



Wuthathi

Aboriginal Corporation

News

Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation
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Wuthathi ready to set up ranger base on Country

The Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation is looking for Rangers to staff its Shelburne Bay Ranger Base next year.

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef Megan Scanlan announced funding for five Wuthathi Rangers from the Queensland Government Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger Program last month.

Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation Chair Keron Murray said securing a ranger program for country was a monumental achievement.

"This is the culmination of

more than 40 years of hard work," he said.

"From the removal of our people in the past to the fight to stop mining and have our lands returned, this has been a priority of the highest order for the Corporation and for the Wuthathi people.

"Funding a ranger team will support our people in caring for our remote and special country, as our Elders did before us, so we can continue to meet

our cultural obligations and manage our lands."

He said the new Wuthathi ranger team would manage Wuthathi land and sea country, including cultural mapping and recording story places, middens and other sites of significance.

Rangers would also contribute to the Raine Island recovery project, supporting the world's largest remaining green turtle nesting population.

Wuthathi people interested in applying for Ranger positions should contact Wuthathi Land and Sea Ranger Projects Officer Clayton Enoch on 4249 3364, or email projectofficer@wuthathi.com for more information.

AGM confirms ongoing project work

The Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation successfully held its 2020 AGM in Lockhart River on Tuesday 13 July this year.

Covid 19 caused this AGM to be delayed until this year.

Members received reports on a range of projects that WAC undertook during the 2019-20 financial year including:

- Healthy Country and Indigenous Protected Area Plans
- Raine Island Recovery Project
- Junior Ranger Program
- Ranger base planning
- Joint Management projects

The meeting was also updated on grants that WAC hoped to secure during the 2020-21 financial year including:

- Great Barrier Reef Foundation Water and Wet Land Monitoring and Sea Grass Monitoring Projects
- Queensland Government Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers
- Australian Government Biosecurity Business Development Grant

These projects have since been funded and will be reported on at the 2021 AGM.

A new Board was elected at the AGM.

Pintara and Annie Punda Directors were left vacant so further consultations could be undertaken.

The new Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation Directors were confirmed at the Board meeting held in Cairns on Monday 23 August 2021.

Coordinator's Report

My first few months in this new role has been interesting and enjoyable, Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation Coordinator Jim Turnour writes...



The corporation is well positioned, with strong governance through its Board, Elders' Council and staff.

It has a good foundation of land and sea management project grants to support the operation and strong partnerships with a range of funders.

Over the next six months, we will complete construction of the ranger base at Shelburne Bay and employ rangers on country.

Wuthathi people interested in working as a ranger should contact the office and complete an expression of interest so they can be considered for these positions.

As Chair, Keron Murray, says, this is a significant

milestone in Wuthathi people's long struggle to return to country.

In other news, we are working on improving our office systems in Cairns, which includes the installation of a new phone system.

Don't hesitate to contact the office or myself if you have any questions.

A list of our staff and their new numbers is on page 8. Meanwhile we hope you enjoy the first of our new quarterly newsletter.

I look forward to meeting more Wuthathi people over the coming months, as we continue with healthy country and IPA consultations and rollout a range of other projects.

Descent Group

Pinthara

Moe Rie Warren

Frank Wilson

Annie Punda

Johnson Moreton

Nara Jira Para

Director

Arnold Wallis

Keron Murray

Smithy Wilson

Maxine Chippendale

Darren Macumboy

Kenny O'Brien

Alternate Director

Lency Pedro

Chrissy Warren

Johnson Chippendale

Greita Pascoe

Deanne Macumboy

Nathan Seden

From the Chair...

I'd like to pay my respects to all our Wuthathi elders, Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation chair Keron Murray writes...



Keron Murray & Johnson Chippendale

I'd like to acknowledge the hard work and guidance we have from our Elders' Council, and their chair, Johnson Chippendale.

He has been my mentor for a long time now, and I'm very thankful for his guidance.

I'd also like to acknowledge all of the hard work that has been done over past decades by those who have paved the way and built the foundation we stand on today.

There are still Elders here who took up our fight when they tried to mine and build a space port on our Country in the 1980s.

There are too many to mention by name, and sadly there are also those who are no longer here today, although we know they are still watching, smiling and guiding us on our journey.

Our journey is continuing with the vision that was laid by those Elders, and they have asked us to take that vision forward.

Roles & Responsibilities

Being a director of our Corporation is essentially a lot of hard work and a full-time role.

Whilst we have the office and all the staff there, directing roles and responsibilities is very important and the onus is on us as representatives to make sure we get the job done, and to let everyone know what we're doing on their behalf.

So we welcome you to our new newsletter.

Our current board of directors has incorporated our Elders' Council into our decision-making processes, which is in line with our

lore and customs.

We work closely with the Elders' to seek their guidance on all matters, especially in relation to land.

