

# RAINFOREST ABORIGINAL news

Issue eight: March 2019

## World Heritage update

A big welcome to the eighth edition of Rainforest Aboriginal News, the first edition of 2019!

First of all, we (Phil Rist and Dr Leah Talbot) have been reappointed to the Wet Tropics Management Authority Board for another term! We look forward to continuing to be a voice for Rainforest Aboriginal People and, along with our fellow board members, provide strategic direction to management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

The review of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 continues with a second phase of public consultation now underway. This second stage of consultation provides Rainforest Aboriginal People the opportunity to again have valuable input into the development of the Management Plan. Taking on board feedback from Rainforest Aboriginal People and the community during the first round of consultations, the Authority has prepared a 'Wet Tropics World Heritage Plan' for public comment that includes two parts:

- Wet Tropics Strategic Plan 2020–2030 states the desired outcomes that the Authority will deliver and outlines the actions that will achieve this.
- Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 (the Management Plan): subordinate Queensland legislation which provides the legal framework for management of the World Heritage Area.

The draft documents are available for feedback until 18 April at [wettropics.gov.au/PlanReview](http://wettropics.gov.au/PlanReview). Future Act Notices have been sent to native title representative bodies, registered native title bodies corporate and registered native title applicant groups.

The Authority also held four general information

sessions across the region for all common law holders in Mossman and Cairns on 16 March, Atherton on 23 March and Cardwell on 30 March. Final documents will go to the Queensland Government for approval in mid-2019.

The Gillies Range Road anti-litter campaign project was launched in December 2018 to address the impact of litter and dumping on the stretch of road between the Atherton Tableland and Gordonvale. This initiative was a partnership between community members, the Authority's Community Consultative Committee, the Department of Environment and Science, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and local councils. Keep an eye out for the new road signs featuring Wet Tropics wildlife. So far the campaign has resulted in eight tonnes of illegally dumped rubbish being removed and a stronger push to report those who continue to illegally dump in the area.

The extreme heat conditions of 2018 are a reminder of the emerging threat of climate change and predicted increases of extreme weather incidents. The Wet Tropics Climate Adaptation Plan is currently in development and aims to identify adaptation activities with a partnership approach. The Plan recognises that climate change is everyone's responsibility and focuses on building resilience into economies, landscapes and communities in the Wet Tropics. Scientific research combined with cultural knowledge informs best practice land management. This approach also encourages sustainable tourism and involvement of Traditional Owners in the ongoing management of country.

Leah Talbot and Phil Rist  
Directors—Wet Tropics  
Management Authority Board



## NRM update

Recently there has been a change in the Terrain NRM board as we farewell Allison Halliday, who served for many years as the Indigenous director and I humbly accept the position. As incoming director, and on behalf of everyone at Terrain NRM, I'd like to thank Allison for her contribution and I'm looking forward to working with you all into the future.

This change is not the only one Terrain NRM has been undergoing recently and it has been quite a tumultuous year for us as several programs ended and new ones began. It always requires a big effort when we are at the beginning of a new funding cycle, but we now have the foundations in place for 4–5 years of exciting new natural resource management (NRM) projects.

Along with these new projects, we have undertaken a restructure of our Community Partnerships team and the way we engage with Traditional Owner groups. For more information I encourage you to get in touch with Vanessa Drysdale (0437 187 036) who is now the central point of contact for Traditional Owner engagement.

Thanks again for the warm welcome and I am excited to be part of such a strong organisation and hope to assist in guiding Terrain NRM's strategic direction in the future.

Barry Hunter—Director,  
Terrain NRM Board



## 2019 People Country Culture Calendar

The 2019 People Country Culture Calendar connects photographs of the cultural landscape to traditional storytellers, relating their connection to the Wet Tropics. Copies have been distributed to Rainforest Aboriginal organisations in the region. If you would like a copy sent to you directly please contact Liam Roberts on 07 4241 0550 or email [liam.roberts@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:liam.roberts@wtma.qld.gov.au)

We acknowledge Rainforest Aboriginal People as the traditional custodians of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and recognise their connection to this cultural landscape. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.





# Mamu's work on Koster's curse

Mamu Aboriginal Corporation is working on country to remove a feral weed species while discovering new insights about their cultural heritage.

Koster's curse (*Clidemia hirta*) is a quick-growing weed known to smother native vegetation, commonly spread by birds. Infestations have been found in North Queensland between Mossman and Tully. Mamu Aboriginal Corporation has taken charge of the removal of Koster's curse on Mamu country in the Palmerston area of Wooroonooran National Park.

In 2018 Mamu Aboriginal Corporation was approached by the Cassowary Coast Regional Council to undertake weed eradication work funded through the feral pest initiative. The work commenced in September, starting out with a combined taskforce day involving Mamu Traditional Owners, Queensland Parks and Wildlife

Service, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, and the Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

Work is ongoing and new plants are regularly removed by hand and/or sprayed to prevent the spread of seeds.

