

# Wait-a-While

Newsletter | Edition 6  
September 2014

## DJUNBUNJI

LAND & SEA  
PROGRAM



## Rangers share pig trapping technology

Sharing the techniques of building and maintaining pig traps made by Mandingalbay Yidinji Rangers were the highlight of a cultural and knowledge exchange with Lake Eyre Basin Rangers from Longreach, Birdsville, Mt Isa, and Camooweal in June.

MY Ranger Victor Bulmer said it was an opportunity for them to show them what Djunbunji has done in pig trapping techniques.

"We did some trapping programs, showing them how to go about utilising pigs' traps that we built here," he said. "It's important work and I just want to showcase our children, our future generation, how to go about looking after our country so they can continue to practice their culture."



19-year-old MY Ranger Djullja Mundraby said it was his first time so far out west.

"We stayed out there for a week at the Myuma Camp," he said.

"We took two pig traps with us to show them and we left them there for them to use.

"It was a great experience going right out there to the west, seeing what the inland's like; I'm so used to the coast.

"I've been telling a few of the cousins and families to come around because we need more young fellows to come to learn from the old people and pass on what we're doing to future generations."

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# From the Executive Director...

**We've had a very exciting year to date since our last Wait-a-While newsletter.**

Depending on the season, some activities have progressed and others are just starting to happen now – fire is one of those just starting to happen now. We have had some heated interested in fire from our community.

This financial year we have planned for our Rangers and members of the community to undertake Level 1 Fire, which is a critical qualification for our rights to burn our own country.

Additionally several of our Rangers and community have achieved their ACDC ticket, which is a chemical ticket.

With these two qualifications our people are able to manage country in a sustainable, cultural way.

Some of the big ticket items still to come for this year are Sea Country activities which involve cultural camps and visitors on country.

I'd like to acknowledge the Mandingalbay Yidinji volunteers in particular in regards to these camps.

We've already had a number of big activities, like our biodiversity camps and our cultural camps and it's the volunteers who were able to assist who made those days happen.

The outcome is not only the volunteers, rangers and the community coming together and working together.

I'd also like to acknowledge the staff of Djunbunji and the Mandingalbay Yidinji

Corporation for their commitment to making what we are doing work for all of us.

We've just completed five workshops around improving the performance of our organisation and our staff, so we've developed new vision statements, new values for the workers.

The results have been much better policies and procedures to deal with the activities.

We've had several other activities around training and networking over the year, including boat licensing, representation at the Native Title conference, the Ranger conference, a number of pest and weed conferences, workshops involving fire, and Ranger exchanges.

We had one Ranger go to New Zealand through the School of Field Studies.

My last acknowledgement goes to our Elders and particularly in regards to the cultural knowledge they have been able to pass to us.

For example Aunty Kathleen and Aunty Helen have been running our basket-weaving which has been one of our core cultural activities and has resulted in their knowledge being passed from generation to generation.

We are all proud and happy about the work we are doing, we have some exciting ventures in the pipeline which we hope will secure our independence and identity well into the future. I hope you enjoy this edition of Wait-a-While.

*Dale Mundraby, ED*



**MY Rangers (net)working west of Mt Isa**

# More new species on record



**A new species of local olive and a scientific record of local eels, turtles and other sea life are just some of the flora and fauna that has been recorded through Djunbunji's Environmental Protection & Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) activity.**

"We had a camp area over in Budabadoo, inside the bush, and there were seven scientists, researchers, everyone from ecologists to zoologists to botanists and one of the surveys that took place was for fish," CEO Dale Mundraby said.

MY Ranger Djullja Mundraby was also on site.

"We went to various locations such as creeks and streams to look for some rare species of fishes that are really endangered on the legislation, and we set up various nets and

fish traps to see what we got overnight," he said.

MY Ranger Victor Bulmer said on the flora side of things they found a rare tassel fern as well as a new species of olive.

"We found a rare tassel fern that's actually not on the botanists' books, and we're still determining the name of the species, so that's one thing in our favour, might be named after Dale for all we know," he said. "The other one was we actually found a rare olive, a rare native olive that actually grows on our country.

"It's edible and it's similar to cultivated olives; you use the same process to actually cure it - and put it on pizzas!

"This one has more of a lemony flavour kind of thing, rather than the salty flavour from the normal kalamata olives.

