




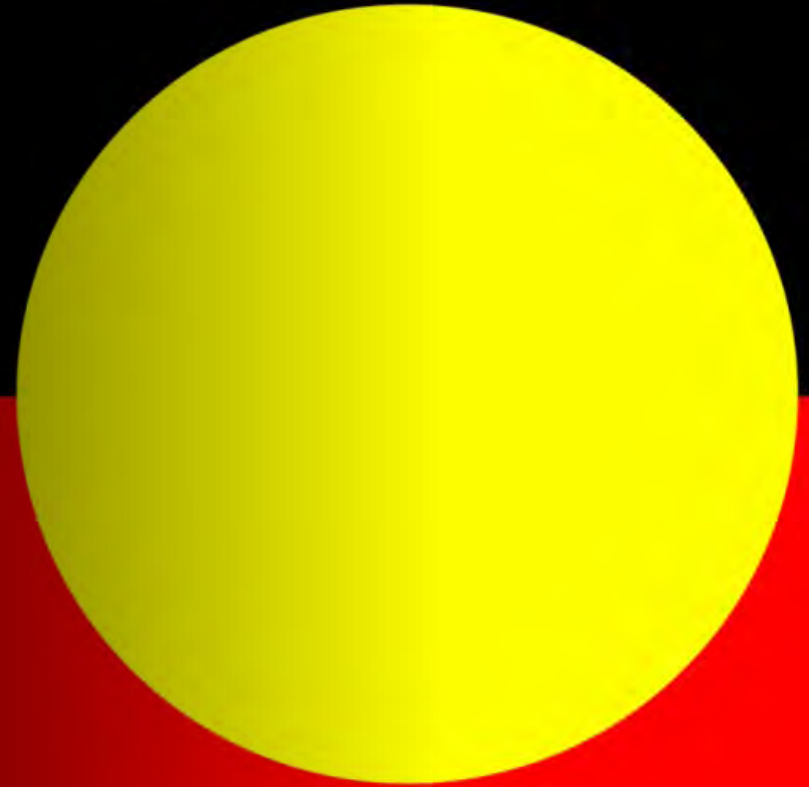
Partnerships to protect Country – Indigenous land managers managing myrtle rust

Aj Perkins & Geoff Pegg



Acknowledgement – Country and Custodians

Deepest respects to the custodians
of the Country where we gather
today, the Elders and people, past
and present



Project aims

Collaboratively develop and deliver an environmental biosecurity training program

Improve the capacity of Indigenous Rangers, Natural Resource Management agencies (NRM) to:

- **Prepare for**
- **Detect and respond to**
- **Manage**

plant pests and diseases threatening Australia's forests.



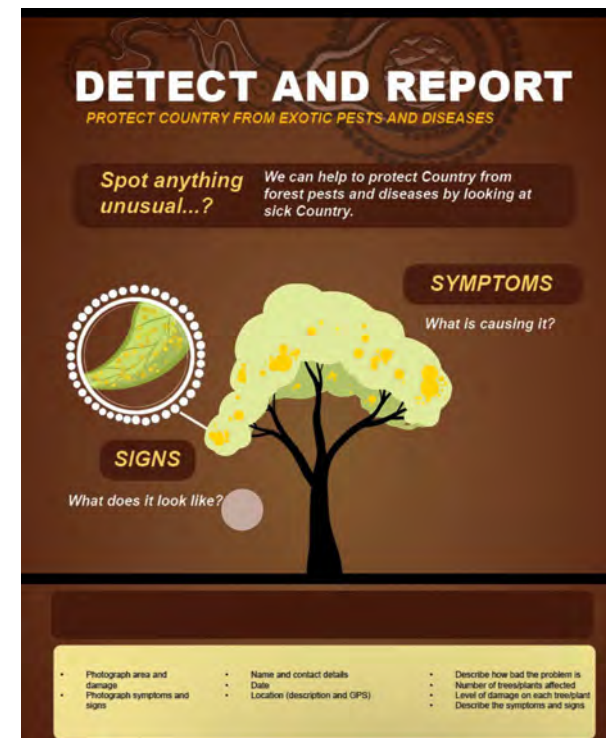
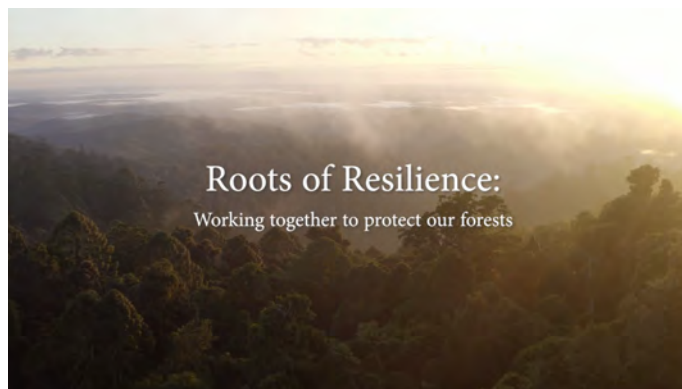
Key message and Outcome

