



ADVENTURES IN SMALL TOURISM:  
STUDIES AND STORIES

Edited and with an Introduction by Kathleen Scherf

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# Revealing the Restorers: Small Tourism in Restored Lands of the Noongar Traditional Area of the Fitz-Stirling in Southwestern Australia

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## Introduction

Key elements of creative tourism are activities that culminate in the co-creation of the experience by tourists and hosts (Richards 2011, 1236). Yet creativity manifests in many ways. The restoration of cleared landscapes back toward their original biodiverse state is itself a form of creation. When this is done in small communities by landowners in partnership with a broad collaboration of individuals and organizations (Bradby, Keesing, and Wardell-Johnson 2016, 828), including visitor and tourist participation, the touristic approach is creative in both concept and outcome. That outcome is not only the observation of an external, changed, natural environment, as occurs in nature tourism, but is an internal, emotional change evoked during the restoration work or by witnessing the transformed landscape and speaking with the restorers. The creation of artworks to represent this experience is another creative outcome for the visitor.

This work is a collaborative reflection among landscape and tourism scholars on the role of tourism at the nexus of landscape and cultural

restoration. As a quality-improvement initiative, we pause to carefully consider our way forward. Speaking in the context of small, relational tourism, we follow a journey of landscape and cultural reconnection that focuses on tourists' brief immersion with land restorers at the site of re-creation. This creative approach is strategic, aligning with the principles of sustainable tourism (Bradby 2016, 316), yielding mutual benefits for the restorers and their visitors.

The purpose of the chapter is to report a unique type of small creative tourism. All over the world, First Nation Peoples are embracing the opportunity to share their culture, highlighting the entwinement of people and place. We offer an example of how Indigeneity can go hand in hand with sustainable tourism development.

## Restoring Landscapes and Lost Habitats

Our theme of restoration addresses the dual perspectives of restoring access for both people and wildlife to biodiverse landscapes. Our examples are located in southwestern Australia, an area designated as a global biodiversity hotspot, which is a place “where exceptional concentrations of endemic species are undergoing exceptional loss of habitat” (Myers et al. 2000, 853). Much of the habitat loss occurred through government-sponsored agricultural development from 1919 to 1930 and 1948 to 1969, now described, with hindsight, as “the post war holocaust of mass clearing . . . [that brought] so much wealth . . . and affliction” (Rijavec 2003). Thus, the habitat that remains is vital to protect.

The Noongar are the First People of southwestern Australia, having continuously occupied its landscapes (in the Noongar language, *Boodja*) for at least fifty thousand years (Turney et al. 2017, 3; Tobler et al. 2017). Noongar identity, language, and culture are universally and inextricably attached to *Boodja*, including strictly controlled rights to resources, and responsibilities for managing biodiversity and the spiritual health of its inhabitants (Meagher and Ride 1979, 67; Berndt 1979). The consensus outcome from this restoration tourism was to promote a reparative path for the relationship between people and nature in light of the hegemony of the unsustainable rate of land clearing globally (Maxton-Lee 2017, 19; Lawson et al. 2014). Entwined altruistic intent echoes loudly throughout the small and slow setting of our tourism. The altruism is focused on reparation.

## Place and Touristic Place

Our place is the “Fitz-Stirling,” which is a largely cleared habitat gap between the Fitzgerald River National Park, itself part of a biosphere reserve, and the Stirling Range National Park, known as *Kykeneruff* by the local Noongar. While these two national parks are recognized locally and globally for their biological richness, more recent work has identified the surrounding and connecting cleared landscapes as equally important (Gioia and Hopper 2017, 9).

Within the Fitz-Stirling, in addition to a range of efforts by the farming community to better conserve the local biodiversity, strategically located low-productivity farms are being purchased by private individuals and conservation NGOs, mostly using philanthropic funds. This cleared land is then being restored as part of a thousand-kilometre connectivity conservation area known as Gondwana Link (Bradby, Keesing, and Wardell-Johnson 2016, 828). These opportunities host the pilot small tourism ventures examined in this chapter.

