



# Wait-a-While

Newsletter | Edition #1

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*Initiating People, Country and Culture outcomes for the benefit and healing of the Mandingalbay Yidinji People and Community*

## WELCOME TO OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER



Overlooking Country. Photo courtesy of the Cairns Post. Photographer Mike Watt.

Welcome to our first edition of Djunbunji Land and Sea Program newsletter, **Wait-a-While**. It has been a little while in the making but now we have published the first edition we can promise that you won't be waiting too long to see the next edition!

Wait-a-While is of cultural significance to the Mandingalbay Yidinji People and while there are many local varieties, it is the *Jabulam* which is the special one. Not only were its canes useful for a multitude of purposes, but its fruit is edible and it is also eagerly sought after by forest pigeons.

The scientific name for *Jabulam* is '*Calamus australis*'. It is found commonly on rainforest margins and in gaps in the rainforest itself. It would be one of the first

plants to colonise areas of the rainforest where the falling of old trees leads to sunlight penetrating the rainforest canopy.

It has various common names such as Hairy Mary, Lawyer Cane or Wait-a-While.

Wait-a-While Newsletter will publicise the work of the Djunbunji Land and Sea Centre Rangers, particularly our Working on Country program. I hope you enjoy reading our first edition and following our progress in later editions.

*Welcome from Dale Mundraby  
Director*



## CEO APPOINTED

Ian Kuch has recently been appointed by the board as CEO of Djunbunji Ltd.



Ian comes to Djunbunji with a wealth of experience in managing Aboriginal Corporations and in developing successful Aboriginal business enterprises. He has a long association with the Yarrabah region since he was a high school teacher in Yarrabah in the mid 1980's.

Since returning to work in the Yarrabah Community in the early 1990's, Ian has held many Senior Management positions in Aboriginal organisations including being CEO of Employnet, the North Qld Land Council and Cairns Regional CDEP.

In more recent years he has been employed as a Special Adviser to the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council managing their transition to fully fledged local government status and more recently as a Council Change Management Advisor around government changes to Indigenous employment service delivery arrangements in regional areas and Indigenous social housing policy.

Ian comes directly to Djunbunji from NPC, an Aboriginal owned mining, civil and

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training contractor where he was North Queensland Business and Community Development Manager.

Ian has a demonstrated track record in developing effective management and governance systems, growing and developing organisational capacity and helping Aboriginal organisations to achieve their corporate goals.

When *Wait-a-While* spoke to Ian he stated, "I am honoured to take up this role and am looking forward to working with the Mandingalbay Yidinji people and the staff of Djunbunji to achieve the company's corporate goals. Having worked at the front end of Native Title in the lodgement and negotiation of claims for many years I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with a group who have established a practical foundation to manage their country and have an exciting future after the recognition of their Native Title Rights in 2006."

## DRAFT INDIGENOUS PROTECTED AREA PLAN RELEASED

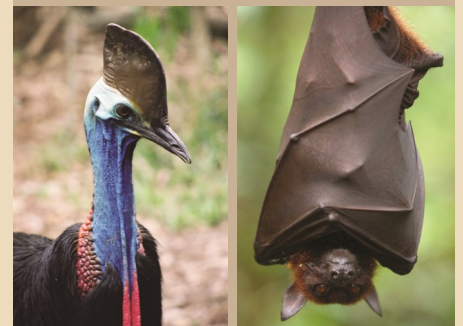
The Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation has released the Draft Management Plan for the proposed Mandingalbay Yidinji Indigenous Protected Area (IPA).

The IPA will provide the framework for Traditional Owner involvement in the management of Mandingalbay Yidinji country where native title has been determined, as well as some other areas still under claim or where native title has been extinguished (such as the East Trinity Environmental Reserve).

### What is an IPA?

An IPA is an area of land and/or sea country that Traditional Owners are committed to protect and manage for their important cultural and natural values. There are currently over 40 IPAs throughout Australia, mostly located on Aboriginal freehold land. IPAs provide opportunities for ranger employment, tourism development and other enterprises that Traditional Owners may wish to develop and that do not damage the values of the area.