Professional & Transparent

We must be professional and transparent but still not lose our culture, so we have to adapt to the times we live in today by making sure we follow the legalities and compliance rules, while not forgetting our own lore, as we bring the two together.

I believe the end result is we have managed to comply to the government's requirements while maintaining our strong cultural governance.

News

We have news of the different elements of what that means to the work we are doing on the ground within this newsletter.

We are currently going through an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) consultation, which we hope will be moving on to dedication very soon.

Watch your notice boards and social media for upcoming meetings in the NPA and Cairns, which will be for the IPA consultation but there will also be discussions about the Elders Council, and their roles and responsibilities.

We also have our Indigenous Management Agreements (IMA), with the Queensland Government.

The management plan we currently have in place is more about providing a buffer zone around our National Park, but we are trying to develop a strategy which will bring all the agencies –

from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, AIMS and other research bodies – together to develop a holistic approach and a clear management strategy for all our land and sea.

Anybody who has an interest in our Country should be led by Wuthathi in line with our vision for the management of our land.

We are conscious we can't manage land by grant funding or by tenure alone, so we are trying to bring everything under the one plan that will give us a higher chance of success, and will align with our peoples' goals and aspirations.

Once we are on our way we can start looking at developing our own plans for our own community on our own Country.

Foundations

We believe we are laying strong foundations for a strong future which all our mob can benefit from.

We all need to play our part for us to move forward.

Finally, I'd like to draw our member's attention to the skills audit we are keen to build on so we have a 'map' of what we can all do as we work towards managing our own futures.

We want to know what you can do! Anyone over the age of 14 is welcome to request an Expression of Interest form so they can play their part.

Please talk to any one of our directors or staff if you have any questions.

All our numbers are here, including my number too, you can call me directly anytime.

Ranger base construction underway

Construction of the Wuthathi Shelburne Ranger Base – including a ranger shed, office and single person's accommodation for up to six rangers – will start this month, Project Officer Clayton Enoch says.

The base has been funded by the Indigenous Land and Sea Corporation.

"A large solar array, to power the base and including solar panels donated by LONGI solar through World Wildlife Fund, will go up in November," he said.

"We'd like to thank Andre Grant from the Centre for Appropriate Technology for the design of the solar system and for his support."

He said Wuthathi Elders warmed the Country and base last month.

"Several rangers will be employed casually during October," he said.

"Casual rangers will be undertaking land management activities on country that month and supporting construction."

He said rangers employed by the Wuthathi



Aboriginal Corporation during 2022 would be stationed at the base.

"This will finally enable Wuthathi people to return to live on and manage their country as Wuthathi Elders have before them," he said.

"We are also considering employing a part-time caretaker for the base, so anyone interested in being a ranger or caretaker should get in touch."

For more information call Clayton on 4249 3360 or email projectofficer@wuthathi.com



PICTURED: Wuthathi Elders, rangers and builders working on the new ranger base and on country



Connecting people and country through joint management



ABOVE: Our junior rangers are our future rangers - pictured here with Uncle Loddy Chippendale & Support Officer Aiden Deemal



Being back on country is great, it's a good feeling, Wuthathi Support Officer Aiden Deemal says.

Joint management funding from the Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service (QPWS) has enabled Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation to employ Aiden.

In this role, he works to support Joint Management of the Wuthathi (Shelburne) National Park.

"Really, it's about caring for country, so looking after country is really important," he said.

"It's not about how much you get paid for doing it or how much times you have to go up there, it's just about connecting to country and making sure younger people in communities are thinking about it.

"It's really important to get back and connect to Country and look after the place like our ancestors did and once you do that, it will look after you."

But he said the logistics of getting there were not easy.

"During the wet season we can't get any access up on country, so I'll probably get up there every once every three months out of the year," he said.

"So my role is to organise different trips – who is going to go on those trips; how are we going to cater for them; and, what kind of jobs will we be doing up on country?"

"In June Clayton and I took two new quad bikes up there to have a look at the tracks.

"We've also done a chopper flight to do an aerial pest survey."

He said the new rangers would make a huge difference.

"They will make my work much easier," he said.

"Effectively I'm the 'middle man' working with all the directors on what meetings or activities we do on country, and what jobs need doing on country.

"They will be the front lines of that."

During the Wet Season Aiden takes on other projects on Country.

"In January I took the Junior Rangers out on country with the Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service and with them we went out to visit different islands," he said.

Contact Aiden Deemal Wuthathi Support Officer phone 07 4249 3363.

Protection plan brings people together

A series of six Healthy Country Plan workshops over the past two years has brought Wuthathi people together to lay the foundations for the development of the Wuthathi Shelburne Bay Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) plan, funded by the Australian government.



ABOVE: the Healthy Country Plan workshop
BELOW LEFT: Chrissy Warren

The Healthy Country Plan was coordinated by Chrissy Warren, facilitated by Andre Grant from the Centre for Appropriate Technology (CfAT) and funded by the Nature Conservancy, National Landcare Program and the



Queensland Government.

