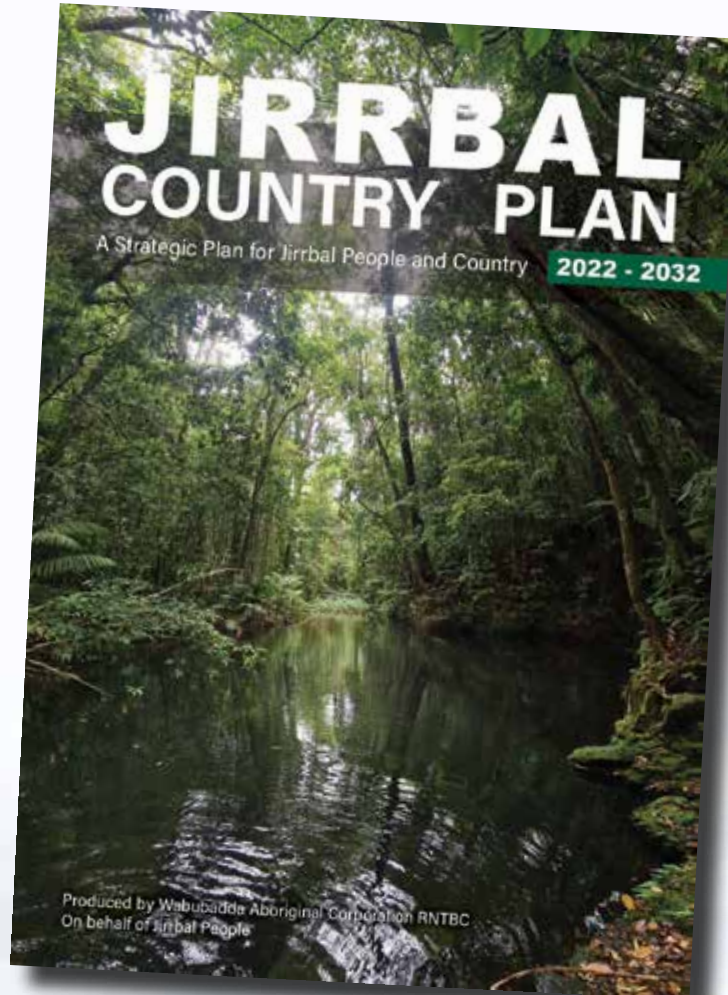


# Jirrbal Country Plan

Massive congratulations to the Jirrbal people and Wabubadda Aboriginal Corporation on their success of the Jirrbal Country Plan.

The Jirrbal Country Plan was developed to provide a framework for Jirrbal people to voice and assert their rights, interests, and aspirations for looking after people and country. On Friday 18 March, Wabubadda Aboriginal Corporation held the launch of the Jirrbal Country Plan in Tumoulin. The day was a success with all partners and Jirrbal people participating in the launch.

The vision for the Jirrbal Country Plan is for Jirrbal people being involved in decision making for the region's development, as well as getting young people back on Country and making sure history is acknowledged. The establishment of the Jirrbal Ranger program is one of the major strategies for Wabubadda Aboriginal Corporation to look after and manage Country.



## Introducing the Authority's newest staff: Welcome to the team Matt and Luke

### Matthew Cheetham

Matt Cheetham is a proud Jirrbal man and Senior Project Officer within the presentation and engagement team.

Having a strong background in youth and community engagement, Matt's key duties include undertaking activities to promote, educate and increase awareness of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area to the community, partners and stakeholders. Matt will lead and deliver community engagement initiatives, increasing youth participation and influencing attitude and behaviour change that promotes advocacy for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area. Matt provides secretariat support to the Community Consultative Committee, supports the Authority's social media presence, and is coordinating of this year's Cassowary Awards.

P: 0448 248 944 or E: [Matthew.cheetham@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:Matthew.cheetham@wtma.qld.gov.au)



### Luke Briscoe

Yundu yalada, ngayku burri Luke Briscoe. I'm a Yalanji man living in Cairns and my traditional lands are Kuburri Wurra and Julay Wurra. I'm very grateful to now be living and working closer to my homelands after residing in NSW for over a decade.

I have vivid memories as boy walking through the Daintree with my grandparents Norman and Wilma Walker and now I'm working for the Authority, which aims to protect and promote culturally significant places like the Daintree—one of the places where my grandparents first shared Yalanji culture with me.