Biosecurity is a shared responsibility – we can all contribute to protect our unique environments and valuable industries.

Increased awareness and capacity to detect, report and manage forest health and biosecurity threats.

Training and awareness

- Myrtle Rust The Silent Killer
“What a beautiful production, informative but the cinematography was stunning” Amy Phillips, Presenter Queensland Country Hour ABC Rural



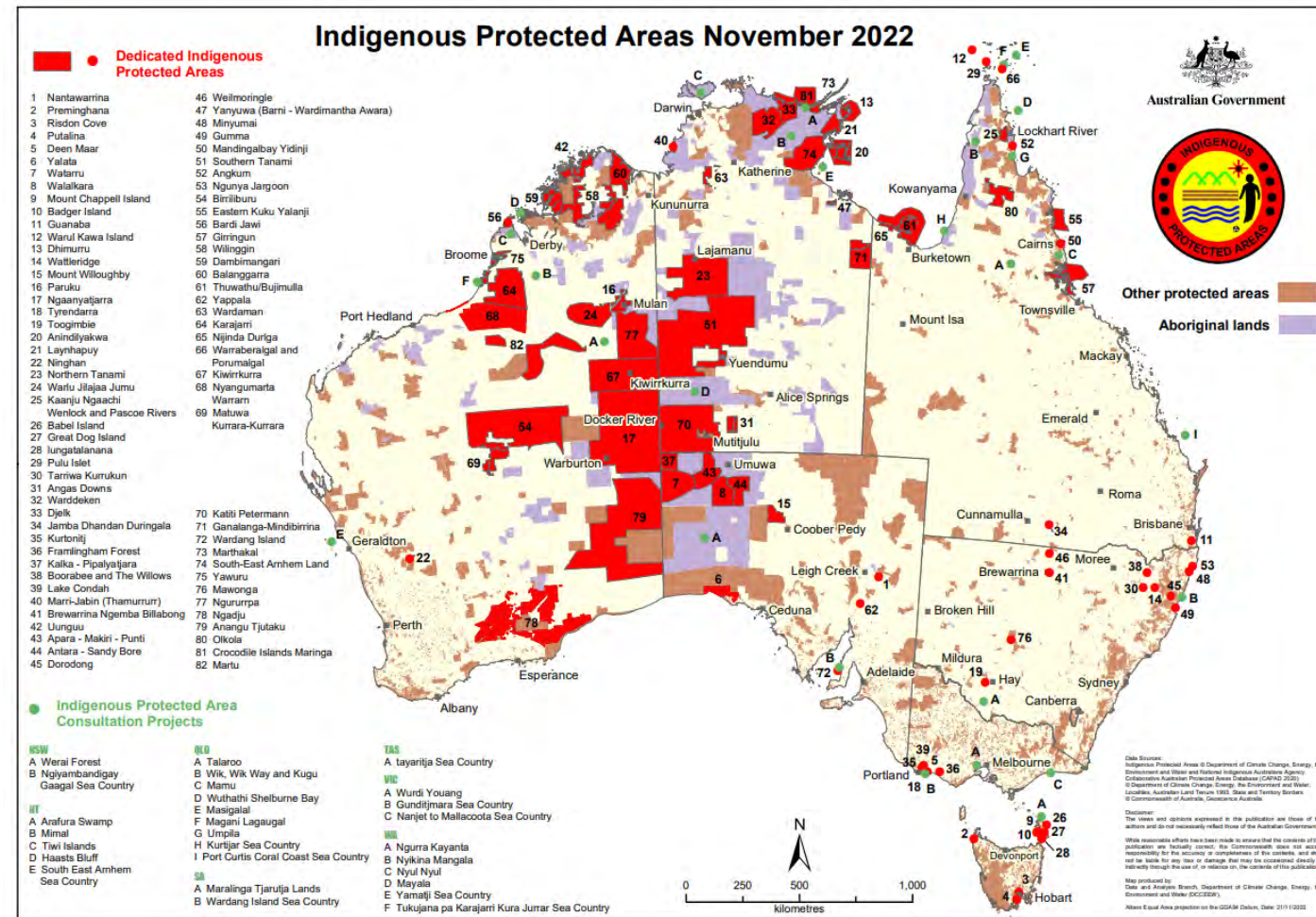
Indigenous Land Management

50% of the national reserve system is managed by Indigenous groups under the Federally funded Indigenous Protected Areas program



