



Wuthathi

Aboriginal Corporation

News

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Efforts to protect seagrass within Wuthathi Karakara have been stepped up in recognition of their environmental and cultural significance – and their inclusion in the Wuthathi Protected Area and Healthy Country Plan.

Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Coordinator Sophie Holt said work was underway to ensure they were appropriately managed and protected.

“Seagrass meadows play a vital role in supporting marine communities and coastal resources important to Wuthathi,” she said.

“They also provide habitat for endangered species such as the Dugong and Green Sea Turtle.

“Of the 15 species of seagrass found throughout Queensland, an incredible diversity of nine occur in Wuthathi Karakara.”

Sophie said Wuthathi-led monitoring of seagrass was critical to ensuring these important plants

remained healthy.

“It also helps us to keep track of known and emerging threats, such as climate change impacts, sediment/nutrient run off and disturbance of the seafloor from shipping and boating impacts,” she said.

Wuthathi Custodians undertook Seagrass Level 1 Training in June which was a combination of in-house classroom and laboratory sessions at JCU, as well as field work, survey training and drone mapping at Yule Point.

Custodian Coordinator Clayton Enoch said the purpose of the training was to ensure Wuthathi Custodians were equipped to properly monitor the health and

abundance of seagrass meadows on Country.

“The planning day at JCU was held with Wuthathi Elders to discuss and plan upcoming seagrass surveys on Country in September and October,” he said.

“Thank you to Lucas, Len, and Catherine from JCU for facilitating our training and assisting with planning for our upcoming surveys and to Yirrgandji and Eastern Kuku Yalanji bama for providing the opportunity to conduct training on their Country.”

More on page 4...

WORKING GROUP: Rex Pablo, Ashley Wilson, Cameron Wilson and Clayton Enoch.



From our General Manager...



With the re-establishment of the Wuthathi First Nation's boundary, and ongoing work to bring land and sea back under their management, the team are as busy as ever, General Manager Jim Turnour writes...

There continues to be a lot happening at Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation, including moving our Administration team to new offices on Anderson Street.

Polly Namai has joined us as an Administration Trainee and Yodie Batzke as a Community Research Assistant.

Wuthathi Custodians are now based on country at Shelburne Bay and continue to set up the ranger base and undertake cultural and natural resource management activities, including water and wet land monitoring, weed control, track maintenance, and fire and biosecurity management planning.

We are all working hard with our Elders and the Board towards Wuthathi people's vision for the corporation:

'To control our own destiny as our elders before us, in caring for Wuthathi people, country and culture'.

Central to this approach is re-establishing the Wuthathi First Nation's boundary and managing Nachi and Karakara (land and sea) holistically.

We continue to advocate this vision with government and non-government partners and work with those who share these aspirations.

I hope you enjoy reading about the work that the team has been doing over the past few months.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with myself or the office.

Jim Turnour
General Manager

From our Chair...

Our Country will be open in March or April next year, Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation Chair Keron Murray writes...

We expect our roads and access to be finalised by the wet season, after that we'll do a few checks and be all good to go.

At the moment our access is limited to:

- Double Point or Maa'u
- Homestead on the north bank Harmer Creek
- South of Junction on the north bank of Harmer Creek
- Middle Camp on south bank Harmer Creek

Wuthathi has become a respondent to the Torres Strait Regional Seas Claim (Part C).

We have already done consults in TI & Bamaga, next is Lockhart River, Cairns and Weipa.

Check our Facebook page for dates, and letters will be sent to members, or feel free to call the office or any of our directors for more information.

We have also successfully obtained funding to do our own Sea Claim for our TUMRA (Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement).

We have been working on a permit system, as we only have four accessible camping areas.

The permit system is for safety so everyone gets to enjoy country without, for example, multiple groups turning up at the same time and so our Custodians will know who is on country for safety.

We need to ensure we have those kinds of rules in place to keep our country beautiful.

There are several Expressions of Interest for the several bits of work we will have coming up around these new and significant projects, so make sure you watch our social media channels – we have Facebook and YouTube now – and put them through if you're keen.

We are keen for our young ones to sign up to our socials. In other news, we are still in talks with Northern Kaanju and Atambaya about the Olive River head waters, and we have started our Community Development Plan, which is about establishing homes back on Country.

Lastly thanks to everyone for their patience and respect for our Elders, Board of Directors and Country.

We'll have more in our next newsletter in January.