In my role I'll focus on communication and engagement activities, supporting all program areas. I have a professional career background working in media and communications, education and policy, I advocate for more cultural inclusion in STEM education with the work I do with INDIGI LAB, a company I founded to get more Indigenous kids into STEM by making science education relevant to them. I'm really looking forward to contributing to the work of the Authority as well as working alongside other Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

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## Updates

### What's been happening in the Wet Tropics...

**31 March–1 April:** Wet Tropics Management Authority Board meeting #118

**27 April:** Youth Roundtable and Reef Assist 'Working with Nature' film night

**20 May:** Nominations open for Cassowary Awards

**16–18 June:** Indigenous Cultural Heritage Conference 2021

### What's coming up in the Wet Tropics...

**1 July:** Nominations close for Cassowary Awards

**3–10 July:** NAIDOC Week

**29–31 July:** Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples' Regional Forum

**31 July:** World Ranger Day

**3–9 August:** Landcare Week

**4 August:** National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day

**9 August:** International Day of Indigenous Peoples

**13–21 August:** National Science Week

# RAINFOREST ABORIGINALnews

Issue eighteen : May 2022



## World Heritage update

Welcome to issue 18 of the Rainforest Aboriginal News. We hope everyone had a great start to the year and is keeping safe and healthy. This issue introduces our newest Board Directors, and celebrates the start to the year and the exciting projects to come.

Firstly, we would like to welcome the Authority's two newest Board Directors, Professor Stephen Williams and Robin Clark. These new directors offer expertise in the areas of climate change impacts and environmental planning in the region.

Professor Stephen Williams has expertise in rainforest ecology and a passion to better understand the natural biodiversity of our region, bringing positive benefits to our Country.

Robin Clark has a wealth of knowledge in all levels of resource management, environmental planning and community governance. We believe Stephen and Robin will further strengthen the Authority's vision 'to protect the values of the Wet Tropics through collaboration, culture, knowledge and passion'.

Our latest Board meeting—the first for the year—was held on 31 March and 1 April. Across the two days we were pleased to welcome our newest directors and receive updates on several projects progressing and finalised, including the Authority's collaborative work with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service.

QPWS provided detailed overviews of the Climate Change Adaption Plan and the raised importance of engaging Indigenous rangers in the fire management practices for the plan. This offers the opportunity for meaningful involvement with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples.

The Board is excited to announce that the 19th Cassowary Awards will be held at Tjapukai Now on 8 October 2022, during Australian Wildlife Week.

The Authority has been successful in its application for a \$395,000 federal government Australian Heritage Grant—congratulations to all involved. The outcomes of the project will increase education, awareness and recognition of the Indigenous heritage values and cultural landscape of the Wet Tropics. The first step of the process will be for the Authority to hold consultations with Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples and work with them to tell their stories and share their knowledge in a culturally appropriate way.

We trust that everyone continues to have a positive outlook for the year and stays connected to our culture. Our next Board meeting will be held in June 2022.

Chrissy Grant, Chair, and Ailsa Lively, Director Wet Tropics Management Authority Board



## NRM update

Our new Indigenous education bursary program is going really well and Terrain NRM's Board of Directors will be offering two more bursaries in the coming months. These are for young people who are studying, or planning on studying, for careers in natural resource or environmental management, sustainable development, agriculture or conservation. The \$3,000 bursaries, from Terrain's Natural Capital Fund, support students in other ways too, by connecting them with people and opportunities in their areas of interest.

Our current bursary holders are studying environmental management at TAFE and university. It has been good to keep in contact with them over the last year. We'll be calling for applications for the next round in coming months so keep an eye out on the Terrain NRM website at [www.terrain.org.au](http://www.terrain.org.au) and on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

Also, congratulations to five corporations for securing Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program funding from the Queensland Government, which will benefit land management in our region: Dulabed and Malanbarra Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation based out of Gordonvale, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation on behalf of Manbarra Elders Council for Palm Island, Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples PBC Aboriginal Corporation south of Yarrabah, Mamu Aboriginal Corporation at Innisfail, and Mandubarra Aboriginal Land and Sea Incorporated for sea Country near Mourilyan Harbour.

Barry Hunter  
Director, Terrain NRM Board







# Caring for Country at Clump Point

Tree-planting and weed control work at Mission Beach is protecting endangered coastal rainforest and strengthening Djiru people's ties with traditional ceremonial land. At Clump Point lookout, Djiru Traditional Owners have been working with the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and Giringun rangers to plant thousands of trees on the edge of littoral rainforest where the land has been overrun by guinea grass. Djiru's Rona Hart said getting back on Country was grounding. "This is a special place—for thousands of years our ancestors met with other groups here, held ceremonies, fished, hunted and camped," Mrs Hart said. "It's always good to come back. We came as kids and growing up, and now I come with my own kids and grandkids. This new project has been an opportunity for other Djiru people to get back on Country too, through short-term employment, to keep the connection and learn new skills." The Clump Point area is a council reserve under an Indigenous land use agreement and Mrs Hart plans to continue land management work in collaboration with the Cassowary Coast Regional Council and other organisations.