The Minyurnai Ranger team set up nesting boxes for native animals after the fire of 2019 destroyed much of the habitat (Photo courtesy of Minyurnai Land Holding Aboriginal Corporation)

Sourcing: National Indigenous Australians Agency
<https://www.indigenous.gov.au/>



Indigenous Protected Areas (IPAs)

2023

Dedicated IPAs

82

Total terrestrial area

More than 87 million hectares

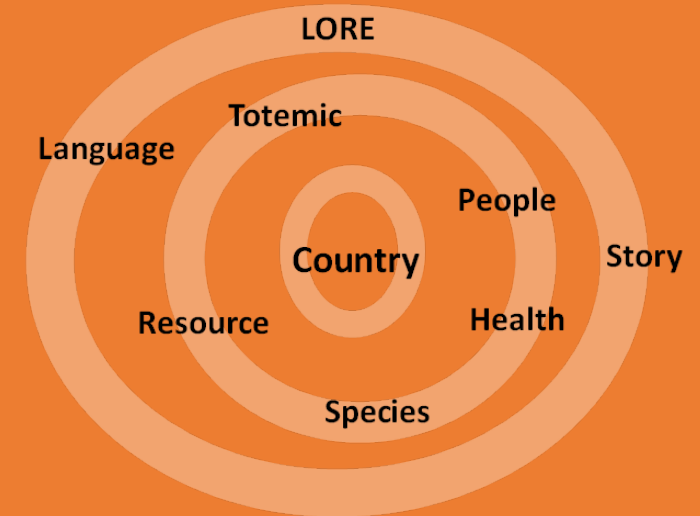
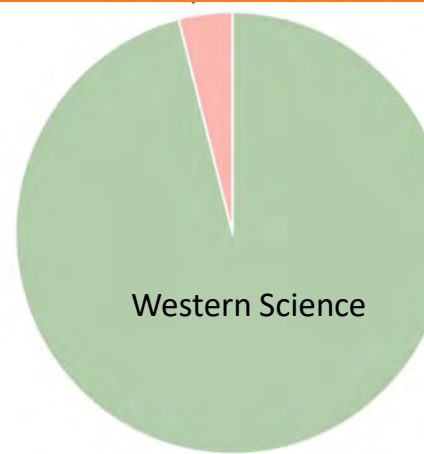
Percentage of National Reserve System