Our touristic place is the *Boodja* itself, being the biodiverse land biome with its entwined Noongar spirituality in all its realms. The tourists journey into it; by interaction with it and by observation, they make their own meanings of it; they come to understand and feel its multiple functions and traditions; they create and retain their own memorable experiences. In *Boodja* there is no pre-selected “stockpile of knowledge, traditions, memories and images,” as found in cities according to Scott (2010). There is the live *Boodja* and the people who live there; tourists journey, look, listen, feel, inquire, participate, and create. Their participation creates a shared social capital of mutual benefits, a reciprocal altruism between restorers and tourists (Paraskevaidis and Andriotis 2017).

## Cultural Connection with “Country”

In traditional life, Noongar people lived within family groups, travelling along tracks (or in Noongar, *biddis*) and residing across specific *Boodja* to which their families had deep spiritual connections, as well as rights and responsibilities to manage. Movement patterns were seasonal, based on climate, resource availability, and social, educational, and ceremonial purpose (Nind 1831, 26; Collard and Harben 2010; Meagher 1974). Clearing of that land and fencing for agriculture, such as occurred in the Wellstead District and much of the Fitz-Stirling area, stripped the natural biodiversity from the

landscape, and in doing so, not only caused harm to Noongar spiritual and educational resources and places, but also severely restricted Noongar access to both the remaining intact and the damaged *Boodja*.

## Reconnecting

Initially, the Gondwana Link program had a strong ecological focus in the Fitz-Stirling, being the progressive reconnection of the two national parks so that they could eventually function again as one ecological unit. With time, a deeper understanding has formed that ecological restoration and reconnection are inextricably linked to cultural and social restoration and reconnection (Aronson, Blatt, and Aronson 2016, 42).

Noongar reconnection with *Boodja*, including the sensitive restoration of *Boodja*, will greatly enrich outcomes for southwestern Australian biodiversity and people, as well as for the tourist experience. Ecological, cultural, and social values are here entwined.

## The Actors in and Design of Touristic Experiences

The restorers in our examples are also the tourism providers; they present their first-hand perspectives, offering authenticity in their ecotourism product.

Their small-group tourism was “backward-designed” (Wiggins and McTighe 2005, 36) to bring about transformative outcomes in tourists. As the consensus outcome for this community of practice was to promote a reparative path for the relationship between people and nature, this theme echoed in their tours, while still presenting distinctive experiences through the variation in landscapes the visitors toured.

To quote author M. Jane Thompson in her tour script relating to why they undertook their restoration, “to restore a bit of the planet in our own little way . . . link the country up, be part of a big scheme; one of our things is to try and inspire other people to do similar things.”

## The Restoration Tourists

To date, the restoration sites have received between ten and fifty visitors per month, excluding seasonal periods, when the risks of the wet (infection with dieback) or fire are prohibitive. Generally, the groups have a common interest for their visits—for example, birds, wildflowers, primary school excursions, mature age summer school, university students, project-based professionals. There is a mix of international visitors with environmental interests and local