"The IPA builds on the Healthy Country Plan, which Wuthathi people have been working on for the past two years," Chrissy said.

"Once the plan is dedicated it will provide a basis for ongoing funding for an IPA coordinator and rangers by the Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation.

"Dedication involves first having the plan approved by Wuthathi Elders and Directors after more consultations with Wuthathi people.

"Support for the plan will then be obtained from

government and non-government partners, who will help with implementation.

"Dedication of the plan will see the significant cultural and environmental values of Wuthathi country recognised nationally and internationally."

She said IPA consultant Ellie Bock was helping with the development of the final IPA plan.

"Further consultations on the plan will occur between the Northern Peninsula Area and Cairns later this year and early next," she said.

For more information on Healthy Country and IPA planning, and future consultations, contact the Wuthathi office on 4249 3360.

Elders' vital to leading our work

Wuthathi Elders are particularly important to the return of our Ngaachi (Country) to the Wuthathi people.



Elders' Council Members

Chair: Johnson Chippendale
(pictured left)
Loddy Chippendale
Moira Macumboy
Nicholas Macumboy
Brian Macumboy
Cecil Macumboy
James Macumboy

Our Elders' Council, led by chair Johnson Chippendale, is vital to passing on the knowledge we have to the next generation.

"Wuthathi Elders have that knowledge for lore and culture for our land and our sea," Johnson said.

"From 1770, when there was the first contact into Australia, all of our people were taken from Wuthathi Country.

"Slowly our lore and custom has nearly disappeared from our landscape but today we have the opportunity to rebuild and recreate our footsteps on our land and pass on our knowledge again.

"To continue our lore and custom.

"We started setting up Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation in 2013 and I used to be the Chair.

"We always talked about living on Country.

"Going back on Country, recreating ourselves on Country, is very important for our younger generations.

"Which area they can and can't go to, which plant can they use as a medicine or to make spears, that's the sort of knowledge we want to pass on, and also hunting skills, especially for young men.

"And with the new rangers now, we have a chance to make sure it's being recorded because it's very important to have that

data, so we can manage all the species – some of which haven't been recognised – in our Country.

"If you don't have that knowledge, you'll die on Country.

"Now we have young Keron as the Chair and he was with me for two years, to get all that knowledge.

"He was like my shadow, wherever I went, he stayed with me.

"So I'm glad that he took an interest in the lore and custom, which he will eventually pass on to our younger generation.

"The aim was always to get back on Country, this is our Wuthathi home and we should all be there.

"We've been living in different parts of Australia for a very long time but in 2015, when we got our Determination, that was something.

"Now we're looking forward to a big celebration when we have our ranger base set up properly, we want to invite all the Ministers, PBCs and land trusts.

"After 200 years we are finally back on Country, I think it's going to be the best day of our lives, recreating our footprint on Country."



Wuthathi Elders, Rangers and Directors on country to warm some of our Islands

Award-winning project moves into Phase 2



ABOVE: Queensland Reconciliation Awards
RIGHT: Thukuruu tower restoration



The Thukuruu (Raine Island) Recovery Project is a five-year, \$7.95 million collaboration between Traditional Owners and several government and non-government agencies.

Wuthathi chair Keron Murray said Thukuruu was a significant place to our people.

"We've come a long way from the beginning of the project to where we are today," he said.

"Now we have a lot more Traditional Owner inclusion, as we have taken more of a lead role in managing the island, as our ancestors did before us.

"It is the largest sea turtle rookery in the world, and has the largest congregation of tiger sharks in the world as well as being a significant nesting place for birds of the Great Barrier Reef.

"We won a Queensland Government Reconciliation award for our work there this year, as well as an internal department

award for excellence.

"Just being nominated for those awards is a great achievement, and we'd like to congratulate all those who were involved and acknowledge all the hard work they all do. Winning is great for the Raine Island Recovery Project because the main thing is the results that are there for the Island, not just the animals and the island itself, but also for our cultural values."

He said there were many people to thank.

"We are grateful to BHP and Great Barrier Reef Foundation, in particular, they have contributed a lot of hard work to help set the platform, and BHP, the Department of Environment & Science, the Great Barrier

Reef Marine Park Authority for their contribution," he said.

"We'd also like to acknowledge and thank the Meriam Nation.

"All of this work has allowed us to set the foundations for where we are today. Now we are moving on and into Phase 2, we are looking to create a coordinator's position for Raine Island, who will work for the interests of the Traditional Owners and between all our stakeholders.

"It's all capacity building as well as transition, and looking at the ongoing longevity of the project, which is not just based on grant funding but in a way that we can move into the future and have ongoing funding to ensure Raine Island's protection."

For more information about any of the stories in this newsletter please contact our Wuthathi Office on 4249 3360.



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