50%

Australian time



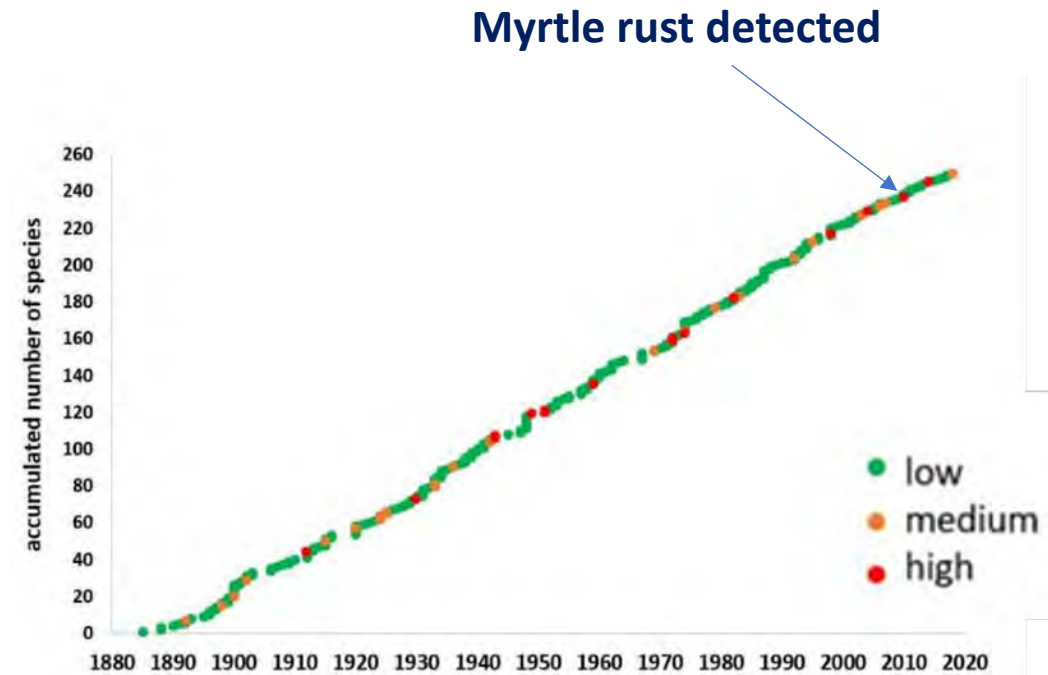
Australian environment
management today



Accumulation of exotic forest pests and pathogens in Australia (Nahrung & Carnegie 2020).

Myrtle rust on Smooth
Scrub Turpentine
(*Rhodamnia
maideniana*)

Yugambah Country
(Tallebudgera Valley)





