



Griffith Law School

Process Evaluation of *Listening to Country: Exploring the Value of Acoustic Ecology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women in Prison* Project in Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre

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Section 2 of this report

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I would also like to acknowledge the strength and courage of all Indigenous people who are in custody. I hope that this evaluation report somehow contributes to making their life that little bit better.

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Executive Summary

This report details the findings of a process evaluation of the ‘Listening to Country: Exploring the Value of Acoustic Ecology with Indigenous¹ Women in Prison’ (Listening to Country) project conducted at the Brisbane Women’s Correctional Centre (BWCC). Since September 2018, the BWCC has been a remand and reception centre for female prisoners in southern Queensland. The total number of women at the BWCC averages about 300 per day, with those who have identified as being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander making up approximately 23% of that number. This is lower than the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adult female prisoners in Queensland, which was 35% on 30 June 2018 (The State of Queensland, Queensland Corrective Services 2018, p. 117, Table 3).

The evaluation methodology comprised observations of the workshops, and interviews with key stakeholders. Key findings include:

- There was agreement amongst the stakeholders that there had been an adequate amount of consultation and engagement of various stakeholder groups by the Research Team, in designing the project.
- The project had been designed in a way that was culturally safe for the female prisoner participants, which was an important element in the success of the project.
- Many logistical challenges arose in delivering the project to prisoners in a remand and reception centre. The Research Team were, however, able to adapt to the circumstances, and as a result of their dedication and belief in the value of the project, were able to overcome all obstacles to ensure that the project was delivered as intended.
- The use of soundscapes is an effective tool for reconnecting and/or strengthening connections to Country.

¹ I am aware of the debates surrounding the use of the term ‘Indigenous’ to refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, however, I have elected to use that term when referring to the female prisoners who participated in the Listening to Country project at the Brisbane Women’s Correctional Centre, because two of the participants had Māori heritage. It is, therefore, important to use the term ‘Indigenous’ to be inclusive. The two prisoners were given permission to participate in the project by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female prisoners.

- The delivery of the Listening to Country project may be more effective in a prison context where there are stable numbers of sentenced prisoners who are less likely to be transferred or released in the immediate future.

Overwhelmingly, this evaluation concludes that the Listening to Country program is a positive initiative for female Indigenous prisoners at BWCC. At the very least it gave the women something to do and something to look forward to, but more importantly it connected the women to Country as a result of their interactions with Elders and from discussing and actively listening to sounds that were relevant to their Indigenous cultural heritage.

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1.0 Introduction

This evaluation stems from a Lowitja Institute grant (under the theme of ‘strong families’) to fund the Listening to Country project. Extra funds were provided to engage an external evaluator to conduct a process evaluation of the project. The aim of the Listening to Country project as articulated in the funding application was ‘to explore the value of acoustic ecology to promote cultural maintenance and wellbeing among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison’ (Woodland 2017, p. 3). By working collaboratively with Indigenous women in prison and using Dadirri (deep active listening) (Ungunmerr 2017) to produce an audio file and CD of culturally significant sounds from natural environments and musical instruments, and from the voices of the participants, the project sought to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of the women and their connection to Country, particularly while serving time in prison. The project was initially envisaged for sentenced female prisoners, however, due to changes to the facility at which the project was delivered, the participants in the project were on remand awaiting the outcome of bail applications and/or their sentence outcome. This process evaluation will consider these changes in assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of the design and delivery of the project. More information about the project and a short excerpt of the audio work can be found at www.listeningtocountry.com.

1.1 Background

The idea for the Listening to Country project came to Dr Sarah Woodland while she was delivering a series of drama programs in the BWCC, including a radio drama program that used audio recording and performance, and a drama performance that had a cultural focus. More and more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women were participating in the programs and some proposed the idea of making a relaxation CD that was culturally appropriate to help them de-stress in a prison environment. By this they meant a CD that included sounds from the bush and other culturally relevant sounds the female prisoners considered appropriate, such as the didgeridoo. Sarah ended up discussing the idea with Dr Leah Barclay (an acoustic ecologist), Dr Vicki Saunders (an Aboriginal researcher) and Elders in various communities, which led to the creation of the Listening to Country project. It was

established as a pilot project since delivering a research project that focused on the utility of acoustic ecology and the use of Dadirri practices on the emotional and social wellbeing of Indigenous women in prison was new territory for all members of the Research Team. The project was described in the funding application as comprising 12 x 2-hour workshops at the BWCC to create a one-hour immersive audio piece with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women that would be made available to the women via a CD and the Internet. Although originally targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison, the workshops ended up including the involvement of two female prisoners who were of Māori heritage and who were given permission to participate by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners. Initially it was envisaged that the Research Team and two Elders would visit the prison twice a week for eight weeks to conduct workshops, but the time-frame for the visits ended up being compressed to two weeks (with one week's break in-between the two weeks for the collection of audio sounds) because in September 2018 the BWCC changed to a remand and reception prison where the women were unlikely to be held for long periods of time. Funds were also provided to develop workshops in other communities and sites to share the project approach and final audio work. A video, policy brief and research publications (in journals and at conferences) were also included as outputs in the funding application. In the process of obtaining approval from the Queensland Corrective Services (QCS) Research Committee to deliver the project at the BWCC, the QCS Research Committee requested that the design and delivery of the project be externally evaluated, and as a result extra funding was requested and obtained from the Lowitja Institute for that purpose. I was engaged as the evaluator, based on my prior experience of having evaluated another culturally-focused arts-based prison program, to conduct the evaluation. This evaluation fits within my Australian Research Council Future Fellowship project (FT140100313), which aims to advance knowledge about how best to evaluate Indigenous-focused criminal justice programs so that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and standpoints are reflected in the work.

1.2 Objectives

The evaluation focused on the design and delivery of the project and how the workshops were implemented as perceived by stakeholders and a small number of female

prisoner participants. The purpose of the process evaluation is to inform future adaptations of the project. The following questions and ideas were provided to guide the process evaluation:

1. How the team assessed the need and context for the Listening to Country project (including consultation processes);
2. What theories, rationale and logic model underpinned the project;
3. How effectively was the project designed and implemented (e.g. including organisational partnerships, logistical challenges, structure of workshop sessions, co-facilitation of creative process);
4. Initial evaluation of outcomes (e.g. immediate responses from the team and participants in terms of the project's efficacy in relation to creative engagement, cultural connection, relaxation and stress reduction).

The program logic model that informed the design and delivery of the project appears below in Table 1.1. The program logic describes why the project is important, what the project is trying to address, what are the main activities that will be delivered, what things will be produced and what outcomes are expected. The program logic assisted in framing the evaluation questions and performance indicators. Although there are a number of medium to long-term outcomes noted in the program logic, including '[e]ncouraging justice-involved women on pathways towards desistance from crime', this evaluation was only able to assess some of the short-term outcomes because of the time frame in which the evaluation was conducted. The short-term outcomes were mainly assessed according to stakeholder, not participant, perceptions. It should be noted that measuring the impact of culturally focused, arts-based programs on recidivism (or pathways to desistance) is challenging and it is often done in ways that are not ethically sound (Putt 2013). Difficulties arise in accurately capturing the number of new crimes committed, fully understanding reasons for changes in recidivism rates, isolating program impact from other causal factors and ensuring that the theories and hypotheses that underpin the Indigenous-focused program are appropriately reflected in the evaluation methodology.

1.3 Scope of the Evaluation and Report Structure

This evaluation is limited to considering how the Listening to Country project was conducted in terms of its design and delivery, and to gauge participant views about the adequacy and appropriateness of the workshops. The evaluation does not evaluate the research outputs stemming from the project or long-term outcomes or impacts.