Keron Murray

WAC Chair

chairman@wuthathi.com 07 4249 3366



Keron with Elders Council chair Johnson Chippendale

High hopes for Wuthathi people on Wuthathi Ngaachi and Karakara



For newly appointed Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Coordinator, Sophie Holt (*pictured left*), the endorsement of the Wuthathi IPA and associated management plan is an exciting next step towards a long-awaited goal - Wuthathi people on Wuthathi Ngaachi.

Having hit the ground running during her first week in the job – taking part in the final round of community consultations for the Wuthathi IPA in the NPA, Thursday Island and Weipa – Sophie said she welcomed the significant progress being made.

“The Wuthathi Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Management Plan and dedication of the Wuthathi Indigenous Protected Area has continued to move forward,” she said.

“A significant moment was the endorsement of the Wuthathi IPA and Wuthathi IPA Management Plan at the Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation Annual General Meeting in April.”

She said after that, and under the direction of the Wuthathi Council of Elders, the formal Draft Management Plan was circulated to relevant partners.

“All Wuthathi’s partners, government and non-government, commended Wuthathi on the production of such a clear and detailed vision for the management and protection of Ngaachi and Karakara,” she said.

“All tiers of Queensland Parks and Wildlife as well as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority have provided Wuthathi with letters of support

for the IPA.”

A formal Plan of Management has been sent to funding bodies NIAA and DCCEEW (formerly DAWE) for review.

Sophie and the team were waiting for feedback from these agencies before making their final submission, which will include a copy of the formal plan, shapefile for the IPA and letters of support.

Another stand-out moment, Sophie said, was the convening of the first IPA Advisory committee on the 23 June 2022.

“We presented the Wuthathi IPA Management Plan and vision for the management of Ngaachi and Karakara to partners, including those from GBRMPA, QPWS (Marine & Joint Management), GBRF, DAWE, NIAA, DES ILSR, DES CYPTRP, DAF and ILSC,” she said.

“Although the IPA is yet to be formally dedicated and recognised by the Australian Government as an official Protected Area, managed to International



ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Elders speaking at IPA Advisory Committee Meeting: Elders Johnson Chippendale, Cecil Macumboy, Brian Macumboy, Moira Macumboy; Director Darren Macumboy.

Standards under the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), it is clear that the many years of planning and culmination of knowledge embedded in the IPA Plan are a testimony to the enduring strength of Wuthathi people.”

Describing the plan as a ‘powerful tool’ for communicating Wuthathi’s direction for Wuthathi-led management of Country, based around values that are important to Wuthathi, Sophie

expressed her great pride at the work already being done.

“It is fantastic to work alongside the Custodians to operationalise this plan and see the way in which it is already informing management on the ground,” she said.

“Through our seagrass and water monitoring projects, for example, and the ongoing development of the Wuthathi Ranger Base, all of which supports our number one priority - Wuthathi People on Wuthathi Ngaachi.”

Protecting our grasses

...from page 1

The Wuthathi Seagrass Monitoring and Protection Project on Wuthathi Sea Country is supported by the Australian Government's Reef Trust Partnership through the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, in partnership with TropWATER, James Cook University and Seagrass-Watch: Global Seagrass Observing Network.



JCU: Brian Macumboy, Sophie Holt, Cecil Macumboy and Nicholas Macumboy at JCU planning day



SEAGRASS MONITORING: Catherine Collier (JCU), Ashley Wilson, Clayton Enoch, Rex Pablo, Len Mckenzie (JCU), Cameron Wilson, Lucas Langlois (JCU), Davis Wilson, Sophie Holt.



DRONE TRAINING: Lucas Langlois (JCU) and Davis Wilson Drone Training.

Safe tracks to reconnect with Country

Work to access country and make tracks safe is underway ahead of celebration plans to officially reopen Country to Wuthathi families at Shelburne Bay. Wuthathi Chair Keron Murray said he was looking forward to the Board and Elders inspecting the new ranger base and track maintenance works at their September Joint Management meeting, so they could start working towards a date.

"Enabling people to reconnect to country is a priority of the Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation," he said.

"The country needed to be warmed by Elders, which happened last year, but the tracks remained eroded and overgrown with vegetation."

Wuthathi General Manager Jim Turnour said the track maintenance work was partly funded by the Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service, with erosion management planning funded by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation through the Reef Trust Partnership.

"A mulcher and skid steer are on country mulching tracks towards the Wuthathi Shelburne National Park down to the Harmer River and the Beach," he said.

"This was the most environmentally friendly way of opening up country, and reducing risks of erosion.

"A Kubota tractor and slasher are also on order, thanks to some philanthropic and QPWS Joint Management funding, which means these tracks can be maintained by Custodians when the vegetation is mulched back to allow vehicle access.