"Scientists are having conversations about what they want to name that species, we believe it should be named after ourselves, the Mandingalbay Yidinji people or our leader Jabulam, king of our tribe."

# A word from the Chair...

***Everything is still going to plan for a major investment in East Trinity Reserve Djunbunji and Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation chair Dawn Kyle (pictured on the right) writes...***

One of the major projects Djunbunji is working on at the moment is with the Indigenous Land Corporation and the Mandingalbay people to develop an eco-infrastructure management plan over Lots 2 and 3 of our exclusive Native Title areas.

Lots 2 and 3 are located down near the opposite side of the Bung Wall, adjacent the CBD of Cairns.

We're just waiting on confirmation and paperwork to go through, we have our own consultants and we're looking forward to seeing what's possible.

Even the tourism mob on board are excited. We're looking at what structures we can achieve environmentally, what will be sustainable for the grounds themselves and what sort of infrastructure we can actually put up there.

We have so many ideas with boardwalks, maybe a flying fox like the Skyrail; these are things we're looking at this stage, but we're just looking at the viability, what is sustainable for the land to keep the vegetation up.

We've taken tourism and the Cairns Regional Council to show them the work our rangers have done bringing back the vegetation, looking after our important sites and even transport to and from Cairns so we can have people come

across from the city to see and experience our culture.

We want to showcase it all, our traditions, food, food sources, native plants, all the flora and fauna.

We're hoping to start off the greenhouse here so we can have our native foods.

We really want visitors coming over so we can show them what we have on their doorstep.

We want to make sure the Mandingalbay people's aspirations for eco-infrastructure - what it looks like and what it will deliver in terms of workforce development - will be achieved.

We want to be able to sustain ourselves, stop the handouts and living off Government payments, and give our people back pride and culture.

As the days, weeks, months go on you see it's really actually coming to fruition, it's getting closer and it's exciting.

The other big change is I am now chair of Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation as well as Djunbunji.

We've combined both with the same board.

This means it's better for us when it comes to meetings or anything that urgently needs to be sorted.

## A new way to move forward...

***It's a new way of working and it's unique in Australia to Djunbunji and Mandingalbay Yidinji Aboriginal Corporation, Elder and Combined Gungganji MY Body Corporate chair Vince Mundraby says.***

"First off, there's sort of two parts to it," he said.

"One is confirming how we as Mandingalbay people are doing things, which is the right way in terms of free and prior informed consent and taking the community with us

through the decision-making and so forth.

"The second part to that is how we're actually structured in terms of having one Board responsible for both bodies - that's for Djunbunji Aboriginal Corporation and the MY

Prescribed Body Corporate.

"And that in itself is unique around Australia."

He said they were also working towards Djunbunji picking up a role as a resource hub and had taken the opportunity to present



*Elder Kathleen Bulmer – one of several brand new Djunbunji Board members – says she has only been on the board for a month having run for her position for many reasons. Pictured above in the middle, she said the most important was she felt as an Elder she needed to be on board to teach the younger ones.*

*“I’m enjoying it and I think we need to keep going as we are, full steam ahead,” she said.*

*Her sister, Helen Bulmer, on the left above, is also an Elder and has only been on the board for a few months.*

*“I just want to see us go full steam ahead and be up to date with everything,” she said.*

We can just make decisions for both Boards and, obviously, sort out both our businesses at the same time; it just seemed a logical thing to do.

Not being able to get everyone together was quite a problem when we had separate Boards. They’re still two separate entities, just the same

Board on each.

So we’re all about keeping strong, putting our heads down and going hard, our future looks very exciting and I’m very proud to be a part of that.

This is for our future generations and that’s what counts for us.

## **A new way to move forward... (Continued from previous page...)**

their ideas to the National Native Title Conference in Coffs Harbour back in June. “Through my other hat as chair of the Combined Gungganji MY Prescribed Body Corporate, we also have an MOU with Djunbunji to actually assist in implementing some of the programs or assisting that organisation any way.”

Traditional Owner Dewayne Mundraby said the resource hub idea went back to basics in terms of what Native Title means to Aboriginal people. “Native Title is overburdening, I suppose, in terms of being destructive displacement program which causes conflict,” he said. “But in our case, it brought us together.

“And through that collaboration, in terms of demonstrating a normative society, our customs are laws, our values, visions – all of those things were captured and, I guess, worked on from the beginning by the people themselves so the wellbeing associated with country is enhanced by that.