RESOURCE



SEASONAL
INDICATOR



FOOD



MEDICINE

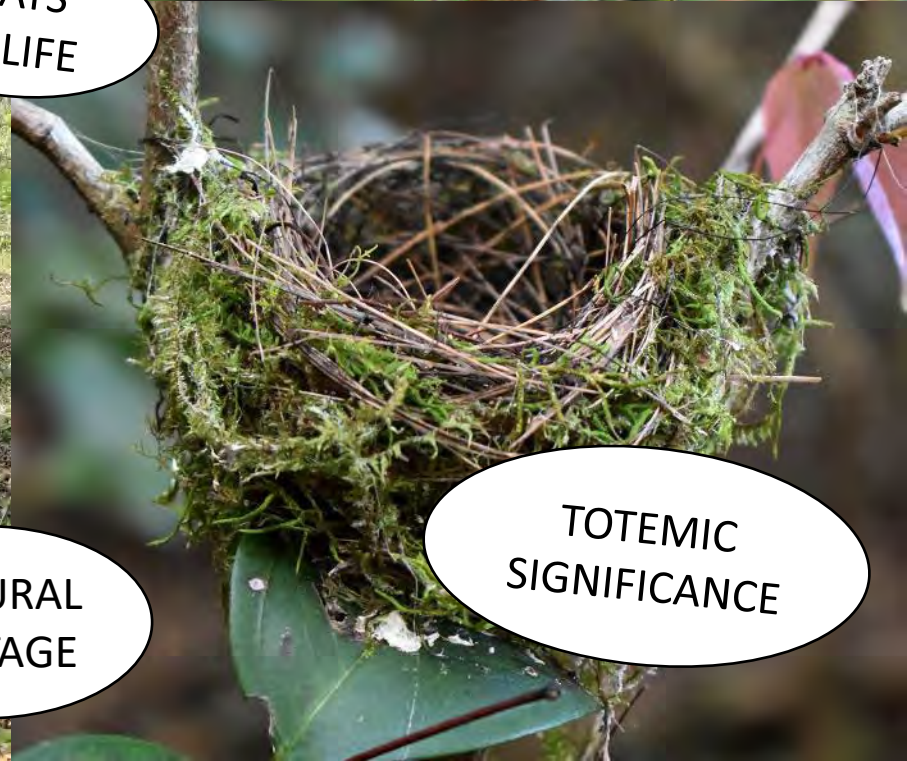


SPIRITUAL
SIGNIFICANCE

STORY



CULTURAL
HERITAGE



TOTEMIC
SIGNIFICANCE

Managing the impacts

Industry Comparison	Revenue	Research investment
Banana Industry NQ	\$600 mill (daf.qld.gov.au)	>\$40 mill
World Heritage Wet Tropics	\$4.4 bill (WTMA)	<\$500 k

“A foreboding new threat to the world’s longest surviving rainforest”

“Daintree Rainforest Myrtaceae provide the backbone of this ancient ecosystem’s structural integrity and with populations showing signs of serious deterioration, their loss to this irreplaceable World Heritage treasure will be catastrophic.”