The following section of the report (Section 2), is a literature review of what benefits arts-based culturally-focused programs and more specifically acoustic ecology programs, offer people in prison and in the wider community. Section 3 sets out the evaluation methodology, including how the data was collected and ethical considerations which have informed the collection and analysis of the data. Sections 4 and 5 report the evaluation findings and discuss their implications for the design and delivery of the project in other prison and community settings. Section 6 concludes the report by making recommendations for future iterations of the Listening to Country project.

Table 1.1: Listening to Country – Program Logic Model

Situational Analysis	Assumptions	Inputs	Outputs		Outcomes/Impact	
<i>What are the needs? Why are we doing the program?</i>	<i>What assumptions are we making that inform the program?</i>	<i>What we invest</i>	<i>What we do</i>	<i>How we document</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Medium to long-term</i>
<p>Lack of culturally informed programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (especially women) in prison. This assertion is supported by the literature, and by the cultural officers at BWCC.</p> <p>Response to direct request from Aboriginal women at BWCC to make a “culturally appropriate relaxation CD” that includes things like “bush sounds” and digeridoo.</p>	<p>Ongoing colonisation has led to socio-economic, emotional, and physical health and wellbeing problems for Aboriginal communities and families that require healing.</p> <p>Aboriginal women in prison are separated from family, community and country and many therefore experience negative health and wellbeing outcomes.</p> <p>Reconnecting with culture and country promotes health and wellbeing for Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Arts activities provide positive experiences such as relaxation, stress relief, mindfulness, etc.</p> <p>Participation in arts and creative projects in prisons has been found to be beneficial for wellbeing.</p>	<p>Partnerships with key stakeholders, including Lowitja Institute, Queensland Corrective Services (Murri Dhagun Unit), Brisbane Council of Elders.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary team of arts and cultural workers, with skills and experience in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participatory arts work in prisons and Aboriginal communities 2. Yarning circles, storywork and practice of Dadirri to promote cultural connection and wellbeing 3. Acoustic ecology 4. Musical composition and audio production 5. Practice-led, arts informed, and Indigenous research methodologies. <p>High quality sound equipment and computers/software for recording, playback and editing/post-production.</p> <p>Administrative systems and support for project management.</p> <p>Networks and connections with Aboriginal communities and groups, artists and cultural workers for future collaboration and development of the project beyond the first pilot iteration.</p> <p>Employ an external evaluator to undertake a process evaluation of the</p>	<p>Continued consultation with Brisbane Elders, Murri Dhagun Unit, and other senior cultural representatives to involve them in the creative process, and ensure ethical, culturally safe, and appropriate approaches are being used.</p> <p>Deliver a program of workshops with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in BWCC that focus on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yarning to explore connection to cultures and country. This may also include the use of photographic imagery, poetry, diary/journal writing etc. 2. Listening to environmental soundscapes brought in from outside, and reflecting on the effects of these (Dadirri). 3. Selecting relevant sites and/or sounds for the purpose of building our own immersive audio recording. 4. Working with the selected sounds, and developing new soundscapes (e.g. singing, poetry, instruments) to build the immersive audio work together. 5. Listening to the finished audio work and reflecting on the effect of this. <p>Administer the GEM tool (validated measure for social and emotional wellbeing) with participants before and after the project (TBC, based on consultation with GEM tool developers).</p>	<p>Audio recording the creative process and yarning with women in BWCC during workshops (where appropriate and agreed upon by the group).</p> <p>Participant reflective journals.</p> <p>Field notes and written/creative reflections from arts/cultural facilitators who are delivering the program.</p> <p>Process evaluation undertaken by external evaluator.</p> <p>Pre- and post-program GEM tool responses and results.</p> <p>1-hour immersive audio work as cultural artefact.</p>	<p>For women participants in BWCC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learning new creative skills. 2. Working collaboratively with each other, and with arts/cultural workers and Elders towards a creative goal. 3. regeneration of cultural practices e.g. Dadirri. 4. developing/co-creation of new approaches to relaxation and stress reduction. 5. a positive, safe space for sharing stories and reflecting on culture and identity. 6. Stress reduction and relaxation through creative process and listening. <p>For key stakeholders (Lowitja Institute, QCS Murri Dhagun Unit, Brisbane Council of Elders):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stronger connections and collaborations between different institutions and groups that are involved in 	<p>For women participants in BWCC:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Positive self-image/identity. 2. Connection to culture/country. 3. Stress reduction and relaxation as a longer-term mechanism for positive coping. 4. Positive relationships and connections with others, including family/kinship/community connections outside BWCC. <p>For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Encouraging justice-involved women on pathways towards desistance from crime. 2. Stronger families and communities due to women’s increased wellbeing and positive participation in family/community life.* <p>For key stakeholders (Lowitja Institute, QCS Murri Dhagun Unit, Brisbane Council of Elders):</p>

	<p>Aboriginal women have engaged enthusiastically in previous drama projects at BWCC (including audio work), and outcomes have been positive, especially in relation to cultural education and connection.</p> <p>Listening to soundscapes from natural environments promotes a sense of relaxation, stress relief and relief from the oppressive soundscapes of the prison.</p> <p>Positive experiences of creativity and cultural connection, maintenance and transmission inside prison impacts on women's ability to form stronger community ties and develop coping mechanisms to assist them outside.</p>	<p>program as practice innovation, and produce a report.</p>	<p>Source already available recordings, and undertake new field recordings of natural environments identified by the women to bring back into the Centre for use in developing the audio work.</p> <p>Produce a 1-hour immersive audio work based on the women's creative input, including creating CD copies for use inside the centre on personal players.</p> <p>Conduct follow-up interviews with the women post-project to explore continued engagement with the audio work.</p> <p>Explore opportunities for "listening events" or sound installations inside the Centre, in other correctional centres such as Numinbah, Southern QLD and Helana Jones, and for public audiences (e.g. Politics of Listening symposium).</p> <p>Continue consultations with key stakeholders, as well as Aboriginal communities and groups, artists and cultural workers for future collaboration and development of the project beyond the first pilot iteration. Develop a knowledge translation plan to present findings and outcomes from the program with these groups.</p> <p>Present the work at conferences/symposia (e.g. Lowtija Conference 2019), and produce 2-3 research papers for inclusion in journals in the discipline areas of Acoustic Ecology, Indigenous health, Indigenous Research Methods, Arts and Wellbeing, Arts Informed Research etc.</p>		<p>supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Innovative model for creative programming with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison that may be adaptable to other correctional settings e.g. other Centres, male populations, youth detention etc. 2. Evidence-based understanding of the relationships between creative cultural practices and stress reduction and cultural connection, maintenance and transmission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (and those in prison). <p>For the wider research community:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generation and translation of new knowledge about the role that creative interdisciplinary processes can play in correctional and other community settings to promote stress reduction, wellbeing, and cultural connection, maintenance and transmission. <p><i>*These kinds of lasting outcomes would be contingent upon more programs such as Listening to Country being offered in correctional sites, and there being community support for women upon release.</i></p>
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2.0 Cultural Arts-based and Acoustic Ecology Programs

Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services approach health as a holistic concept which includes social and emotional wellbeing, recognising the important relationships between individuals, family and community, and connection to Country, culture and spirit (Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of NSW 2017). Ongoing colonisation and inequality have led to significant socio-economic and health and wellbeing disadvantages for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Despite the increasing number of health and wellbeing programs aimed at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, disparities in health, social and emotional wellbeing, incarceration rates, self-harm and suicide rates, substance abuse and family violence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations persist (Walker et al. 2014). In this context of child removal, intergenerational trauma and cultural dislocation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in particular face significant marginalisation, and have become the fastest growing group in the prison population (Sullivan et al. 2019). The risk of suicide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women leaving prison is estimated to be 6.5 times higher than for non-Indigenous women of the same age (Rasmussen, Donoghue, & Sheehan 2018). This literature review will outline the importance of culturally appropriate health and wellbeing programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the role sounds associated with nature could have in engendering healing within a prison context.