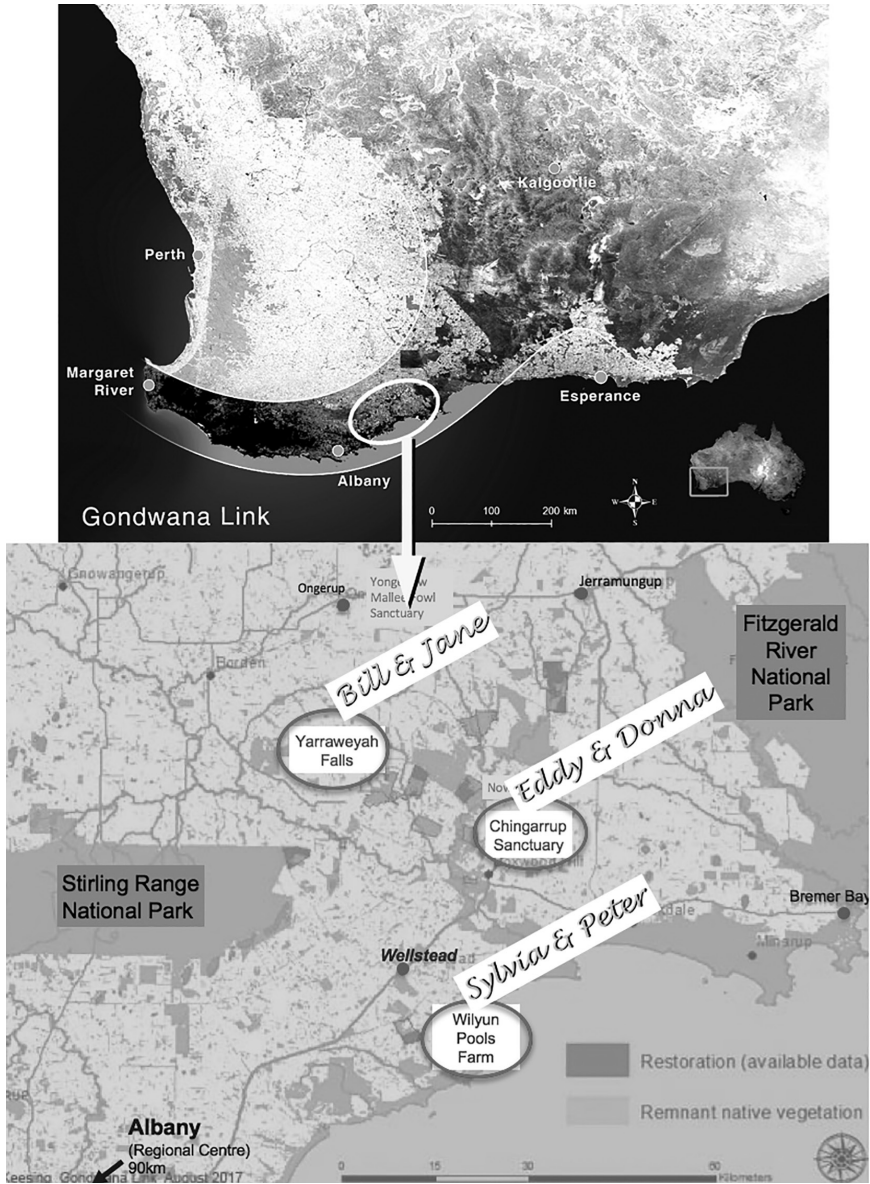
people, some being potential benefactors. They come as pairs or small groups typically of ten to twenty adults, coming for periods ranging from two hours to four days; some larger groups also visit.

## Our Restoration Tourism Examples

Figure 4.1 shows the geographic location of our three examples: Chingarrup Sanctuary and Yarraweyah Falls in the Fitz-Stirling area, and Wilyun Pools Farm in the Wellstead district.

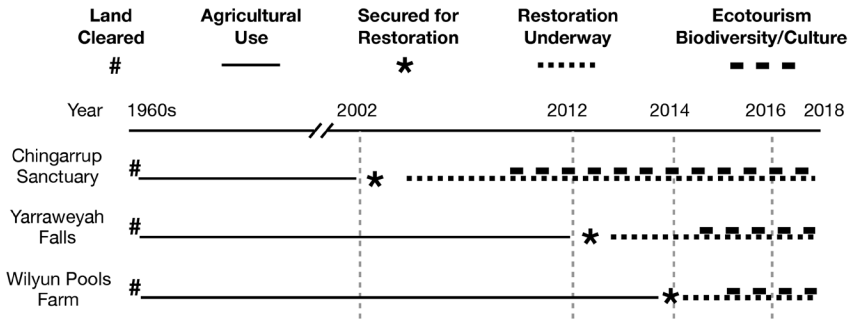
Each property was nearly 90 per cent cleared of original bush in the 1960s and '70s in preparation for agricultural use, and then farmed by conventional practices until no longer profitable, when ownership changed. Figure 4.2 shows a historical timeline of the landmark events of our three examples.