Daintree rainforest foundation

Wet Tropics

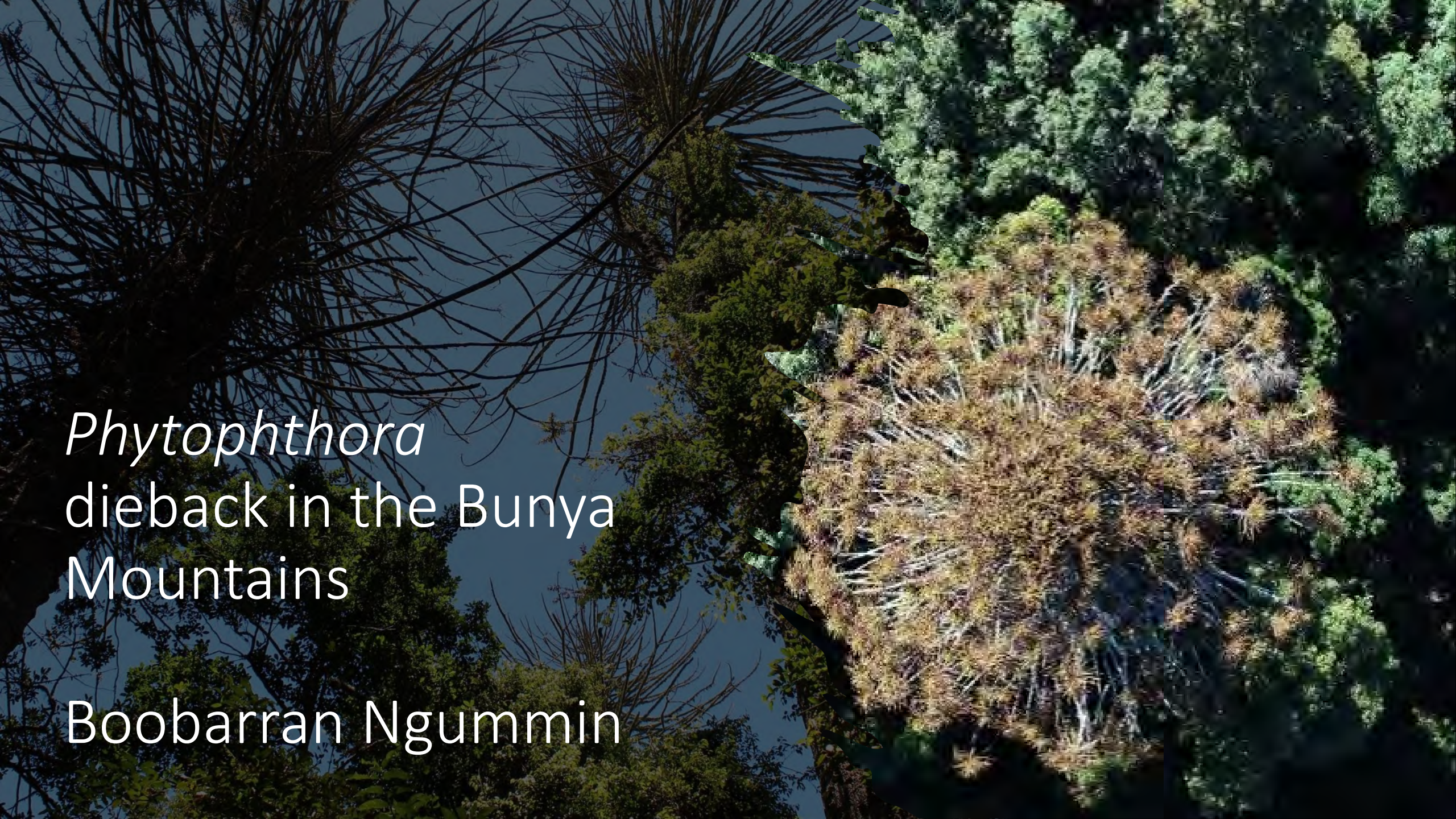
- Ranked 2nd most irreplaceable natural World Heritage site
- 70% of Australian rainforest Myrtaceae
- **6 species likely to be extinct within a generation**
 - 11 species in severe decline
- Flow on ecological impacts – waterways and forest structure



Water gum/Kanuka Box – North Queensland

- **Potential for serious impacts not only on Wet tropics ecosystems, but also the Great Barrier Reef.**
 - Facultative rheophyte species along creeks and riverbanks
- **Myrtle rust impacts on the survival of kanuka box.**
 - Serious ecosystem-level threat to the integrity and function of GBR-connected riparian communities
 - Threat to the World Heritage values of the GBR Marine Park and the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.





Phytophthora
dieback in the Bunya
Mountains

Boobarran Ngummin

Learning from our neighbours – Aboriginal and Māori people exchanging cultural knowledge and ideas about managing pest and disease threats to Country





Unity of Purpose: Indigenous communities and researchers unite to combat myrtle rust threat

- [*Whakakotahitanga i te Kaupapa / Unity of Purpose*](#) is a video capturing activity from a cultural exchange aimed to discuss the challenges posed by myrtle rust in New Zealand and Australia.

Developing strategies to keep Country healthy – Indigenous led forest health and biosecurity program



- **Extend partnerships with First Nations Communities**
 - Co-designing solutions with Traditional Owners
 - Establishing First Nations network in forest pest and disease biosecurity
- **Culturally appropriate management of established threats**
 - Knowledge and skill sharing and pathway development - Culturally based solutions
- **Improving resilience of Country**
 - Business model for Indigenous Forest Health and Biosecurity

Thank you!



Office of the Australian Chief Environmental Biosecurity Officer



Australian Government
**Department of Agriculture,
Fisheries and Forestry**