2.1 Culturally Appropriate Health and Wellbeing and Art-based Programs

A systematic review of health and wellbeing programs targeting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (both in and outside prison) found that successful programs incorporate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander definition of wellbeing into their design and implementation (Murrup-Stewart et al. 2019). This involves valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and doing, and emphasising cultural and traditional activities as part of the healing process. Programs which incorporated creativity and artistic activities were identified as particularly effective by participants. Improved wellbeing was described by participants as positive increases in self-awareness, empowerment, emotional strength

and intelligence, healthier coping mechanisms, and a sense of belonging and connection to culture and Country (Murrup-Stewart et al. 2019, p. 183).

There is growing recognition that programs must be designed, implemented *and* evaluated in ways that are culturally appropriate and include the involvement of Elders and the wider community throughout the entire process. Incorporating yarning into health and wellbeing programs, an important cultural process of communication which involves sharing stories and building knowledge collectively, has been strongly linked to improved social and emotional wellbeing, increased participation in programs and strengthened relationships both within community and between the participants and facilitators of the program (Murrup-Stewart et al. 2019; Walker et al. 2014). Yarning is both an enjoyable and culturally relevant activity for participants, as well as a useful methodology for understanding participant perspectives and achieving accurate, in-depth evaluations of these programs (Walker et al. 2014).

Evaluations which utilise traditional Western methodologies and definitions of health or wellbeing often emphasise rates of recidivism in prison contexts, and disregard cultural and social determinants in favour of individual outcomes in the healthcare context. These research methods are perceived as inappropriate, uncomfortable and unsafe by participants, and often yield 'lacklustre' results (Murrup-Stewart et al. 2019, p. 172). By contrast, a comprehensive literature review of research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander healing processes, including prison programs, found strong evidence that findings are 'remarkably consistent' when evaluations are grounded in local Indigenous knowledge systems and qualitative methods (McKendrick et al. 2013, p. 3). These findings consistently demonstrate that health and wellbeing programs must engage with local communities to ensure services are culturally safe and holistic, integrate appropriate staffing, include culturally relevant activities, value participant experiences, and utilise culturally appropriate evaluation methodologies.

Centring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander holistic approaches to health and wellbeing is further supported by contemporary theories of desistance from crime, which highlight the importance of broader social processes and positive social development of

individuals in pathways towards desistance from crime (Cheliotis & Jordanoska 2016). Arts programs in prison have been found to be particularly effective at encouraging positive individual and community outcomes which indirectly assist in desistance. These outcomes from prison-based arts programs include positive self-perception, enhanced self-esteem, empowerment, reduced levels of stress and depression, increased teamwork and socialisation, and various other positive psychological and social changes (Hill 2015). Prison-based arts programs which are culturally-specific for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners have been similarly found to lead to feelings of belonging and engagement, help build a sense of purpose and hope, empower individuals and communities, improve healing between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, facilitate connection to culture and Country, and build community with other Indigenous prisoners (Ware 2014; Hanley & MacPherson 2019). Evaluations of these programs that focus on offending-related outcomes such as rates of recidivism are often considered inappropriate and ineffective.

2.2 Sounds of Nature in Prison

Nurturing positive social and emotional wellbeing is key to broader healing processes, particularly in the prison context. The stressful environment of prison, and the separation from family, community and Country, compounds the higher rates of chronic health conditions, mental health issues, and substance abuse that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals experience (Sivak et al. 2017). A key contributor to stress, violence, self-harm and suicide in prison is the harsh and stressful soundscape of the prison environment (Morana & Turner 2018). Prisons are often described as noisy, unpredictable, hostile, disorienting, with unpleasant soundscapes punctuated by outbursts of violence and shouting (Rice 2016). Prisoners lack 'acoustical agency' over their environment, with the harsh soundscape functioning as an aspect of the wider punishing role of imprisonment (Rice 2016, p. 10). The concept of acoustical agency is particularly key in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community context of ongoing colonisation, and struggles for agency and self-determination.

With the lack of personal space and acoustical agency in prison, sound is therefore a source of significant stress and it can also have profound implications for empowerment and relaxation. There is an abundance of evidence that exposure to sounds of nature reduces stress and promotes relaxation, has restorative effects, and encourages cognitive skills (Ratcliffe, Gatersleben & Sowden 2013). Although the oppressive conditions of prison are well documented in criminological literature, the rehabilitative and therapeutic effects of connection to nature for imprisoned people is a significantly under-researched topic (Hemsworth 2016). There has been no research specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations in prison.

Drawing on qualitative research from the United Kingdom and the Nordic region, Morana and Turner (2018) found that exposure to green space and natural acoustics had calming effects in prison, reducing levels of stress and tension and even improved health outcomes. The researchers suggest that there is a lack of research into the restorative effects of natural soundscapes in prison because prisons are not often perceived as healing or rehabilitative in their function (Morana & Turner 2018). However, due to the inherently restrictive environment, sounds of nature in prison could be more vital to a person's emotional wellbeing compared to other environments (Hemsworth 2016). Furthermore, the profound connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to Country suggests the health and wellbeing effects of nature sounds could be even more pronounced for these populations.

Supporting rehabilitation through stress reduction and connection to nature could have an important role in encouraging healing and ultimately reducing reoffending. Positive experiences of creativity, connection to culture, community and Country, and connection to natural and culturally relevant soundscapes inside prison may have a powerful effect on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners and their pathways to desistance.

3.0 Evaluation Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The process evaluation considers the following questions:

1. How the team assessed the need and context for the Listening to Country project (including consultation processes);
2. What theories, rationale and logic model underpinned the project;
3. How effectively was the project designed and implemented (e.g. including organisational partnerships, logistical challenges, structure of workshop sessions, co-facilitation of creative process);
4. Initial evaluation of outcomes (e.g. immediate responses from the team and participants in terms of the project's efficacy in relation to creative engagement, cultural connection, relaxation and stress reduction).

As previously mentioned, this project also forms part of a larger ARC Future Fellowship project which is exploring better ways to evaluate Indigenous-focused criminal justice programs in ways that acknowledge and privilege the position of Indigenous cultures. The overarching framework for the research is, therefore, to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols, knowledges and standpoints are respected, followed and acknowledged and that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are privileged. As Martin & Mirraboopa state, this does not necessarily equate to 'resisting or opposing western research frameworks and ideologies', but rather working in conjunction with such methodologies (2003, p. 205).

The methodology relied on four main sources of data:

1. Existing documentation and publications: This included documentation regarding the establishment and funding for the Listening to Country program, the ethics application and progress reports;
2. Interviews with key stakeholders, including:
 - a. Members of the Research Team;
 - b. Elders who supported the project;

- c. BWCC staff who assisted with the delivery of the project (who are also considered QCS staff);
 - d. QCS staff (not working in BWCC) who were involved with the implementation of the project;
 - e. Female prisoners who participated in the workshops.
3. Observations of the Listening to Country workshops.
 4. BWCC data on numbers of prisoners and number of Listening to Country attendees.

The evaluation was requested by the QCS Research Committee prior to approving the delivery of the Listening to Country project at the BWCC. The scope and methodology of the research was formulated in consultation with the Research Team and Elders who participated in the delivery of the project.

In conducting the research, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) research guidelines were followed. These Guidelines comprise 14 principles, which AIATSIS states can be grouped as follows:

- rights, respect and recognition;
- negotiation, consultation, agreement and mutual understanding;
- participation, collaboration and partnership;
- benefits, outcomes and giving back;
- managing research: use, storage and access, and
- reporting and compliance (Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies 2012, p. 3).