For many years Mandingalbay Yidinji country has been divided into separate areas, such as National Park, Forest Reserve, Environmental Reserve, Council Reserve, Marine Park and Fish Habitat Area, and managed by different



Rehabilitation of East Trinity Environmental Reserve (top), Cassowary and Flying Fox (bottom)





government agencies. The IPA "joins country back together" and puts Traditional Owners in the driver's seat to coordinate management across the whole of country. The IPA will be managed by Djunbunji Land and Sea Rangers under the direction of Traditional Owners and in partnership with government agencies.

The map to the right shows the area included in the proposed IPA. Other areas could be added to the IPA later if Traditional Owners want that to happen once further native title claims have been resolved.

### What's in the Draft IPA Management Plan?

The Draft IPA Management Plan describes the important cultural and natural values of Mandingalbay Yidinji country and the vision that Traditional Owners have for protecting those values and passing them on to future generations. The Draft Plan also explains how the IPA will be managed to make sure that Traditional Owners will always be able to hunt and gather on land and sea and to ensure that threats to country from feral animals and weeds are controlled.

The IPA Management Plan was developed in consultation with the Mandingalbay Yidinji Cultural Protocol Committee and other Traditional Owners and Rangers. The IPA was first proposed in the *Strategic Plan for Mandingalbay Yidinji Country* published in 2009.

Implementation of the IPA Management Plan will include a range of projects and opportunities for Traditional Owners to become actively involved in using and managing their country, including:

- Ranger employment
- Recording traditional knowledge of animals, plants and places
- Cultural heritage surveys and site recording
- Strengthening language and cultural practices
- Fire burning country the proper cultural way
- Controlling pigs and weeds that are damaging country

- Monitoring water quality, fish populations and sea grass beds
- Working with research scientists to help country recover from clearing and acide sulphate soils, especially on East Trinity
- Developing tourism and walking track proposals that can provide jobs for Traditional Owners

Copies of the Draft IPA Plan are available at the Djunbunji Land and Sea Program office, Bessie Point, on the Yarrabah Road, and later will be available on the Djunbunji website.

Traditional Owners are invited to provide feedback on the Draft IPA Management Plan over the next couple of months.

Please contact Stacey at Djunbunji Land and Sea Program (ph: 07 4056 8283) to request a copy of the Draft Plan or to arrange a more detailed briefing on the Plan. After further discussions and consent from Traditional Owners, Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation will prepare a final IPA Management Plan and will invite Traditional Owners to attend a ceremony to dedicate Mandingalbay Yidinji country as an IPA.



# DJUNBUNJI RANGERS

## Implementing People, Country and Culture Programs.

Mandingalbay Yidinji country in far north Queensland covers some 40 kilometres of coastline and includes two World Heritage Areas, a nationally threatened ecological community and a large number of nationally threatened and/or migratory species.

Our project has seen the development of a sustainable ranger service on Mandingalbay Yidinji country comprised of a team of Aboriginal Rangers and one

Ranger Coordinator. This team plays a key role in the management of the area through tasks such as invasive animal and plant control, protection and management of significant sites, revegetation and rehabilitation and fire management.

The work of the Rangers is not confined to environmental management as the project is also in the process of developing a traditional ecological knowledge recording program and keeping place. This will assist with documenting, recording and transferring Mandingalbay

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Yidinji knowledge and culture from current to future generations.

The Rangers also perform other occasional activities such as exchange visits and liaising with universities, schools and other Indigenous communities.

Djunbunji Rangers commenced work in April 2010 and they have received intensive training in a variety of areas relevant to land and sea management.

A small administrative team supports the operations of the Working on Country program from our headquarters at Bessie Point, on the Yarrabah Road.



In November of last year four of our Rangers, Damon Mundraby, Giles Mundraby, Leon Wallis and Kenny Kyle participated in a ranger exchange with the Gangalidda and Garawa Rangers based in Burketown in the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Djunbunji Rangers spent seven days in Burketown and assisted the local rangers with a wide range of activities including aerial gel torch operations on rubber vine eradication, crocodile surveying, cast net surveys to determine species variety and

## FIRST RANGER EXCHANGE

numbers and ghost net and rubbish collection along the coast. They also completed a fire training course and attained a Certificate 1 in Fire Management which will allow them to participate in controlled burns on country in the future.