*(Continued next page...)*

# Frankland Islands trip a first for many

A huge highlight for many MY and Djunbunji members this year was a trip out to Normanby Island, part of the Frankland Island group, for the first time ever for many of the group.

## Ranger William Mundraby

“The trip over to the Frankland Islands was for our community, for the Rangers and their families plus our community members of MY people, and we went to one of the Franklin Island.

“The Island we went to was Normandy Island and it was the first time I’ve been there.

“I found it pretty good, nice clean water; I didn’t go for a swim though, I watched everybody else.

“I took my son and my daughter with me, and another nephew and they totally enjoyed it.

“Hopefully next time I can get my wife to come although she’s scared of boats.

“It’s just like a piece of paradise on your own country which you don’t see every time but first time being there I thought it was a nice place to be.

“When the tide was out, I went for a walk on the reef.

“It was a good experience.”



## A new way to move forward... (Continued from previous page...)

“Strategies for moving forward for us had to include the economic enhancement, participation, workforce development all these things are imperative to sustaining our livelihood or the social economic wellbeing of our people. We are responsible for our country, and as a people we’re responsible for our future. “In Mandingalbay’s case, those are the imperatives for

ensuring inter-generational planning as strategically implemented to benefit our people, our country and our neighbours and the community at large.

“The concept of a resource hub actually grew out of Deloitte’s Review of the roles and functions of Native Title rep bodies in this country. “Conceptually we threw around a few things and with our

combined expertise and with the people, we formed a view that having an enabling centre which assists our PBCs and that’s why we have Djunbunji, to facilitate that role.”

He said it was a concept they took to this year’s National Native Title Conference in Coffs Harbour.

“A big thank you to AIATSIS, they covered the cost of attending and participating

Ranger Laurissa  
Mundraby

“It was a really awesome experience, I hadn’t been there before.

“It’s part of our country and to walk over there with the mob was really, really good.

“I took my kids out there as well and they loved it.

“At first they were all nervous about getting on the boat, going out into open waters, but everyone enjoyed it.

“I think it was important to get all of the mob out there because they don’t really get the opportunity to get out there to see that part of MY country.

“It kind of helps me and my kids understand the importance of what I do as a Ranger.”



**A new way to move forward... (Continued from previous page...)**

in the public forum down there in delivering the paper of the resource hub with the concept of MYAC currently demonstrating that structure and delivering on that structure,” he said. “So I guess where we’re at at the moment in terms of considering the development of the resource hub is that at the Coffs Harbour Native Title Conference Prime

Minister and Cabinet made some inquiries with us about the resource hub and was enthused around the concept of it and the presentation. “The intention is to have some genuine consultations with PBCs and the Mandingalbay Aboriginal Corporation, certainly welcome that opportunity in terms of looking at also the engagement of that

framework we’re entering into that framework with other regional PBCs. It makes sense to incorporate a structure whereby those aspirations for economic participation and social wellbeing is assisted, and assisting in a way to resource those PBCs, to deliver the outcomes that strategically enhanced the people’s wellbeing and go forward.”

# Frankland Islands 2014





**Elder & Board member  
Kathleen Bulmer**

“It was really surprising, it was the first time I’ve seen the place.

“We really enjoyed it, especially the kids.

“We just had a look at country, and did a bit of walking around.

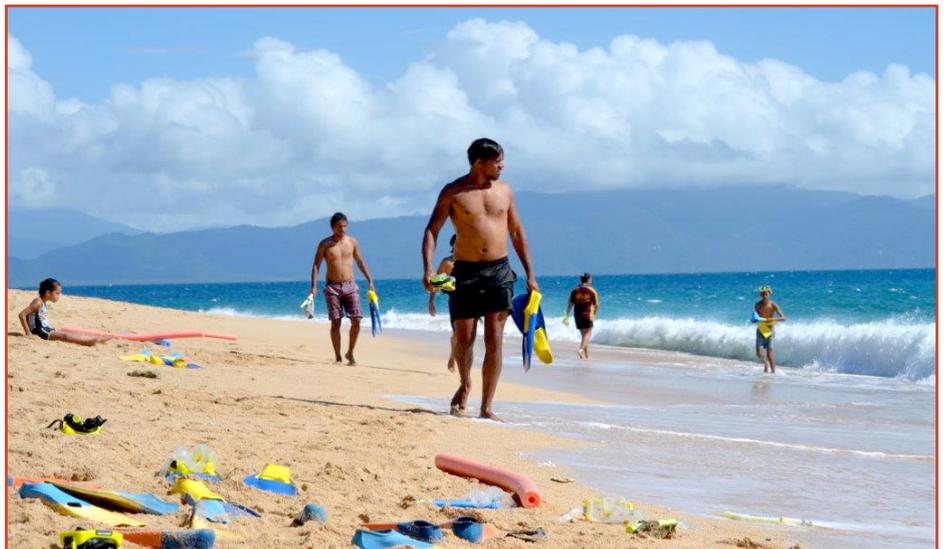
“It was really wonderful, but it was surprising because most of the time we sit on the opposite side of the beach looking over - we’ve seen it from a distance, but never been there.”