Another innovative approach to the same restoration outcome is through “balanced” farming where properties that have been worked intensively and unsustainably are subject to changed farming practices that return biodiversity to the landscape (Bawden 2018, 124; Massy 2017). Our Wilyun Pools Farm illustrates this: a long-standing family farm has transitioned to a sustainable, regenerative future. A wider adoption of sustainable regenerative farming requires the changing of a mindset that has been ingrained through generations of harsh agricultural practice. The surrounding farming community has taken a first step toward such a cultural transformation by formally recognizing Noongar natural and cultural heritage locally.



**Figure 4.1:** The Gondwana Link “Corridor” in southwestern Australia and the locations of three restoration tourism examples in the Fitz-Stirling.

Source: Gondwana Link Office, Keith Bradby.



**Figure 4.2:** Timeline for landmark events in landscape restorations.

Source: Moira Maley and Gondwana Link.

## Profiles of the Restoration Tourism Examples

### *Chingarrup Sanctuary*

#### **NOONGAR CULTURE**

Chingarrup Sanctuary sits within the catchment of the Pallinup River, an important Noongar movement corridor between the coast and inland areas. Of particular significance on the property are the Corackerup and Chingarrup Creeks, which provided water and fertile land for people, plants, and animals, and thus were vital for hunting, plant gathering, and movement corridors. An ochre source on the Corackerup Creek was traditionally used and remains important to Noongar people. Waterways also had (and continue to have) important spiritual significance, and were traditionally the focus of ceremony and daily Noongar life, while upslope heathland and granite outcrops were important for specific plants and other resources, and again, hold spiritual significance.



## **PEOPLE AND PROCESS<sup>1</sup>**

Eddy and Donna, restorers, wildflower enthusiasts, and botanists, purchased the Chingarrup property (576 hectares) in 2002 as a “bush block for conservation”; their block evolved into a biodiversity restoration project as part of Gondwana Link. Funding assistance supported the initial revegetation of 110 hectares, with ongoing restoration extended over more than twelve years, worked by the owners and many volunteers, with professional help in periodic visits, as Eddy and Donna are based in the capital city of Perth, some 450 kilometres away. Research and monitoring are carried out through citizen science (volunteer supported and grant funded) and professional groups; tourist visitations coincide with the owners’ regular visits to their property.

## **DESIGN**

In designing the tour program for visitors, Eddy and Donna traced the themes of their own emotional journey during the restoration. They aim to inspire others to recognize the importance of connected natural landscapes, and for others to learn from hands-on work in a biodiverse environment, observing and feeling personal responses to the colours, textures, sounds, and behaviours of the landscape and its wildlife inhabitants through complete immersion in it.

## **THE EXPERIENCE**

Chingarrup Sanctuary tours are visitor-centred and range from occasional day visits with guided driving and walking tours of the property’s highlights to extended project-focused camping stays. Written guides for an immersive, multiple-day program consider the goal of the period on site; a choice of the extent of personal involvement alongside more experienced participants; the range of activities; potential highlights; time-tabling of activities; skills level for participation; personal tools that would be helpful to bring; food menu and kitchen facilities; sleeping and toileting arrangements; clear directions for locating the sanctuary; and communications facilities available, as well as contact numbers. This full and frank guide projects a responsible approach to the safety of visitors and provides a clear set of behaviour expectations.