While the Mamu Environmental Services (MES) crew monitors the distribution of the weed, the main aim is to stop it making its way to local waterways. As well as causing local impacts, Koster's curse could become a huge problem further downstream if allowed to spread through wet season flooding.

The increased on-country work has also allowed for greater cultural heritage monitoring.

Koster's curse is a restricted invasive plant under the *Biosecurity Act 2014* and sightings must be reported to Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23.



© Mamu Aboriginal Corporation

# TUMRA book and tourism video launch

Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation launched the Yirrganydji Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) book on 14 December 2018.

The TUMRA enables Yirrganydji Traditional Owners to plan and implement collaborative management agreements that protect sea country in partnership with the Australian and Queensland governments. Yirrganydji Gurabana Aboriginal Corporation, the Department of Environment and Science, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Wet Tropics Management Authority, Cairns Regional Council, and Yirrganydji Traditional Owners attended the event.

Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation also launched their tourism video, highlighting the cultural values of Yirrganydji country and the connection that Traditional Owners have to the land and sea. It provides an enticing draw for visitors and features the globally outstanding Great Barrier Reef and Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage sites.

6 The Australian and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) recently recognised the leadership represented by the tourism video with the Award for Indigenous strength and leadership in public administration in Australia and Aotearoa-New Zealand.

The leadership Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation has shown in the development of the TUMRA book and tourism video, recognises and empowers today's generation of Yirrganydji people for tomorrow's future. We congratulate the Yirrganydji people on their achievements. Well done!



© Wet Tropics Images



© Dawul Wuru





## Signs unveiled at Jilgi, Ganyiira and Buddabadoo

Mandingalbay Yidinji people and Gunggandji people gathered in December to celebrate the unveiling of signs to depict local stories about Jilgi, Ganyiira and Buddabadoo.

Developed by the Gunggandji-Mandingalbay Yidinji Peoples Prescribed Body Corporate Aboriginal Corporation (GMYPPBC), the signs include beautiful artwork depicting the stories by artists Maynard Bulmer and Connie Richards.

The unveiling ceremony at Jilgi, Ganyiira and Buddabadoo was attended by the Mandingalbay Yidinji people, Gunggandji people, local community members, stakeholders and dignitaries including the local MP Curtis Pitt, the Wet Tropics Management Authority's chair Leslie Sherriffs and Yarrabah Mayor Ross Andrews.

GMYPPBC Executive Officer Helen Tait said the signs were symbolic.

*They are a sign of what the GMY people have achieved over the years and through their native title determination, and they are also a sign of what is to come for the organisation and future generations of the GMY people.*  
Helen Tait

The GMYPPBC board of directors also wanted to recognise and thank artists Maynard and Connie for their time and contribution to the GMYPPBC Signage Project, and the Wet Tropics Management Authority for their funding commitment and collaboration with the GMYPPBC to develop these important signs.

## Going digital

Caring for country now involves drones, GPS mapping and online mapping portals.

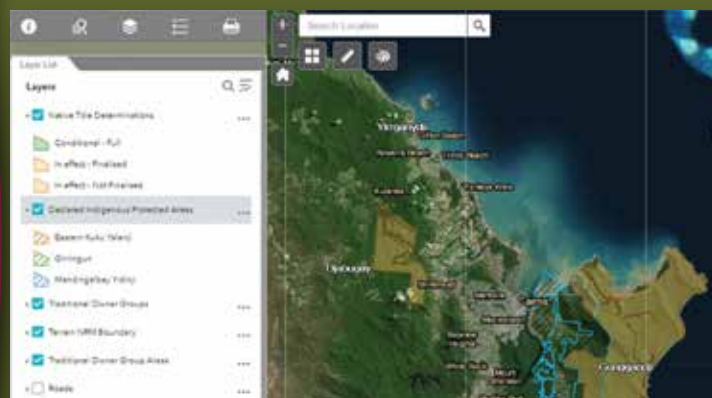
Indigenous groups in the Wet Tropics are going digital to record their land, sites of cultural significance and environmental projects ranging from tree plantings to traditional burns. Projects are bringing together the older and younger generations.

Djiru Traditional Owner Rona Hart said the Djiru people in Mission Beach were working with Terrain NRM to create an online resource that could be used both on country and in the office. 'This is a mapping portal with layers of information about our mob, tenures, partnerships and our projects. It'll be a resource we use to assess projects and to plan for new ones.'

Terrain NRM is custom-building mapping portals for community and Indigenous groups, with workshops on ongoing data management. Over the past year Terrain NRM has worked with a range of groups in the Wet Tropics including the Djiru people at Mission Beach, Bulmba Rangers from Kuranda, Gulngay people at Tully and Gunggandji people from Yarrabah.

Ms Hart said the project was bringing people together.

*We'll be using GPS and drones to map sites in the next stage and we're hoping this is the kind of project that will appeal to the next generation and get more of us involved in the management of traditional land and sea country.*



The Djiru people's most recent projects have been on creek-side land at Wongaling Beach where Singapore daisy was removed and native trees planted, and also near the Mission Beach State School where a wetland was restored.