**Elder and board member  
Helen Bulmer**

“It was the first time I’ve been out there, just walking around an island out there for the first time, it was just lovely, a lot of oysters and clam.

“We had a great day out there.”



# Fire a 'hot' topic at workshop



More than 100 people, mostly rangers themselves, from as far away as Tasmania and Western Australia went to the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, formerly Bertiehaugh Station and on Taepithiggi Country on Cape York, for a two-day fire workshop in July.



Event organiser Victor Steffensen said this was the sixth workshop held on Cape York, and it had grown every time with new communities coming along every year and past participants coming back. He said this year people came to the workshop from across Cape York, Yarrabah and Tallaroo Springs in far north Queensland, as well as from Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and New South Wales. Djunbunji Rangers William Mundraby and Maynard Bulmer also went and said it was a good dusty trip to get there.

"We got there on the Monday afternoon and they did the smoking ceremony and welcome to country," Mr Mundraby said.

"Even a New South Wales fire warden came up for the

fire workshop, he said he didn't know how to start a fire, he knows how to put out a fire but he doesn't know the methodology of things like how to start a hot fire, so that was pretty interesting coming from a warden.

"It was a good workshop, I totally enjoyed it.

"I think meeting new people and seeing different country was the best part of it and I can't wait for another one."

Cape York Natural Resource Management Board

Operations Manager Peta Standley said she had worked with fire on Cape York and in the Wet Tropics since 2003.

"Workshops like this provide an opportunity to learn how to use fire properly and safely, and learn what to do when you put in into the bush," she said.

"Participants learnt traditional

fire burning techniques, fire methodologies, botanical information and filming techniques.

"They shared their cultures and stories, and formed lasting friendships."

Mr Bulmer said it was a good experience which highlighted their frustration with local authorities' failure to recognise their expertise in some areas.

"What's the point of having country back if you can't use the cultural knowledge," he said.

"MY people have the experience of looking after and showcasing our country, what we've got here and probably will have years down the track - we've got it good here."

*Additional material with thanks to the Cape York NRM 'Healthy Country' newsletter.*

# Student exchange building bridges

**Building relationships with an organisation founded in Boston, USA in 1980 has resulted in MY Ranger David Kyle traveling to New Zealand to participate in Environmental Field Studies and gain a credited Certificate from the University of Minnesota.**



The School of Field Studies (SFS) says it is all about creating transformative study abroad opportunities through field-based learning and research.

Mr Kyle said it all started with a group of students from SFS doing a tour.

“Through our engagements and we gave them a bit of a tour around up in here,” he said.

“They went over to Budabadoo and spent the night over there in the bush.

“We took them on a long walk on a few of the beaches over there; it was lovely and they enjoyed it.

“A few of them even said it was their first time going camping in a new country.

“They thoroughly enjoyed the experience and to see the natural wonders that we showcase over there – it was really good.

“So they were definitely interested in having more exchanges, like having one of the Rangers go around with the student group, studying with them.

“We built up a relationship with them and they asked one of us if we’d like to go to New Zealand to study environmental science and human impacts upon the land, the make-up of the land and how to best restore rainforests in some areas.

“It went really well, I spent a little over a month with the group.

“We spent two weeks in New Zealand and two weeks in the Atherton Tablelands.

“Being in New Zealand was a pretty good eye-opener to see how well integrated the Maori culture is there, as opposed to Indigenous Australian culture and how it’s not as integrated into society.