Their mature approach to visitors reflects their experience over the long term. Activities are well paced, of appropriate size for completion so as to see a result during the stay, and designed so that a participant takes away a sense of personal contribution within a continuum. Evening activities are gently creative, inclusive, and support learning around the value of connecting

landscapes and people. This rich interaction embodies slow tourism where perceived value is linked to the host—tourist relationship (Clancy 2018).

A biannual illustrated newsletter containing relevant recent reports and events is distributed by the restorers to all past participants, creating strong and expansive social capital. Eddy promotes both Chingarrup Sanctuary and Gondwana Link as an invited speaker, and maintains active contact with government agencies in lobbying for environmental conservation.

These restorers were pioneers of ecotourism in the region; they showed unique courage and generosity of spirit in their venture, and their thirst for lifelong learning has led them to start other restoration sites, allowing them to progressively reinvest their wisdom.

## *Yarroweyah Falls*

### **NOONGAR CULTURE**

Yarroweyah Falls is also within the catchment of the Pallinup River, and thus Noongar activity and tradition reflects the situation at Chingarrup. Of particular Noongar significance are the two Yarroweyah Falls on the river, which are connected by 150 metres of rock and remain of contemporary ceremonial importance.

### **PEOPLE AND PROCESS<sup>2</sup>**

Bill and Jane are experienced intensive farmers from Queensland and keen botanists, who purchased Yarroweyah Falls (1,500 hectares) in 2012 for biodiversity restoration as part of Gondwana Link, and also as a home site. The attraction was the high biodiversity of the area, the umbrella support of Gondwana Link, and the proximity to other biodiversity-driven restorations. Their previous experience had been on an organic farm located on the rim of encroaching industrial development.

Carbon sequestration funding (from the Carbon Neutral Charitable Fund), combined with Australian Government biodiversity funding supported the planting through direct seeding of a hundred hectares of local trees and shrubs that would both sequester carbon and provide biodiversity benefits; the owners undertook biodiversity infill planting with seedlings from stock they collected and propagated on the property.

## DESIGN

In designing their tour programs for visitors, Bill and Jane use creative themes from their own immersion in the restoration, and they make an effort to share their joy at the outcomes of the emerging life forms that they see.

## THE EXPERIENCE

Ecotourism is young in the area of Yarraweyah Falls. Visitors see a variety of features there: the re-vegetation, waterfalls, and the adjacent restoration sites Monjebup and Red Moort. Jane creates artworks with natural elements, and Bill loves walking among nature, quietly explaining special features so as to conjure the mythology of the landscape to the present moment. Visitors reflect on this later and write about it.

Creative activities form the backbone of their guided tours and stays. Their promotions offer nature-centred activities that are customized to visitors' interests and interaction with adjoining restoration properties; a family-friendly context for introducing nature and landscape connection to people of all ages; home cooking and an organic vegetable garden; and wide open skies and geological vistas.

Bill and Jane brought to their restoration tourism a combined wisdom from their own family experience, previous projects, a realist environmental commitment, and their belief in the importance of local networks. They worked on their Yarraweyah Falls property in a supported context alongside like-minded landscape restorers in the Gondwana Link community.

## *Wilyun Pools Farm*

### NOONGAR CULTURE

Wilyun Pools Farm is located in the southern part of the Fitz-Stirling corridor. For some time, local community members had recognized a need to record the local Noongar cultural history. In a spirit of cultural reconciliation, they wished to formally record local cultural heritage as an artwork for future generations. A painting depicting the local country before European settlement was commissioned from Noongar artist Nicholas Smith, who painted in the distinctive landscape tradition of the Carrolup artists of the 1940s (Wroth 2015). Nicholas began to paint in the Carrolup school when he was removed with other Aboriginal children to the Marribank Mission. His painting hangs in the Wellstead Community Resource Centre on the tourist visitor trail, and represents a strong example of cultural mapping.