Terrain NRM's Bronwyn Robertson said her organisation will be working with other groups in coming months to help involve more people in cultural and environmental land management throughout the Wet Tropics.

To access free online mapping tools, visit the Wet Tropics Plan for People and Country website at [wettropicsplan.org.au/Mapping/Mapping-Tools/](http://wettropicsplan.org.au/Mapping/Mapping-Tools/)

## Traditional Owner Leadership Group update

2018 was a big and successful year for the Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) and 2019 is shaping up to be even bigger.

With a mandate arising from the October 2017 Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples regional workshop at Palm Cove, a Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) involving the Board of the North Queensland Land Council (NQLC), the Indigenous Advisory members of the Authority and the Indigenous Director of Terrain NRM was formed.

The TOLG has held six meetings to date and hosted the Rainforest Aboriginal People's Regional Forum on 19–20 October 2018 at Mission Beach Resort. More than 80 participants, representing Traditional Owners from around the region, along with original Regional Agreement signatories, shared their thoughts and ideas at this two-day forum.

The participants at the forum:

- reviewed and acknowledged the work and significant progress made by the TOLG throughout 2018
- considered and endorsed the documents produced by TOLG on behalf of Traditional Owners
- sought direction on meaningful ongoing engagement from Rainforest Aboriginal People to ensure the Wet Tropics Management Plan review adequately addresses priority issues for Traditional Owners
- discussed Rainforest Aboriginal People's issues and concerns that may have fallen outside of the original scope of the Plan Review
- provided an opportunity for Rainforest Aboriginal People of the Wet Tropics region to come together and provide advice on priority issues.

At the end of the two-day forum the floor endorsed the recommendations presented by TOLG. The Authority, NQLC and Terrain NRM will continue to support the TOLG with the refresh of the Regional Agreement. Planning is underway for the next Rainforest Aboriginal Peoples Regional Forum. A summary document has been distributed, if you would like a copy please contact Alicia Haines on phone 4242 0510 or email [alicia.haines@wtma.qld.gov.au](mailto:alicia.haines@wtma.qld.gov.au)

## 30 Years of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Queensland Environment Minister Leeanne Enoch joined with industry and community leaders on 15 December to commemorate the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage Area's 30th anniversary.

The Wet Tropics was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List on 9 December 1988, following a lengthy public debate with strong community involvement for and against the listing.

Thirty years on, Minister Enoch said there was now little doubt about the Area's values.

'I am proud to be here today to celebrate what is

now a world-renowned natural and cultural landscape, which contributes so much to the lives of local residents and the tourism industry in particular,' Minister Enoch said.

'As a Quandamooka woman, I acknowledge the 20 Traditional Owner tribal groups across the Wet Tropics, the only First Nations people in Australia to have lived permanently in the rainforest landscape.'

The event itself was strongly attended with performances from both Yirrganydji and Gimuy Walubara Yidinji traditional dancers. To mark the milestone, Wet Tropics Management Authority Chair, Leslie Shirreffs (centre), joined with directors Anne Clarke (left) and Leah Talbot (right) to plant an endangered Daintree gardenia (*Gardenia actinocarpa*) in the Cairns Botanic Gardens' Gondwanan Evolution Garden.



# Updates

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

**7 November**—Australian Government Protecting Indigenous Knowledge Roundtable meeting, Cairns

**9 November**—6-year anniversary of National Heritage Listing of Indigenous Values (Wet Tropics)

**30 November**—Traditional Owner Leadership Group meeting/research protocol workshop with QPWS

**26–28 November**—Global Ecotourism Conference, Townsville

**4 December**—GMYPPBC sign launch

**6 December**—launch Gillies Range Road litter and illegal dumping project

**9 December**—30th anniversary of Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

**14 December**—Wet Tropics Management Authority board meeting

**15 December**—Dawul Wuru Aboriginal Corporation launch TUMRA booklet and tourism video

**4 February**—Traditional Owner Leadership Group (TOLG) meeting

**2 March–18 April**—phase 2 consultation for the Wet Tropics Plan 1998

**2 March**—Girringun AGM

**4–5 December**—Wet Tropics Management Authority Board meeting

**18–19 March**—TOLG meeting and Research protocols workshop with QPWS

**16 March**—plan review meeting, Mossman and Cairns

**23 March**—plan review meeting, Atherton

**30 March**—plan review meeting, Cardwell

## open grants

**1 February**—Cairns Regional Council NAIDOC grants open | [cairns.qld.gov.au/onlinegrants](http://cairns.qld.gov.au/onlinegrants)

Indigenous Advancement Strategy, PBC capacity building grant funding is open with no closing date | [pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/grants-and-funding](http://pmc.gov.au/indigenous-affairs/grants-and-funding)

**30 April**—National Landcare Program—new Indigenous Protected Area funding applications close | [grants.gov.au](http://grants.gov.au)

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