"The young trees are looking beautiful," she said. "But there is always more weed management to do. This kind of coordinated effort is really beneficial—it empowers Djiru people to become more involved in environmental issues and it also helps to bring traditional knowledge and cultural practices into shared land management." Littoral rainforest is listed as endangered, and Clump Point is the only place in the Wet Tropics where it is growing on volcanic soil. The Clump Point initiative is one of Terrain NRM's Building Rainforest Resilience grant projects. Terrain NRM's Tony O'Malley said the organisation strongly supported Traditional Owner management of Country and this project, where the council employed Djiru people for littoral rainforest restoration, was strengthening partnerships. Cassowary Coast Regional Council's Cr Jeff Baines, who holds the council's environment portfolio, said the project had a positive impact on the environment and renewed everyone's focus on the Clump Point area as a special place. "Undertaking this project together with Traditional Owners ensures there

is sustainability and a place-based approach to actions taken," he said. Since the trees have been planted, Council has been focusing on regular maintenance and it's been heartening to see how quickly the trees have already grown. The Building Rainforest Resilience project is supported by Terrain NRM through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program.



# The Gungandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Reef Assist Ranger Project

The Gungandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporate's Reef Assist Ranger Project (the Project), funded through the Queensland Government's Reef Assist program and in collaboration with the Wet Tropics Management Authority, commenced in February 2021. Seven Gungandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Rangers (GMY Rangers) have completed a significant amount of training in this short period, including four field trips with David Stanton from 3D Environmental, a Certificate III in Conservation Land Management with TAFE Queensland and a wide range of complimentary training. GMY Rangers team have made their community extremely proud of their achievements in 2021. It has been a pleasure to watch the GMY Rangers grow throughout the year and develop a wide range of new skills and qualifications that can be applied in the field to achieve positive land management outcomes on Gungandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Country.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority's Executive Director Scott Buchanan said, "The Authority appreciates the great work undertaken by the GMYPPBC team in the delivery of the Reef Assist program and in providing employment and training to unemployed and underemployed locals while investing in on-ground restoration and cultural activities". The Project values partnerships and wishes to acknowledge and thank partners and staff for their time and support throughout the year. Gungandji and Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples are looking forward to continuing these partnerships and achieving many more positive outcomes in 2022. Special mention to our Project Partners: Queensland Government's Reef Assist program, Wet Tropics Management Authority, Wugu Nyambil Pty Ltd, VPG Partnerships, MAS Experience, Djunbunji Ltd, TAFE Queensland, Rural Fire Service, Tangaroa Blue, Yarrabah Leaders Forum and Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.



# Connecting with Country



Funding is enabling Wanyurr-Majay Aboriginal Corporation to carry out land restoration and cultural mapping on traditional land and sea Country in the lower Mulgrave and Russell rivers. Wanyurr-Majay are the Traditional Owners of the southern lower coastal Yidinji nation. Their interests oversee approximately 200km2 of land near Babinda, south of Cairns, including the sandy reaches of the Mulgrave River. Wanyurr-Majay rangers are working with landholder Franco Arri and Mulgrave Landcare and Catchment Group to restore disused cane land, with pest plant species being replaced with native trees. Planting trees to stabilise the banks of paddock watercourses will improve the quality of the water entering the river and reef lagoon and enhance biodiversity to benefit wildlife. It's hoped that the native fruits planted will attract cassowaries back to the site. Elders recall a time when the area was teeming with bird life. Greening Australia have funded the monitoring of birds on site—Simon Kennedy from Birdlife Australia will work with the rangers to regularly survey and record bird activity.

Traditional indicators and scientific data will monitor the success of the project. The Wanyurr-Majay Corporation is also working with a cultural landscape specialist to map culturally significant waters in the lower Russell and Mulgrave catchment and outwards to include wetlands, springs, wells, lagoons and feeder creeks. A plan will be developed to assist Wanyurr-Majay to work in partnership with government bodies, Mulgrave Landcare and Catchment Group, and landholders to take more responsibility and care of all significant Wanyurr-Majay traditional waters. Wanyurr-Majay Aboriginal Corporation Registered Native Title Body Corporate, established in 2006, works with neighbours and partners to protect the cultural and natural systems that support Wanyurr-Majay people and the wider community. Traditional Owners appreciate and welcome every opportunity to care for Country and thank the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and the Australian Government's Reef Trust for funding Wanyurr-Majay Aboriginal Corporation to deliver this project.