Djunbunji Ranger Leon Wallis said "Although the country is completely different from ours with big salt pans, numerous creeks, rivers and estuaries and sparse, stunted vegetation, the exchange was very useful and we learned a lot which we can apply on M/Y country. Gangalidda Garawa Head Ranger, Vernon Yanner made us all feel very welcome and was impressed by the professionalism shown by Djunbunji Rangers."

Ranger Damon Mundraby particularly enjoyed the crocodile survey but reckons



Gangalidda and Garawa Country, Gulf of Carpentaria





he can do without the boat breaking down in these croc infested waters.

Overall the rangers felt the exchange was very beneficial as Gangalidda Garawa Rangers have been established for a longer period, have more rangers (13) and appear to have a lot more power than we currently have. It is great for Indigenous Rangers to share their knowledge, best practice and experiences with each other. As most of the area they manage is not National Park they do not seem to have as many restrictions on their operations as we experience at home.

We have offered a reciprocal visit to Gangalidda Garawa Rangers as we place a high value on these work exchanges. We look forward to hosting the Gulf mob in the future.



Gangalidda and Garawa Country, Gulf of Carpentaria

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## WEED MANAGEMENT

ACDC Training undertaken late last year has certified Djunbunji Rangers to undertake weed control activities on country. Working with our QPWS and QASSIT partners, Rangers have been slashing tracks on East Trinity Reserve to provide 4X4 access to isolated outcrops of Singapore daisy and guava. Our capacity to manage weeds has been vastly improved with the commissioning of our modern QUIKSPRAY unit.

Djunbunji Rangers have been actively managing pond apple on East Trinity Reserve. Pond Apple (*Annona glabra*) is an aggressive, semi-deciduous tree that has the ability to invade estuaries and mangrove ecosystems of tropical

Australia that have previously been undisturbed natural habitats.

Introduced prior to 1886 and native to Central Americas, pond apple was used as a root stock for the custard apple tree. Its fruit is similar to a smooth skinned custard apple which can float on ocean currents for up to 1300 kilometres. Pond apple distribution is prominently wet tropics, Cape York Peninsula and northern island communities of Queensland with a small infestation identified at Mackay.

Pond apple's ability to grow in flooded areas and to tolerate salt water has enabled it to spread through much of northern Queensland's wet tropics area. It now infests more than 2000 ha of the Wet Tropics Bioregion, and threatens

melaleuca wetlands and native mangrove communities. It is also spread by cassowaries and feral pigs.

Infestations on East Trinity Reserve are mapped and areas for control determined in consultation with QPWS and QASSIT. Stem injection is the preferred method for treating pond apple in aquatic habitats because it minimises herbicidal runoff and impacts on non-target plants and animals.

Control costs of pond apple are high due to the nature of the infestations and challenging work environments posing health and safety risks to control operators.

To learn more about this weed and how you can help, go to:

<http://www.weeds.gov.au/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/a-glabra.pdf>



Singapore daisy (far left), Pond apple (far right)





# WORKSHOP PRACTICES



## Wait-a-While

Rangers have had the opportunity to be involved in metal fabrication, design and construction, and workshop practices with a training agreement between Djunbunji Ltd and a local workshop.

Two models of steel mesh pig traps were produced: one designed by Djunbunji Rangers in consultation with an engineer, the other following discussions with our local QPWS Ranger, Dan Fitzpatrick, and our local engineer.

This training and skills development has resulted in the supply of pig traps to QPWS on a fee for service basis. Djunbunji Ltd is in discussion with Cairns Regional Council and QPWS in the sharing of resources for the cooperative management of pigs in the area.

Djunbunji Rangers have also designed and constructed a workshop bench, work stands and a BBQ for our operational base, all of which have been put to good use.

# CREATING EMPLOYMENT

A casual labour project commenced in late May to remove old fencing in the East Trinity Reserve. The fence lines were constructed during the 1980's to manage cattle. The location of the fence lines makes access for land management activities in the Reserve difficult, particularly access for fire management. The activity was developed in collaboration with QPWS and QASSIT by Simon Bigelow, Djunbunji's Land and Sea Ranger Coordinator.

