The non-Indigenous partners on the Advisory Committee, and we as researchers, have come to a recognition that our "whiteness mediates listening bodies, ears and spaces" and that our history and social relations will affect our ability to listen (Swan, 2017, p. 8). This can be discomforting but it is

important to stay with these feelings and begin to "develop knowledge of what is not fully present", through what Ahmed (2000, p. 157) calls an "ethical communication" that is the basis of political action and the redistribution of material and cultural resources. For Indigenous people this ethical communication must result in a redistribution of land and recognition of Indigenous people as right-holders with historical and cultural connection to place (Altamirano-Jimenez, 2004, 2013; Banerjee, 2000; O'Bryan, 2018; Sarkki et al., 2020).

Such an approach could facilitate moves away from privileging Western ways of organising and partnering (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2004, 2013; Banerjee, 2000, 2018; Banierjee and Tedmanson, 2010; Peredo et al., 2004; Peredo & McLean, 2013) and help to shift the power dynamics of colonisation which can impair the ability of the partnership to work effectively (Caine & Krogman, 2010; Kuokkanen, 2011; O'Faircheallaigh, 2017). We argue that attention to the relationship between place and time fosters place-based ethical partnerships (Allen, 2003; Almog-Bar & Schmid, 2018; Hesse et al., 2019; van Tulder & Keen, 2018). Specifically, we identify the ways in which the practice of placed-based storytelling can help navigate contested meanings of place in cross-sector partnerships. This involves non-Indigenous partners acknowledging the intersection of power, time and place in shaping partnership relations. As Banerjee (2000, p. 33) argues, drawing on Mudimbe (1988, p. 183), this requires a fundamental restructuring of power relations in which Aboriginal peoples are able to "construct their own social and cultural models in ways not mediated by a Western episteme and historicity".

Massey's (1995) argument that places are shifting articulations of social relations is useful in helping us understand the way that place shapes cross-sector partnerships. However, the way in which she critiques the relationship between place and the past: what she calls, "the invention of tradition" (1995, p. 184) fails to recognise the need for colonised people to reclaim a lost sense of place. Western assumptions about the relationship of place to time risk homogenising different histories and normalising cultural differences. To avoid this, we need to recognise that for indigenous peoples meanings of place are shaped by power relations (Agius et al., 2007; Allen, 2003; Escobar, 2008). For Banerjee, this begins with recognition of the other should not stop with a "recognition of other histories but should recognise them as other knowledges that question the legitimacy and power of Western knowledge systems" (2000, p. 32). We believe this happened in our case, as non-Indigenous partners came to understand the primary importance of cultural connection to Country and appreciation that Aboriginal people have always had their own ways of mapping time/space that does not involve carving places up using straight lines or telling stories about a place through linear narratives because "the winding path is just how a path is, and therefore it needs no name" (Yunkaporta, 2019, p. 21).

We suggest that as management, organisation studies and business ethics scholars, we have much to learn from listening to and incorporating non-Western understandings of place in our research methods and theorising. In this case, Indigenous Australian's understandings of place—and the belief that place and time are inseparable as concepts (Moreton-Robinson, 2003; Pascoe, 2014; Yunkaporta, 2019)—has helped us to better understand how place and time interact in contemporary practice. This is not to say relationships between time and place have not been explored by Western scholars; it is to emphasise how Aboriginal writings about place and the way that the Aboriginal members of the Advisory Committee talked about the relationship between time and place offered nuanced understandings of the indivisibility of the two. We developed a new appreciation for how the past is embedded in place, and how connection to place can provide a moral justification for future-focussed, cross-sector work. We have come to an understand Country as a system of reciprocal relations and obligations and to appreciate that such a way of understanding place is integral to the politics of decolonisation (Radcliffe, 2018).

Conclusion

Listening to Indigenous people as right-holders and custodians of their Country is essential if cross-sector partnerships are to foster reciprocal relations and practices that are attuned to the specificity of place. Our paper shows how an openness to Indigenous understandings of the indivisibility of place and time can foster an ethics of custodianship in which new partnerships models can emerge (c.f. Banerjee, 2018; Ermine, 2007) that can redress the ongoing negative consequences of colonisation.

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