Ethics approval for the process evaluation component of the research was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Griffith University.

3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

Interview participants were selected based on their participation and involvement in the Listening to Country project. Potential participants were identified by the Research Team

and by using snowball sampling, whereby an interview participant suggests other possible participants. Potential interviewees were contacted to ask if they were willing to participate in an interview. Three of the potential interview participants identified by the Research Team were not interviewed. Two declined to be interviewed because they felt they did not have a great deal of involvement in the project and one had left their position. The interviews were conducted either via telephone or face-to-face. The two Elders did their face-to-face interview together. All of the participants were given an Information Sheet and Consent Form (see Appendix A and B). The stakeholder participants signed a Consent Form (see Appendix A) prior to doing the interview and the female prisoners who were interviewed were asked to sign a Consent Form (see Appendix B) when the workshops commenced at BWCC which included their consent to be interviewed if they agreed to participate in the process evaluation. In total, 12 people were interviewed from the following groups:

Role	Number
Research Team (coded as RT1, RT2, RT3 and RT4)	4
Elders (coded as E1 and E2)	2
QCS staff (coded as QCS1, QCS2 and QCS3)	3
Female prisoners (coded as P1, P2 and P3)	3
Total	12

Information about the way in which the Listening to Country project was designed, how it was implement and whether it met its original aims was collected utilising a semi-structured interview approach using the following interview questions:

Stakeholder interviews

1. How did you become involved in the Listening to Country project?
2. What is your role in the Listening to Country project?
3. Can you describe how the project works? Are there certain aspects of the project that are crucial?
4. What do you see as being the main aim or aims of the project?
5. How do you think the project connects participants to culture and Country? Is the creative approach important for doing this?

6. Do you think that there are particular participants for whom the project works better?
7. What are the benefits for the women who participated in the project?
8. [For BWCC and QCS interview participants] How effectively did the Research Team consult with QCS and BWCC staff in setting up and delivery the project?
9. [For BWCC and QCS interview participants] How is the project perceived by the wider BWCC staff?
10. How well did the Research Team engage the female participants?
11. What changes would you make to the project? What were the challenges in implementing the project?
12. Is there a benefit of a project like this for the wider community both in and outside prison?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Prisoner interviews

1. How did you hear about the Listening to Country project?
2. How many times did you attend the workshops?
3. Why did you choose to participate?
4. What made you return to the workshops after the first day you attended?
5. How did the workshops make you feel? Did they help you feel more relaxed and less anxious? Did they make you feel more connected to others?
6. How do you feel about the facilitators? About the Elders?
7. What activities did you enjoy most? Least?
8. How do you identify? Do you know where you are from/your mob? Do you have a strong connect to culture and Country on the outside (where you are from, where you were born or your belonging place? – whatever this means to you)? Where would you put yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the strongest)?
9. Does this project help strengthen your connection to culture and your ideas of Country?
10. What did you like or not about the Listening to Country project?
11. Would you do a project like this again if were offered?
12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

On average the telephone and face-to-face Interviews took 35 minutes (range 12-71 minutes), although more time was spent talking to the interview participant prior to the interview taking place. A decolonising and critical race approach was used to interview Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants to reflect the purpose of the study, which is to change and improve conditions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Dunbar Jr. 2008). Decolonising approaches to interviewing are typically concerned with building a rapport with the people being interviewed and ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives are prioritised (Neuman 2003). In order to facilitate this with the female prisoners who were interviewed, an Elder was present during the interviews. The Elder contributed to the discussion as they saw fit. With the consent of the interview participants, the interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed by a transcription service. Each participant was assigned a code according to their role to de-identify the data collected, and for the purposes of analysing the data, it was noted whether they were Indigenous (eight participants) or non-Indigenous (four participants). The interview data were analysed according to themes that emerged from the data and that were informed by the scholarship that has discussed acoustic ecology programs and culturally-appropriate arts-based programs in prisons.

3.3 Observations

Permission was sought from all those participating in the Listening to Country project (including the female prisoners participating in the program) to observe the conduct of the workshops. Observations took place on the 11th of January 2019, 18th of January 2019, and the 31st of January 2019. Notes were taken of the following observations:

1. How Indigenous women who participated in the workshops interacted with Elders and members of the Research Team;
2. How the layout and working space of the rooms used to conduct the workshops facilitated the ease with which Indigenous women connected to the Elders and Research Team;
3. How the Indigenous women who participated in the workshops interacted with each other during the workshops;

4. How the BWCC staff interacted with the Indigenous women who were participating in the workshops, Elders and members of the Research Team.

3.4 Limitations

It is important to remember that this evaluation is primarily focused on the project's process and not on outcomes. Four of the people who were interviewed were involved in establishing or facilitating the project. Their responses to the interview questions were not markedly different to the responses given by other stakeholders, indicating that their responses were balanced and not intended to portray the project only in a positive light.

4.0 Evaluation Results

4.1 Consultation and Design

The interviews used to evaluate the level of consultation and engagement of various stakeholders and the appropriateness of the design of the project, were mainly those of the Research Team, Elders, QCS staff and BWCC staff (nine interviews), since the three female prisoner interview participants were not able contribute much to this discussion. Project documentation, such as funding and ethics applications and progress reports were also reviewed.

All of the nine interview participants agreed that there was an adequate amount of consultation and involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the design and delivery of the project. Having said that, two of the Research Team members thought that the project would be even more effective if Indigenous researchers led the project, which would be their aim if they were to receive ongoing funding to deliver the project again. The Research Team included a Gunggari researcher and a Kabi Kabi/Gubbi Gubbi artist and researcher, who were heavily involved in the development of the workshops and who will also be involved in future knowledge translation activities. Additionally, two local Brisbane Elders were asked to join the project after consulting with one of the Elders in Residence at Griffith University, the Brisbane Council of Elders, the Director of the Murrighagun Cultural Centre² at QCS and the Cultural Liaison Officer (CLO) at BWCC. The Elders were involved in program development and will be involved in future knowledge translation activities in a consultative capacity. The Elders expressed a keen interest in being involved in the project when they were approached, and found their participation not only helped the women in prison, but also themselves. According to one of the interview participants, the 'Aunties took a lot away from it [the project] as well. ... [T]hat's a win-win for everyone' (Interview with QCS3). The involvement of Elders was crucial in order to encourage 'relatedness' and connection with the female prisoners (Interview with RT1). This was accepted as enhancing

² The Murrighagun Cultural Centre is the name for the QCS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit. The word 'Murri' in the name references to Aboriginal people from Queensland and north-western New South Wales and the word 'Dhagun' means ground.

the quality of the research. Underpinning the design and delivery of the project was the funding support from the Lowitja Institute, which also required the Research Team adhere to culturally appropriate ethical standards and principles in formulating the project and methodology. The degree of consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and individuals and the positive response that resulted from these consultations confirmed in the minds of the Research Team that the project was a 'good idea' (Interview with RT2). Programs that are specifically for Indigenous remandees are not common, making the Listening to Country project unique on various levels, including its culturally specific focus, its use of acoustic ecology and its delivery in a remand centre. One of the interview participants noted it was important to provide programs specifically for Indigenous people in prison, because it would improve attendance rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners. Attendance at mainstream programs was usually not high for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners, because those programs were not necessarily culturally safe and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners were less likely to actively engage in programs if they are in the minority.

The Research Team and the QCS participant noted that it took quite some time to negotiate with the QCS Research Committee to obtain their approval to proceed with the research. The QCS Research Committee wanted the methodology to reflect a more quantitative, scientific approach, suggesting that a randomised control trial be used. The Research Team viewed this as being unethical and unsuitable for the targeted group of participants and design of the project. The participants who had knowledge of the negotiations that took place, thought they were handled professionally and according to cultural values and protocols by the Research Team.