Traditionally, Noongar walking *biddis* were a core human element of *Boodja* in the Fitz- Stirling. However, clearing for agriculture and cessation of Noongar management of *Boodja* has meant that the locations of *biddis* have become obscure and poorly known. To address this erasure, a recent Noongar-initiated project<sup>3</sup> brought together several Noongar Elder women with Wilyun Pools Farm and the local Historical and Heritage Committee to share the Elders' collective family stories and childhood memories. The project utilized early settlement maps to guide them in locating a women's cultural trail, the Gnadju Trail. Revisiting sites along the trail was an emotional experience, as they stood in a group in these places, recalling events that connected the Noongar women with their grandparents and ancestors. Documenting these stories was important for Noongar and non-Noongar participants, and has provided a valuable resource not only for their families, but for national reconciliation.

#### PEOPLE AND PROCESS

Sylvia and Peter, the restorers for Wilyun Pools Farm, both grew up in the South Coast region of Western Australia and were working farm children during the “million acres a year” agricultural clearing holocaust in the 1960s. As adults, Sylvia worked as an environmental conservationist and Peter in farming and plantation forestry.

Wilyun Pools Farm (1240 hectares) was a family farm developed by Sylvia's parents through clearing of the original bush, and then largely grazed with sheep from 1965 to 1991. Its use changed in 1991 when 820 hectares were planted with blue gum trees (*Eucalyptus globulus*) for paper fibre. In 2014, farm ownership was passed on to the next generation, bringing a transition to more ecologically balanced farming. Sylvia and Peter pooled their skills to restore the family farm back to a more balanced commercial agricultural business, including 120 hectares restored back to natural biodiverse landscape. Their vision is to operate more gently within the natural ecology of the landscape and incorporate wildlife as an integral part of the business.

The initial restoration of 100 hectares of biodiverse wildlife corridors across Wilyun Pools Farm has received support in the form of federal and state grant funding.<sup>4</sup> Peter and Sylvia collected the native plant seed used from remnant areas on the farm and built 60 kilometres of protective fencing to exclude grazing stock from the restoration corridors. They manage, monitor, and conduct ongoing participatory action research relating to biodiversity.

Inviting Noongar Elders back on *Boodja* and sitting together on land within the farm boundary was a meaningful step into a richer future of cultural respect and sharing. The culturally significant Noongar *biddis* across both the farm and the Wellstead District have now been mapped and recorded, and an ongoing dialogue is maintained with Noongar community members. Using this map, four non-Indigenous artists stayed on-site and, using a slurry of the local orange clay, created a 2-by-3-metre “Tracks of Time” canvas as a non-literal depiction of the old Noongar *biddis* that criss-crossed the landscape before the land was cleared. This artwork now moves around the region on display.

### DESIGN

In designing tours for visitors to the farm, Sylvia and Peter want to demonstrate that conserving native plants and animals can be easily integrated into commercial agricultural businesses in Australia.

### THE EXPERIENCE

An ever-increasing number of school children, university study groups, art groups, and agricultural interest groups visit Wilyun Pools Farm.

Although the school children are from the regional small city of Albany (only 100 kilometres away), the big open space on the farm, as well as the interactions with farm animals and machinery, has great impact. A tour for sixty children rotates them through four outdoor activities, each of which requires walking and talking with experts, building a structure, or drawing what they saw.

## Discussion

### *The Restoration Ecotourism Experience*

Regardless of the duration of the tour, the remote location of the restoration sites necessitates three tour phases: first, a journey into country; second, an orientation and intimate interaction inside country; and third, a journey back out from country. So, from the visitors’ perspective, there is a big transition from their starting landscape (likely a car park or city home) to that of the restoration site in the first phase of the visit, providing an opportunity to build a relationship with the destination, and negotiate expectations. For the second phase, which commences on arrival, the visitors require an orientation to the immersion landscape before moving, participating, or creating

within *Boodja*, which for them is an unfamiliar world. The third phase of the visit, leaving *Boodja*, must be undertaken with respect, acknowledging mutual contributions and also future possibilities; during the journey out, space is left for reflection but also for resolution of any issues that may have arisen. The crafting of the ecotourist's experience has to allow for changing weather, wildlife behaviour, and unforeseen natural events. All being optimal, the impact on the visitors of their engagement with nature, as well as with elements of tangible and intangible cultural heritage of *Boodja*, will be strong, lasting, and transformative. Such are the possibilities of small tourism in small places.