“I guess the strengths of their culture there is something I’d like to use from what I took from that experience and from that whole trip and use a framework that we can build from that, so we have a standard to keep up with or something like that there.

“If they can do it, we can do it.

“We’re still learning, but we’re getting there.

“We’re still building capacity, and that’s what it’s all about.

“It was a big learning curve for me.”

“We’re still building capacity and if we get the opportunities like this coming up in front of us I reckon we grab the bull by the horns and take full advantage of the opportunity, and that’s ways to build our capacity as a mob, as a people, as a collective of the whole.”

See <http://www.fieldstudies.org/> for more info.

# Weaving baskets and yarns high on list of artifact activities

Elder and younger members of Djunbunji alike look forward to days of working and yarning with each other they put together all the materials they need to make artifacts.



Basket weaving features high on the list of things to be done in this area, as Djunbunji chair Dawn Kyle explains.

“I’m here today to get some more knowledge on basket weaving,” she said.

“I was quite young when my mother showed me how to do it, but I’ve forgotten how to and never really had the chance to get back into it.

“So today is a perfect opportunity to sit with our sisters and aunts and whoever

else arrives I suppose.

“I like to be having lots of conversations, yarns, talking about the old times which we do a majority of the times we do get together, just how it was back in the days.

“So I’m looking forward to everyone arriving and getting on with the day.

“And, yes, bringing that culture back and keep it going for future generations – that’s our main aim.”

Elder and board member

Kathleen Bulmer said they had collected their materials from Yarrabah.

“Yesterday we went over to Yarrabah, got some of it cut down, now we’re bringing it back, cleaning it and then drying it out like over there,” she said.

“And when it’s dried, just roll them up, hang them up and after a couple of days start taking it out and making artefacts.”

*Continued next page...*



*From previous page...*

"We're also helping out, trying to make some head gear and things for some of our dancers," Kathleen Bulmer said.

Also an Elder and board member, Helen Bulmer, said she was happy to be sharing her work with others.

"We all family, so we had to do something, I just couldn't be sitting at home all day long do nothing," she said.

"I was doing my basket weaving at home all the time, so I think it's about time I bring it out into the open."

For more information call the Djunbunji office.



# Seagrass focus for JCU workshop



Seagrass was the focus of a James Cook University workshop hosted by the Centre for Tropical Water & Aquatic Ecosystem Research (TropWATER) last month. MY Ranger Laurissa and William Mundraby were there to learn more about what seagrass was, where it could be found and how it worked for the environment.

“Seagrass makes us automatically think of turtle and dugong eating it and I guess that’s why it’s really important for us to monitor it, to make sure it’s still growing because as Indigenous people we want to make sure that there’s going to be food available for turtles and dugongs in the local area,” Laurissa said. “It was a really good experience, and learning the effects of why we’re losing our seagrass from run-offs, development and natural impacts all as environment damage.

“It’s also a habitat for juvenile fish to live in until they get bigger and head out into the reef. The turtles graze on the top of the grass whereas the dugong actually consumes more of the roots system.

“At the same time as it passes through the digestive system it also spreads the seed and provides nutrients for seagrass to pop up in other places. “If I remember correctly, turtle only eat about two kilograms of seagrass and dugong, on the other hand, about 40 kilograms a day. They said we’re losing out of the seagrass to environmental damage at a rate of roughly about two football fields a day, so it’s really important that we do conserve seagrass.”



*MY country is full of never-ending and ongoing jobs, so thank goodness Rangers Victor and William along with our many volunteers are there to do them! From clearing brush before burns to collecting for biodiversity, studies they work tirelessly every day to make sure our country is safe and well. It's good to know our country is in such good hands!*

# From the Rangers' Corner

Not so long ago Ranger Laurissa Mundraby (pictured right), some of the other rangers and volunteer Gregory Kynuna (below) did a spot of croc spotting along the East Trinity Reserve.

"It's a nice experience just going down there and seeing the crocs," she said.

"When I started here I had a big fear of crocs and often wondered how I'd react under the circumstances if I ever saw one, but now I have a greater respect for them with their habitat – it's their home.



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"We go there and be mindful, be respectful that they're there; you don't know when they're going to come; you don't know their behaviours," Laurissa said.

"A lot of people get complacent too near water, and it's good for them to be croc-smart.

"We go down to the inlet and often people go down there fishing without realising a croc can come from behind them and straight into the water on the other side."



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