The design of the project necessarily changed when the BWCC became a remand and reception centre. Due to the transitory nature of the centre, the delivery of the workshops was compressed to two weeks, which compromised the relational aspect of the project. This was, however, the best way to deal with the risk of attrition from the workshops due to prisoners being transferred to other correctional institutions or released. The creative component of the design of the project necessarily made the workshops more intensive and the timeframe for the workshops longer, adding to the challenges resulting from

implementing the project in a remand and reception centre. The importance of the creative component of the project was reinforced by two of the female prisoner interview participants, who mentioned that they liked the artistic nature of the project and the feeling that they had 'made something' (Interview with P3).

Notifying the female prisoners about the project did not go as planned. An insufficient number of posters were circulated throughout the prison, resulting in one of the female prisoner interview participants mentioning that more should have been done to advise the prisoners about the project. Two of the prisoners who were interviewed found out about the project from posters and one found out about the project from another prisoner. This latter interview participant suggested announcing information about the project over the loudspeaker, which one of the QCS interview participants confirmed could have been done. Both the QCS interview participants acknowledged that the project had not been widely advertised and that more posters could have been printed or they could have asked the CLO to speak to the women directly about the project (although the CLO was on leave at the time the project was being advertised). Additionally, by the time QCS Research Committee permission was granted to proceed with the project, advertising the project occurred during the Christmas/school holiday break, leaving it up to staff who were not on leave and who were not necessarily the staff the Research Team had consulted with in the planning stages to promote the project amongst the prisoners.

4.2 What Made the Project 'Work'?

Two main components of the project ensured its 'success': (i) the fact that it was an Indigenous specific program with a cultural element; and (ii) the skill and dedication of the facilitators. All of the interview participants, including the three female prisoners, identified the cultural safety and focus of the workshops as an important element of the project. As mentioned, there are not many programs in prisons, particularly in remand and reception centres, that are specifically for Indigenous prisoners, which made the Listening to Country project unique and appealing for the female prisoners. The Elder involvement ensured the

project was delivered in a culturally safe and respectful manner and that it maintained its cultural focus, as is explained in the following quote:

Because those Elders were there, they also had a huge amount of input as well, so that also made it a really culturally responsive piece of research. It was really, really important from my point of view. Really important. A lot of the time women in centres are really stuck with art or sewing or learning hairdressing and because of the limited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff in QCS, to have those Elders just with those girls by themselves in a small group, is very, very important. A lot of the time the girls are in the centre because they're not connected to culture so it was really important to connect them in that way. (Interview with QCS3)

The skills and dedication of the Research Team was also a crucial element of the project. The Research Team was described as 'smart', 'all good', 'cool' and 'nice' by the three female prisoners, and as a group of people whose 'heart' was in the project by the other stakeholders, meaning they were passionate about what they were doing. Without this passion and without their 'tenacity', 'determination' and adaptability, the project would more than likely have folded when faced with the challenges presented by QCS Research Committee (Interview with RT2). The general consensus was that the Research Team was able to effectively engage with the women in prison, despite the challenges involved in working in a remand centre. Indeed, one of the female prisoners noted that the facilitators 'brought ... [them] out' over time 'like getting to know a child', suggesting that the Research Team was able to build a rapport with the female prisoners despite the short time frame in which the workshops were delivered (Interview with P1). Another prisoner ended the interview by thanking the Research Team for 'bringing the project to us girls' (Interview with P3). Only one of the female prisoners offered a suggestion to improve the workshops, which was to provide morning tea. She was especially concerned that there was no tea or coffee for the Elders, which she considered 'rude' (Interview with P3).

A member of the Research Team and the Elders also acknowledged the support of the BWCC and some QCS staff as a reason the project was able to be delivered.

4.3 Aims and Effects of the Project

There was a common understanding amongst all of the stakeholders, aside from one (who indicated they did not have sufficient knowledge of the program to be able to comment) that the aims of the program were to reconnect and/or strengthen the women's connection to culture and Country through discussion and deep listening to sounds from the natural environment, and by interacting with Elders. Reconnecting and/or strengthening the women's connection to culture and Country in the workshops and when listening to the final product (the CD) would improve their wellbeing by assisting the women to relax and de-stress, and by giving them a degree of acoustic agency:

It's this idea of allowing people to reconnect to place, to reconnect with the environment through sound. That sound and this idea of deep listening in every way we want to explore. Deep listening has this profound way to reconnect us to a place and time. We know for a fact that has a lot of health benefits in terms of sound changing people's blood pressure and heart rate and things like that. ... [T]he main intention was exploring how, in the context of a prison, we could look at some of those ideas of how sound can be this powerful tool to connect the women to Country and be something that could be positive in their experience in prison. Whether that was to inspire them to go back to Country and visit those locations, inspire them to think differently about their connection to Country and look at ways that that could be, hopefully, a valuable tool in the context of a prison. ... To go and record those sounds that were for them and then bring them back to the prison so that experience of what they have talked about, what they have felt connected to – that sound comes back and it's their sound. It's not from some random sound library or database. It's something that's being recorded specifically for them. (Interview with RT3)

Four of the stakeholders made mention that it was important to ensure that the women did not experience any harm as a result of conversations about Country, particularly when some of the women may have experienced or may have had family who had experienced being forcibly removed from their families and communities. There was also a risk that the

conversations and sounds might generate feelings of homesickness. All four agreed, however, that the project did not have this effect, and that it was indeed, a therapeutic program, because it was delivered in a culturally safe manner.

It was not possible to assess for whom the project worked best, but three of the stakeholders thought women who were 'thirsty' for culture (Interview with RT1), who 'really came a lot' (RT4) and wanted to engage, and 'who made a conscious choice to leave all the other stuff at the door' (Interview with RT2) would get the most benefit from the Listening to Country project. Two of the stakeholders also thought that the older women were more engaged and present for the right reasons. The Research Team did not impose any criteria for the women to participate in the workshops, although one of the female prisoners who was interviewed said that participation depended on 'association issues', meaning some women could not participate because they were not allowed to be in the same room as other women (Interview with P3). This meant that women who signed up to do the workshops would be assessed for eligibility according to who had previously signed up.

The fact that the project was for the Indigenous women in the prison and that it gave them something to do, was what motivated the three female prisoners who were interviewed to attend the workshops. All three women said that project strengthened or reconnected them to culture and Country, either through the sounds they were exposed to or through being with their Elders. One mentioned that she did have a strong connection to culture because she grew up on a mission, but that she no longer connected to it because she now lived in the city. While doing the workshops, however, her connection became stronger. The workshops produced positive feelings in all three women, with one saying she felt 'all right, great, yeah – good' (Interview with P1), another saying she felt 'pretty good, I guess, pretty relaxed' (Interview with P2), and the third saying she felt 'good' to be 'reconnected' to her culture (Interview with P3). The women enjoyed creating something with one of the women saying that when she is released, she wanted to get her children to listen to the CD and explain that she had participated in producing it. She thought that they would like the 'animal sounds' (Interview with P1).

Three of the stakeholders confirmed that they had received positive feedback from the workshop participants about the project. One of the stakeholders said that some of the women who had not taken part in the workshops had expressed regret that they had not participated.

4.4 Challenges of Working in a Remand and Reception Centre

The nature of remand and reception centres is that prisoners generally spend shorter periods of time in such centres and that they are often being transported to hospitals for medical assessments or to courts for hearings. This context affected the attendance rates of the workshops. Table 4.1 depicts how many women attended the workshops. Initially, 16 women had signed up to do the workshops. Of the sixteen, none attended all nine workshops.

