Respecting Aboriginal people and their knowledge:

Protocols for people involved in commercial bush foods enterprises, research and development with produce and knowledge from Central Australia

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Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre
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Merne Altyerre-ipenhe (Food from the Creation Time)
Reference Group

Veronica Dobson
M.K. Turner
Lorna Wilson
Rayleen Brown
Bess Price
Maree Meredith
Gina Smith
and past members
Myra Ah Chee
Sandy Marty
Marilyn Cavanagh
How protocols were compiled

Protocol workshop 2006

Visits to local traders/wholesalers

Workshop with researchers, industry and government representatives 2007

Gina Smith, MK Turner & Rayleen Brown at CLC’s full council meeting, August 2008.
Bush foods have always been a part of our economy, daily life and wider culture
Handing down knowledge to children and keeping it strong

*Kunapuka (Acacia coriacea)* seed harvest near Tjukurla. Photo: NPY Women’s Council

*Acacia tenuisimma* seed harvest by three generations of women from the Holmes family, Ampilatwatja

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Bush foods in restaurants, tourism, supermarkets, horticulture

Trial plot at Alice Springs Desert Park

Cooking competition

International chef, Athol Wark

Cooking competition

Supermarket
Aboriginal *KNOWLEDGE* about bush food species >5,000 years

Aboriginal *CUSTODIANS* of bush food species and lands

Aboriginal *HARVESTERS* trade bush food produce – bush harvest & horticulture

Aboriginal-held & managed *LANDS* from where plants & produce is sourced

**Economic Value Chain**
- Traders/wholesalers
- Manufacturers
- Distributors
- Consumers

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Governance by Aboriginal people

“There are many people involved in bush foods but we don’t know who these people are and what they are doing.” Rayleen Brown

Full CLC Council meeting attended by Merne Altyerre-ipenhe Reference Group members, August 2008. Photo: Central Land Council
“Need to keep recognition of where plants are collected from and the community. Our people are being left out. Need to know which country or community it comes from.” Veronica Dobson
“Community ranger groups are important for managing country.” MK Turner

“...killing off of bushfoods, introduced grasses, hard hoofed animals. We're always stressing how plants are going to be destroyed.” Veronica Dobson
Aboriginal employment, training and learning

“Get younger people involved so they can learn.” Bess Price

“Non-Aboriginal people come and go. Our children will stay here. They need to be the researchers. Jobs mustn’t just go to outsiders, otherwise our children will be in the river.” Veronica Dobson

Women from Epenarra bring Desert Raisin and Wattleseed to sell to trader Peter Yates
Agreements and intellectual property

Desert Aboriginal Laws

- Altyerre, Jukurrpa
- collective ownership
- custodial rights and obligations to certain species
- different rules for different species
- wait to be offered or invited
- always ask
- respect for plants & lands of other groups

Australian Laws

- intellectual property rights
- copyright
- plant breeders rights
- patents
- trademarks
- legal agreements

Protocols can sit between two Laws
For Aboriginal roles to be appreciated & valued, they first must be recognised.

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Thank You