The restorers have deep passion, enthusiasm, respect, and understanding of the tour site's landscape. These attributes aid them in their role as interpreters and translators of cultural traditions; in landscape restoration, there is a culture of biodiversity heritage as well as the culture of the traditional people. The comfort and familiarity shown by restorers when in their landscape is a stabilizing factor for the visitors, most of whom will be out of their comfort zone to some extent, at least initially. By design, an entirely self-drive version of this restoration tourism would lack both the key relationship elements and the spaces for undistracted reflection, and would also open the possibility of disease incursion.

### *Meaning Making and Mentorship*

In order to make sense of the restoration actions, the visitors need to re-create in their own minds a background context against which to evaluate the evidence before them. The evidence is the range of different species of plants and animals, their colours, shapes, sizes, behaviours, and the shapes of the landscapes they are in—in a word, biodiversity. The biodiversity needs to be felt through contact and actions before meaning can be made. The restorers have made their meaning from the restoration process and outcome and wish for others to do the same, so they are the best possible human interpreters and mentors (Lukianova and Fell 2015, 615). To continue on the personal journey toward understanding the value of biodiversity, visitors may repeat the tour, engage in other restoration-related activities, or other transformative travel such as guided visits in national parks (Wolf, Stricker, and Hagenloh 2015).

Wolf, Ainsworth, and Crowley (2017, 1664) derived a framework for transformative travel from their systematic review of reports on visitor-experience development in rural or urban protected areas. The experience

characteristics and benefits listed in their framework also apply to the restoration ecotourism examined in this chapter. We have the additional contexts of creative and altruistic tourism in which to consider the visitor experience. These dimensions are contributed by the restorers, as well as by a focus on actively restoring the landscape.

In the spirit of lifelong learning demonstrated by the restorers to date, keeping an ongoing dialogue between Noongar traditional owners and landholders will strengthen Noongar reconnection and will enrich the tourist experience for both provider/interpreter and visitor. Sylvia and Peter's approach at Wilyun Pools includes both informal relationship building between restorers and traditional owners, as well as direct Noongar interpretation for visitors. Western scientists in Australia are just starting to recognize that over sixty thousand years of Aboriginal knowledge should inform settler ways, rather than remain as a separate historical entity (Bairnsfather-Scott 2019, 1). The restorers have the opportunity to share the dynamic journey of incorporating Aboriginal science into ecological restoration.

At Nowanup, other recent and inclusive innovations in cultural landscape restoration in the Fitz-Stirling have seen close collaboration between Noongar Elders and ecological restoration professionals that have deliberately incorporated the spiritual importance of plants and landscape in restoration design and execution (*Koori Mail* 2017, 22). This creates meaningful, comfortable human spaces on *Boodja* that can again be used as Noongar places of spiritual connection, learning, and healing. Ongoing connection between our restorers and this new, inclusive approach to restoration of Noongar *Boodja* will further enrich the biodiversity and socio-cultural outcomes of restoration, and hence the tourist experience that they host.

### *About People Who Restore*

The restorers in our examples were committed partners, with skills related to the restoration work; they did not complete their projects alone. Their pathways to the decision to restore varied. At Chingarrup, the personal conservation decision coincided with the commencement of Gondwana Link; the restoration was paced, continuous, and evolutionary, and intermittent over fifteen years, and so was a significant part of life for the restorers. At Yarrahweyah Falls, the decision was planned and strategic, and made in collaboration with a fully formed Gondwana Link advisory group; the restoration was a full-time immersion over two years, being lived by the restorers.