Table 4.1: Number of Women Attending the Workshops

Number of women	Number of workshops
0	9
1	8
3	7
2	6
2	5
2	4
3	3
2	2
1	1

Half the women who had registered attended five or more workshops. The reasons why the women did not attend were that they had been released, they were transferred to another prison, they were in lockdown, they were not called to attend, they were not allowed to attend, they were at court, they were at work, they were unwell, they were moving cells or they decided not to attend. Only one of the women who decided not to attend all of the workshops provided a reason for her decision, which was that she was unhappy with the way the younger women interacted with the Elders. She thought it was disrespectful.

Not being able to develop a relationship of trust with the women over a longer period of time, was thought to have affected the level of participation and attendance rate:

It's hard to get consistency within the group and that's why we compressed the program, because we found out it was reception. We went, okay, we need to compress this and make it more intensive and get it done quickly, because we will have high turnover. But even then, it was still a challenge because being acoustic ecology and audio composition, ... [one of the Research Team members] had to go off and record and produce and so we had to have week on, week off structure. That kind of ... in that week off, people disappeared, you know, so it affected the consistency and the momentum and, in my view, then also the safe, not safety, but the ability to generate that sort of really strong rapport and sense of trust and group cohesion that's necessary to do a project like this. (Interview with RT2)

However, one of the stakeholder participants thought that the interaction of the Research Team with the women prior to starting the workshops was sufficient and that 'it allowed that trust to be built up between the researchers and the women' (Interview with QCS3). If the project were to be delivered in a remand and reception centre again in its current compressed form, two of the Research Team members thought that it would be more conducive to focus on the deep listening aspect of the project rather than the creative process.

Just prior to starting the workshops, the Research Team were advised that they were not able to take a laptop into the facility. According to three of the Research Team members, this affected the level of trust the female prisoner participants had in the Research Team, because the female prisoners could not see how their ideas were being translated into an acoustic product. There was a perception amongst some of the prisoners that the Research Team were stealing their intellectual property and developing something for non-Indigenous people to use. Their fears were allayed through discussion and reassurances by the Elders and Aboriginal members of the Research Team. Indeed, one of the Research Team members reiterated the importance of having Elders participate in the project to facilitate trust between the female prisoner participants and the Research Team. It was particularly necessary because of the compressed timeframe:

[B]ecause it was an intensive project the Elders were key because we wouldn't have been able to get straight into that level of trust It would have taken us a lot longer to get where we had to be, even just to start getting that information out of them, and that magic on the first day with the Post It notes wouldn't have happened, because we would have been this complete unknown group of people, even though there were two Indigenous people there. They still didn't know us. The Elders were there and they had that relationship. They had that trust. So I think we couldn't have done it without the Elders (Interview with RT3).

Although not specific to a remand and reception centre, prison noises such as flushing toilets and clanging doors, the set-up of the Training Room in which most of the workshops were held and interruptions caused by the need for frequent head counts, also made the facilitation of an acoustic ecology project within a prison setting difficult. These sorts of challenges would more than likely also be present in other prison settings and are not within the Research Team's control to change.

4.5 Disseminating the Final Product and Project

There are two aspects to this part of the evaluation. The first relates to how the final audio soundscape was disseminated to the female prisoners and the second relates to developing a similar project for other communities and sites. The manner in which the audio soundscape was disseminated to the female prisoners who participated in the project was developed in consultation with prison staff and with the Murrighagun Cultural Centre. According to the members of the Research Team, the final audio file was copied onto a CD for the female prisoners who participated in the workshops to listen to on their own CD player or via the BWCC computers, which are made available to the prisoners. The female prisoners who participated in the program were given two CDs, one to keep in their cells and another, which was placed in their personal properties, to use when they were released or transferred from the BWCC. Copies of the CD were posted to women who had been released or transferred prior to the completion of the final product. Two sets of headphones were also left with the BWCC. The final soundscape was also uploaded to the QCS computer hard-drive

and made available via the CLO. The soundscape was also uploaded to the Listening to Country website, and made available via a password protected URL. Because there is no Internet access inside correctional centres, the women were given the password to access the file via the URL upon release. One of the Research Team members mentioned that they were concerned about equity issues in relation to prisoner access to the audio file, both in and outside prison. The Research Team were conscious of the fact that in prison, the female prisoners might be denied access to headphones or a computer as a form of disciplinary sanction, in situations where they may be most in need of access to the audio file. When released, the female prisoners may not be able to access the audio file online or listen to it on a CD player because they may not have access to the Internet or other necessary equipment and they may not be technologically literate.

When discussing access to the final product, questions were raised by the women about who would have access to particular versions of the audio file. The women requested that only those who had participated in the workshops or other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the prison, have access to the full one-hour audio file and that other versions be developed for wider distribution outside the prison. The Research Team, therefore, produced a version in which the women's voices were distorted for dissemination to the wider public (which can be downloaded at <https://www.listeningtocountry.com/>). This was also a requirement of QCS, to comply with the privacy and confidentiality clause of the research contract. Personalised versions of the audio file were also produced for particular women who wanted recording of themselves reading poetry they had written. The female prisoners who were interviewed confirmed that they had been given CDs containing the soundscape, however, one had not been allowed access to the CD since returning to the BWCC from another prison and another mentioned that it is only easy to listen to the CD if you have a CD player.

The Research Team had discussed the use of transducer technology with prison staff and the Murrindhangun Cultural Centre, however, the consensus was that dissemination in that form would require a dedicated cultural space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners to be able to listen to the soundscape. Transducer technology enables an audio

signal to be converted from the place in which it is embedded (such as a wall or table) to the receiver.

All of the stakeholders (aside from one who did not have much knowledge about the project) thought that the acoustic ecology framework that underpinned the Listening to Country project would be beneficial for the broader community, both in and outside prison. Although the original idea for the project was that it be provided to a more stable prison population group, one of the stakeholders thought it should alternate between remand and in prison. This would provide a form of continuity and a through-care approach in that the women who were in remand would then be able to access the workshops in prison once they were transferred (if not released). The healing benefits of the project were seen to be particularly relevant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were displaced and vulnerable, such as those in hospital or medical settings. Using Dadirri for people accessing medical care could help strengthen a sense of belonging and a 'connection to Country, which gives us all wellbeing' (Interview with RT1). One of the stakeholders thought that it would be difficult to implement the project on Country because it may breach cultural protocols.

5.0 Discussion

This evaluation focused on the design and delivery of the Listening to Country project. As mentioned in Section 2, successful Indigenous-focused health and wellbeing programs incorporate Indigenous knowledges, perspectives and values in their design and delivery (Murrup-Stewart et al. 2019). The evaluation found that the Listening to Country project satisfied these core requirements, making it likely that the female prisoners who participated in the pilot project experienced improved wellbeing. Only three female prisoners were interviewed not long after the project ended, making it impossible to come to any firm conclusions about the impact of the project on their wellbeing. Having said that, the three female prisoners all spoke positively about the Research Team and the way they delivered the workshops. The inclusion of Elders and the involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers were crucial for creating a culturally safe space when delivering the workshops.

The aims of the Listening to Country project was to explore how creative processes used to develop an audio file and CD of culturally significant sounds can promote and strengthen connections to Country and thereby improve prisoner emotional and social wellbeing. Acoustic ecology and Indigenous health and wellbeing scholarship informed the manner in which the project was designed and delivered, having made the workshops culturally safe and relevant for the female prisoner participants. The findings made it clear that Indigenous-specific programs are lacking in correctional centres and that the use of arts-based practices can be an effective mode of engaging Indigenous prisoners. More research needs to be conducted to better understand the direct and indirect benefits of culturally-relevant arts-based prison programs, however, we know that they are supported by prisoners and that they offer benefits other mainstream rehabilitative programs do not (Marchetti 2019; Shepherd et al. 2018). Indeed, all three of the female prisoners interviewed for this evaluation said that they would do the workshops again if they were offered.