Aspects of the project included slashing fence lines, removal of vines and weeds from the fences, and spraying. A considerable amount of barb wire was removed and recycled to local farmers. Dennis McDowell from the QASSIT team provided assistance by removing steel posts and rail, all of which was recycled.

Together with Simon, Vic Bulmer took on the supervision of the casual workforce which included two first time jobseekers

who had the opportunity for three months practical work experience. As well as generating a tangible land management outcome by allowing for improved access for fire and weed management, the activity generated positive interactions between our partner agencies, demonstrating Djunbunji's capacity.





# SHARING IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES

Wait-a-While

Djunbunji Land and Sea Program hosted a visit from Ghungalu Traditional Owners from the Blackdown Tableland National Park area in early September. Blackdown Tableland National Park is located 180 km west of Rockhampton and 110 km east of Emerald.

Roy Rob, Pam Hegarty and Greg Dunk, accompanied by consultant Dermot Smyth, visited five locations in the Cairns region to meet with Traditional Owners involved in Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) and National Park management to learn from their experiences and exchange ideas about future options, including tourism and other enterprise development.

The Ghungalu delegation was provided with copies of the *Strategic Plan for Mandingalbay Yidinji Country* and draft IPA Management Plan.

Among issues discussed were:

- Challenges of establishing an independent Indigenous ranger group from scratch, including selection of rangers and building capacity through training and mentoring
- Challenges of coordinating work programs with multiple government agencies
- Benefits of the IPA concept to enable Traditional Owners to lead the journey towards co-management
- Growing support and recognition from government

agencies of the benefits of the IPA planning process to build partnerships and to assist agencies to meet their obligations to protect and manage the cultural values of protected areas

- Interest in broadening the scope of Djunbunji economic enterprises, which may include contract environmental services outside the IPA boundaries and tourism opportunities within the IPA, particularly given the close proximity to Cairns

- Blackdown Tableland National Park co-management IPA project, Ghungalu enterprise development initiatives, including cultural heritage services and their traffic control business

Traditional Owner visits, Ranger exchanges and attendance at National Indigenous Ranger Conferences provide a range of opportunities for the sharing of ideas, strengthen links and build on experiences to allow for better outcomes in managing and caring for country.



L to R: Greg Dunk, Victor Bulmer, Susan Medway, Simon Bigelow, Pam Hegarty, Stacey Mundraby, Roy Rob, Dale Mundraby



National Indigenous Ranger Conferences: Home Rule, 2010 (left) and Injinoo, 2011 (right)



# MEET THE DJUNBUNJI TEAM!

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Vince Mundraby  
**Cultural Advisor /  
Stakeholder Liaison  
Officer**



Stacey Mundraby  
**Receptionist**



Susan Medway  
**IPA Coordinator**



Simon Bigelow  
**Ranger  
Coordinator**



Darryl Murgha  
**Cultural  
Heritage Ranger**



Giles Mundraby  
**Ranger**



Victor Bulmer  
**Ranger (Casual)**



Damon Mundraby  
**Ranger**



Leon Wallis  
**Ranger**



Kenny Kyle  
**Ranger**

## PUBLICATIONS

Drop into the office or contact us on (07) 4056 8283 to receive a complimentary copy of the *Strategic Plan for Mandingalbay Yidinji Country*.

## MEMBERSHIP

Would you like to become a member of Djunbunji Ltd? If you are a descendant of Jabulum Mandingalpai (aka Jimmy), or an Aboriginal person residing in the Cairns Regional Council region or Yarrabah

(Aboriginal) Shire Council region who is directly or indirectly related to descendants of Jabulum Mandingalpai, please contact us for a form. Membership is free and you will be kept up to date with the latest news!

## HAVE YOUR SAY!

Please contact us with your news, photos and ideas for future newsletter stories. Drop into the office or email [ceo@djunbunji.com.au](mailto:ceo@djunbunji.com.au)



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Djunbunji Wait-A-While Newsletter is produced with the support of



Australian Government

Department of Sustainability, Environment,  
Water, Population and Communities