The decision among the farming community to seek cultural change in Wellstead spanned a long period, giving community members time to listen, engage, and then act. On Wilyun Pools Farm, the decision for both cultural and biodiversity restoration evolved as a planned part of family succession; the restoration was paced over a term and took place alongside the farm business. It remains open to rapid change as the next generation of restorers embrace the challenges of climate change and interweave ancient knowledge with modern dynamic landscape assessment.

Although each restorer came to their place along a different journey, they shared a culture of respect for nature and connection with their landscape; this drove their actions as restorers. In executing their restorations and designing their small tourism experiences, the restorers acted akin to craftsmen, as Sennett (2009) has described in the context of achieving mastery. Craftsmen not only desire to do quality-driven work, they also have the ability required. Their high levels of skill allow them to feel fully and think deeply about what they do. Their mastery has an ethical dimension, which is slow crafting.

The restorations were arduous but were also an opportunity for personal change. As an action, restoration potentially evoked a new identity in individuals, beginning their transformation from environmental advocates to change agents who enrol others for their cause (Williams and Chawla 2016, 980). The restorers must share with others the outcomes of their work in order to create mutual benefits; by inviting ecotourists to share the experience of the process of restoration, the restorers spread the word and mature their own wisdom. Showing others is an important transaction for them. The form of collaborative, altruistic tourism is an effective strategy for aiding ecological, economic, cultural, and social sustainability, one small group at a time.

Our restorers were individuals who, through life experience and strong commitments to the value of intact landscapes and cultural respect, acted to protect and restore. Their stories are parallel journeys inside one touristic place; restorers share their own experiences with tourists, and invite them to create their own and to take with them into the future a new relationship with nature and biodiversity.

## Restoration Ecotourism and Small Tourism

Our ground-driven, co-creative activities, our strategy based on need (to protect and restore habitat), and our revealing the “intangible embeddedness of



the host community” defines creative tourism, according to Richards (2011, 1239). The school children’s amazement at the rural open spaces, broad landscape horizons, and new sounds and smells at Wilyun Pools Farm matches urban “performative spaces” (Clope 2007, 47), but in the rural setting. Slow tourism is another perspective in which restoration ecotourism can be considered. Hallmarks of slow tourism include quality in its social and relational aspects, environmental soundness, and economic and social benefits for destination communities (Clancy 2018).

The small context optimizes the experience potential for tourists. The restoration pathway that is core to Chingarup, Yarroweyah Falls, and Wilyun Pools Farm was the shared driving motivation, akin to environmental altruism. Our restorers’ commitment to crafting a solution to their biodiversity dilemmas and their recognition of First Nation People’s cultural knowledge led to personal mastery. In fact, with this interweaving of ancient knowledge and modern landscape assessment, a generational change in mindset has become evident in southwestern Australia. The wider community now embraces First Nation People’s cultural knowledge, ecological science, and lore related to land management. Emerging generations increasingly recognize and demand cultural connection and its integration into future restoration projects. Looking at small things is empowering and healing; recognizing nature’s strategies is humbling to humans (Bairnsfather-Scott 2019, 1; Laudine 2016, 121). Truly transformative ecotourism can only be accomplished by close observation of a small place.

## Conclusion

Our collaborative reflections at the nexus of landscape and cultural restoration have shown not only a unique type of small creative tourism, but also a small, slow, and transformative restoration ecotourism. The key features that emerged were quality in the social and relational aspects of the restorer/tourist/nature interactions; environmental soundness; and the diffusion of rewards for individuals, communities, and the land.

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## NOTES

- 1 Funding assistance/in-kind support was sourced from Bush Heritage Australia, Conservation Council of Western Australia, Greening Australia, Greenskills Inc., and Shell Reconnections.
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- 3 With funding assistance from National Science Week, an initiative of the Australian Government.
- 4 The Australian Government’s 20 Million Trees program and the Landcare Australia initiative of the State Natural Resource Management.

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