Delivering programs in prison can be challenging when correctional centre or departmental requirements change and when the environment itself is not conducive to the

implementation of cultural arts-based programs. The findings of the evaluation suggest that challenges can be surmounted if sufficient consultation occurs, relationships with Indigenous stakeholders and communities are established, and if the project team is committed to their vision of effecting change. The challenges experienced by the Listening to Country Research Team reflects the controlling and oppressive nature of correctional centre environments, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoners who lose their ability to remain connected to Country and culture. Considering the high rates of imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and research that documents the compounding negative effects of prison on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prisoner wellbeing, more work needs to be done to strengthen cultural connection and identity, which are known to improve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health indicators (Sivak et al. 2017). As this evaluation has found, an acoustic ecology framework is effective in reconnecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are displaced from Country, to their cultural roots. There is scope for expanding the reach of the project to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are no longer on Country and who are in institutional settings which are known to negatively impact on a person's mental health, such as hospitals and aged care facilities. Care needs to be taken to ensure cultural protocols are followed and that appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members are involved in the process.

Within the prison setting, programs such as Listening to Country can, with ongoing funding, encourage the development of skills using creative and culturally significant processes. All of the stakeholders and female prisoners fully supported the Listening to Country project and workshops, with some prisoners who did not attend, making it known that they would attend if the project was offered again. Programs such as this one, require time and effort to establish trust and build relationships, which will inevitably increase and stabilise attendance rates. As is evident with other culturally-specific arts-based prison programs (Marchetti 2019), trust and rapport improve and strengthen with the longevity of a program and as words spread about program efficacy.

6.0 Recommendations

The research did not uncover any major flaws in the design and delivery of the project. The overall consensus was that the Research Team designed and delivered the project with the upmost care and consideration of cultural protocols, which resulted from their extensive consultation and inclusion of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members and stakeholders. Most of the recommendations listed below are suggested to address challenges that may arise when designing and delivering the Listening to Country project to prisoners, in various prison settings. Three of the recommendations (recommendation 2, 5 and 6) might be considered applicable if the project was to be expanded to other settings. The recommendations focus on the design and delivery of the Listening to Country in prison settings, despite the fact that the findings suggest support for expanding the project to broader community. It is difficult to make recommendations that relate to offering the project in other settings without further research and consultations.

The key observations and recommendations are:

- 1. Ensuring the QCS Research Committee engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Committee prior to making any decisions about the suitability of the project.*

Many of the initial challenges in gaining approval from the QCS Research Committee may have been avoided if the QCS Research Committee had been diligent in seeking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander input to inform their decision. According to the AIATSIS ethical guidelines, Research Committees and Research Teams should ensure appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait people and organisations are involved in negotiating the parameters of the research project, be fully consulted in relation to the proposed research, and that agreement and mutual understanding is reached. Of course, whether or not the QCS Research Committee does this is out of the Research Team's control.

2. Continue the involvement of Elders.

Elder involvement in the project, particularly in the delivery of the workshops, is crucial for establishing relationships of trust with the prisoners and for maintaining cultural safety. This is necessary, regardless of the number and status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members on the Research Team. The Elders are respected within communities, often know prisoners from Elder prison visits or through family connections, and are able to reconnect and strengthen the participants' connections to Country.

3. Tailor the project for the particular type of prison.

Attempts were made by the Research Team to tailor the Listening to Country project and workshops for prisoners in a remand and reception centre when they were advised that the BWCC was no longer housing sentenced prisoners. The duration of the workshops was compressed and the Research Team adapted to the transitional and unpredictable nature of the centre. When everything is taken into consideration, the Research Team managed to deliver an effective, useful and culturally safe project in circumstances that were less than desirable. Indeed, by being forced to deliver the project in such circumstances, the Research Team has acquired new knowledge about what is and isn't possible in particular types of correctional centres. Although the original and ongoing plan, was and still is to deliver the project to sentenced prisoners, where there is less disorder and unpredictability, it is recommended that the Research Team consider continuing to offer the project in a modified form to people who are detained in a remand and reception centre, since programs such as Listening to Country are scarce, if not non-existent. Many of the modifications needed for the delivery of the project in a remand and reception centre were adopted. However, future iterations of the project in such circumstances should consider whether workshop activities and promised outcomes should be scaled back to suit the prison context. Consideration should also be given to whether project participants should be assessed for suitability, particularly if the project is redelivered at a remand and reception centre.

4. Improve manner in which project is promoted in the prison setting.

It is difficult to control the manner in which the prisoners are notified of the project, since such activities are generally managed and influenced by prison procedures and resources. Despite this, the Research Team together with prison staff, should develop a detailed plan for notifying prisoners about the project and upcoming workshops. The plan should allow for contingencies, such as changes in staff and prison lockdowns.

5. Aim to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research capacity.

Future funding applications should include an ongoing position for an Early Career Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Researcher, with an interest in acoustic ecology who can work with the Research Team to build capacity in this space. Training and mentoring junior Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative arts researchers is not only important from an ethical, cultural safety perspective. It is also important for the longevity of the project, since it establishes a succession plan for the selection of future project leaders.

6. Collect pre- and post-program wellbeing measures.

Collection of reliable and valid participant data before and after the program is important for assessing changes in prisoner wellbeing. Using the Growth and Empowerment Measure (GEM) to assess this change is recommended. The GEM examines dimensions of wellbeing and empowerment as defined by Aboriginal Australians who participated in the Family Well Being program (Haswell et al. 2010). The Research Team had proposed using the GEM for the pilot project in their Program Logic Model and in their Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee application, but the QCS Research Committee questioned its use. In the end, the Research Team consulted with one of the key authors of the GEM and established that it would not be appropriate to implement in a remand setting, given that the tool's verifiability depends on longer-term pre- and post-program engagement with participants. Nevertheless, the Research Team should endeavour to incorporate the administration of the GEM in future iterations of the Listening to Country project, where appropriate.

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Appendix A – Stakeholder Information Sheet and Consent Form

Griffith University reference no. 2017/578



INFORMATION SHEET – This is for you to keep

Listening to Country: Exploring the value of acoustic ecology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison.

Who is doing the research?

Dr Sarah Woodland (Project Leader)
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Why is the research being conducted?

We know from previous work in BWCC that women there enjoy and respond really well to creative projects. While we did a previous project, some of the Aboriginal women asked us if we could create a relaxation CD that was culturally relevant, using bush sounds and other cultural elements. Working creatively together, and listening to environmental soundscapes have proven benefits for stress management and wellbeing. We want to see how doing these things can help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison with wellbeing and connecting to culture.

What you will be asked to do

Listening to Country is a creative activity where we are going to make an audio recording together that can be used for relaxation and stress management, and connection to natural environments and/or your cultural heritage. To find out how the creative process and the finished product can help with wellbeing and cultural connection, we will be doing the following:

1. In the weeks leading up to the 'Listening to Country' creative activity, a researcher who is not involved in the delivery of the project will be conduct meetings with key staff members and stakeholders. These will be voice recorded.
 - a. The meetings will focus on what staff and stakeholder expectations are for the project, and how it has been negotiated and set up, leading towards implementation.
2. In the weeks following the 'Listening to Country' creative activity, this researcher will do one-to-one interviews with key staff members and stakeholders. These will be voice recorded.

- a. The interviews will focus on how effectively the project was run, what worked, what could be improved, and whether the project reached its goals. Interviews will run for approximately 30-60 minutes.
- b. The interviews will be scheduled at your convenience in the weeks from 12 February – early March 2019.

How participants have been selected

Participants for this part of the research project are staff members of BWCC, including the Murri Dhagun Unit, and others who have consulted in the project's development such as Brisbane Council of Elders. We are requesting interviews with people who have been involved in the early conversations, and also the logistical aspects of delivering the project, or who have direct contact with the women who participated in the workshops.

The expected benefits of the research

This project will help us find new and creative ways to address wellbeing and cultural connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison. Your responses will help the team to establish whether the project was effectively designed and run, and how to make improvements and adapt the project for future use in other places.

Risks to you

There will be no significant risks to you in participating in the project.

Confidentiality

Your identity will only be used in the resulting publications and documentation with your written consent (the consent form follows this information sheet). Should you wish your identity to remain anonymous the research team will omit your name and specific role from any resulting documentation, but please note that your identity may be clear to readers who are familiar with the organisation.

Research Data Storage

All audio recordings will be erased after transcription/analysis. However, other research data (focus group interview transcripts, field notes and analysis) will be retained in a locked cabinet and/or a password protected electronic file at Griffith University for a period of five years before being destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Questions / further information

For additional information about the project, please contact Dr Sarah Woodland. Phone: (07) 3735 6232 or email: s.woodland@griffith.edu.au

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics on (07) 373 54375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

Feedback to you

Access to a copy of the publications arising as a result of this research will be provided if requested. As stated above, you will have access through BWCC to the audio work that we create together, and you will be able to keep a copy of the audio in your property for when you are released from BWCC.

Privacy statement

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375.



CONSENT FORM – This means you can say “NO”

Listening to Country: Exploring the value of acoustic ecology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison.

Who is doing the research?

Dr Sarah Woodland (Project Leader)
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By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that a researcher will conduct two recorded conversations with me about the Listening to Country project.
- I understand that audio recordings of interviews will NOT be publicly distributed, that only the research team will have access to these recordings, and that they will be erased following transcription and analysis;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that individual results from participation will vary and there may be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand the privacy statement;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand that I can contact the **Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au** if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the study.

I agree to participate in the study

Name	
Signature	
Date	

I agree to the use of my name or identifying information in publications arising from this research.

Appendix B – Information Sheet and Consent Form for Female Prisoners

Griffith University reference no. 2017/578



INFORMATION SHEET – *This is for you to keep*

Listening to Country: Exploring the value of acoustic ecology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison.

Who is doing the research?

Dr Sarah Woodland (Project Leader)
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Email: l.barclay@griffith.edu.au

Why is the research being conducted?

We know from previous work in BWCC that women here enjoy and respond well to creative projects. While we did a previous project, some of the Aboriginal women asked us if we could create a relaxation CD that was culturally relevant, using bush sounds and other cultural elements. Working creatively together, and listening to environmental soundscapes, have proven benefits for stress management and wellbeing. We want to see how doing these things together can help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison with wellbeing and connecting to culture.

What you will be asked to do

Listening to Country is a creative activity where we are going to make an audio recording together that can be used for relaxation and stress management, and connection to natural environments and/or your cultural heritage. To find out how the creative process and the finished product can help with wellbeing and cultural connection, we will be doing the following:

1. We are going to do a series of workshops together that will include:
 - a. Yarning to explore our connection to culture and country.
 - b. Listening to recordings of environmental soundscapes brought in from outside, and reflecting on the effects of these.
 - c. Asking you to choose sounds, and create sounds (e.g. singing, poetry, instruments) that we can layer together to make a 1-hour audio recording.
 - d. Listening to the finished audio work and reflecting on the effect of this.

Please Note: These workshops are part of the research, so if you are involved in the creative workshops, you are also participating in the research.

2. During some of the creative activity sessions, we will lead yarning circles in which we will talk about our experience of the creative process, and what it is like to listen to the audio recordings that we collect and make together. These yarning circles will be voice recorded. You will not be required to speak about any issues that you don't wish to discuss – what you contribute to these discussions is entirely up to you.
3. During the creative activity sessions, we will provide you with blank journals to write in. We may do some guided writing activities with you, and you may also like to write back in your unit between sessions about your experiences of the project. With your permission, we might keep, or photocopy your journal entries for the research.

Please note: we know that not everyone feels comfortable reading or writing. Writing in your journal is not compulsory in this project.

4. In the week following the 'Listening to Country' creative activity, the we will do one-to-one interviews with each of you about your experience of the project. These will be voice recorded.
5. Another researcher who has not been part of the workshops will also conduct a group interview with you, to see what you thought of the project, asking some questions about whether it was effectively run and enjoyable.

Please note: If any aspect of the project causes distress for you, please notify a member of the Research Team or BWCC staff present at the workshop, and you will be referred to the appropriate support staff in BWCC, for example Aboriginal Liaison Officer, IMHIP team member or Psychologist.

Schedule of Activities:

Activity	Details	Dates
Pre-project preparation	Information session for people who are interested. Setting up the workshop space and consulting with BWCC staff.	7-11 January 2019 Time TBC
Listening to Country creative activity: 10 x 2-hour workshops Research during activity sessions.	Creative workshops working together to build soundscapes that will make up the relaxation project. Recorded yarning circles and guided journaling.	14 Jan - 1 Feb 2019 Mondays - Fridays 9.30-11.30am Note: this will be one week on, one week off, and then one week on again.
Listening session 1 x 2-hour research yarning workshop	Sharing the finished audio recording Research yarning workshop where we ask for feedback from the group about	11-15 Feb 2019 Times TBC

Interviews	<p>what we are finding in the evaluation of the activity.</p> <p>Group and/or one-to-one interviews with participants.</p>	
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How participants have been selected

This project focuses on wellbeing and cultural connection specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison. BWCC has supported us doing the project here because of our previous projects. It is open to everyone who has signed up, and been approved to attend the Listening to Country activity by BWCC staff.

The expected benefits of the research

This project will help us find new and creative ways to address wellbeing and cultural connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison. Participation in the project means that you will be involved in a positive creative process, and then we might be able to do this again with other groups. We will also leave the audio recording and some equipment here so that you can continue to use it for relaxation after we are gone.

Risks to you

There will be no significant risks to you in participating in the project.

Confidentiality

- We will NOT use your names or identify you personally in the research.
- We WILL ensure that all participants respect the privacy and confidentiality of other participants.

Research Data Storage

All audio recordings will be erased after transcription/analysis. However, other research data (focus group interview transcripts, field notes and analysis) will be retained in a locked cabinet and/or a password protected electronic file at Griffith University for a period of five years before being destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. *Please note that if you decide to withdraw from the study, you will also need to withdraw from the creative activity.*

Questions / further information

For additional information about the project, please contact Dr Sarah Woodland. Phone: (07) 3735 6232 or email: s.woodland@griffith.edu.au

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics on (07) 373 54375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au

Feedback to you

Access to a copy of the publications arising as a result of this research will be provided if requested. As stated above, you will have access through BWCC to the audio work that we create together, and you will be able to keep a copy of the audio in your property for when you are released from BWCC.

Privacy statement

The conduct of this research involves the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone (07) 3735 4375.



CONSENT FORM – *This means you can say “NO”*

Listening to Country: Exploring the value of acoustic ecology with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in prison.

Who is doing the research?

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By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the information package and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that we will be working together to create an audio work;
- I understand that the researchers will voice record some of our responses to the creative process and some interviews afterwards.
- I understand that audio recordings of our conversations and interviews will NOT be publicly distributed, that only the research team will have access to these recordings, and that they will be erased following transcription and analysis;
- I understand that the audio work may be played outside BWCC to other researchers and students at Griffith and other universities for conferences and events, but that I will NOT be individually identifiable.
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that individual results from participation will vary and there may be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty;
- I understand the privacy statement;
- I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand that I can contact the **Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 4375** or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the study.

I agree to participate in the study

Name	
Signature	
Date	