"This will enable Custodians to access country without damaging equipment and, in the future, enable Wuthathi families to reconnect with Country."

He said their approach was important.

"It is critically important that this is done in a way that is culturally, environmentally and personally safe for everyone," he said.



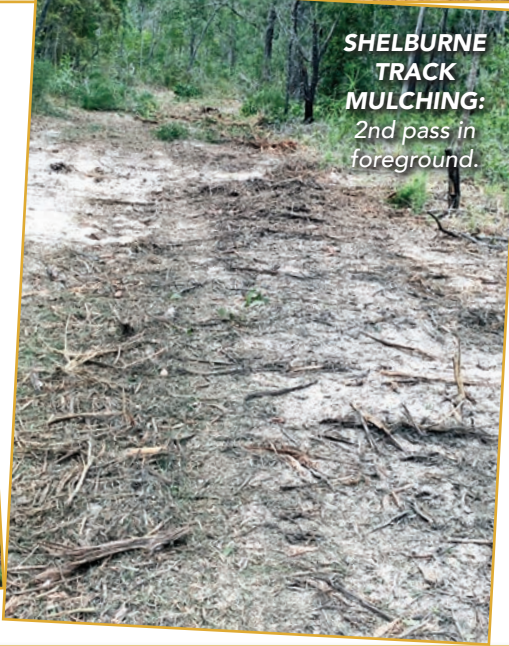
SHELBURNE: Track inspection.



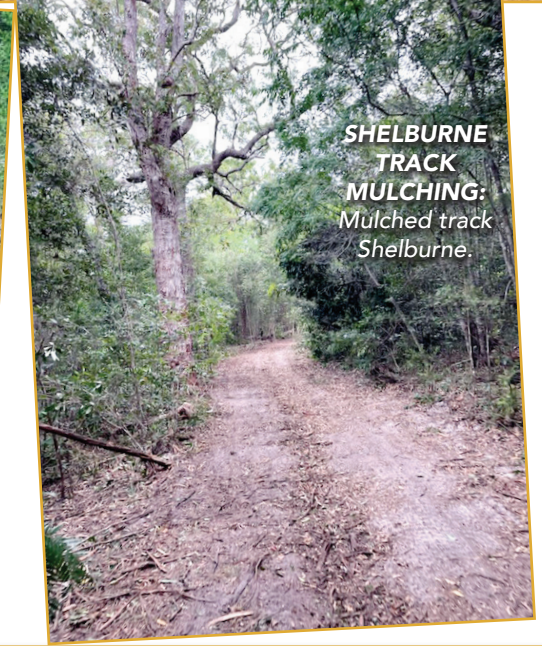
TAKING OFF: Track inspections Wuthathi Ranger Base.



SHELBURNE TRACK MULCHING: 1st pass of machine.



SHELBURNE TRACK MULCHING: 2nd pass in foreground.



SHELBURNE TRACK MULCHING: Mulched track Shelburne.



LEFT: SHELBURNE TRACK MULCHING: Mulching machine.
BELOW: Track maintenance planning



Monitoring the health of our reef, people and country

Over many years there have been lots of programs to monitor the condition of Sea Country – few have included or properly reflected our perspectives and values as Traditional Owners.

The Strong Peoples – Strong Country framework (SPSC) has been designed to do this and Wuthathi Community Research Assistant Yodie Batzke has been appointed to help test the Framework with Wuthathi Custodians and community.

SPSC works on the premise that people and country depend on each other for health and wellbeing.

In effect, for example, the health and condition of the Great Barrier Reef is connected to the quality of life for Traditional Owners.

In return, Traditional Owners have obligations to country that create meaning and protect the health of country. Hence, country (land and sea) needs to be healthy, for Traditional Owners to feel that

they have carried out their cultural obligations and responsibilities.

“I am employed for the next two years as the Community Research Assistant for WAC to see whether the SPSC Framework is something that helps WAC or not,” Yodie said.

“Over the past four to five years WAC has been very proactive in developing our own values and indicators for our current draft IPA Plan and draft Strong Wuthathi Healthy Country Plan.

“So we are piloting the SPSC Framework to see how it aligns with - and can build on - these plans from a Wuthathi perspective.”

The framework is designed to guide how we monitor the health and condition of reef, people and

country, according to agreed values, priorities and aspirations.

Measuring is then based on a Traditional Owner worldview, providing a social-ecological systems view of the health of country, people and Indigenous heritage of the Great Barrier Reef.

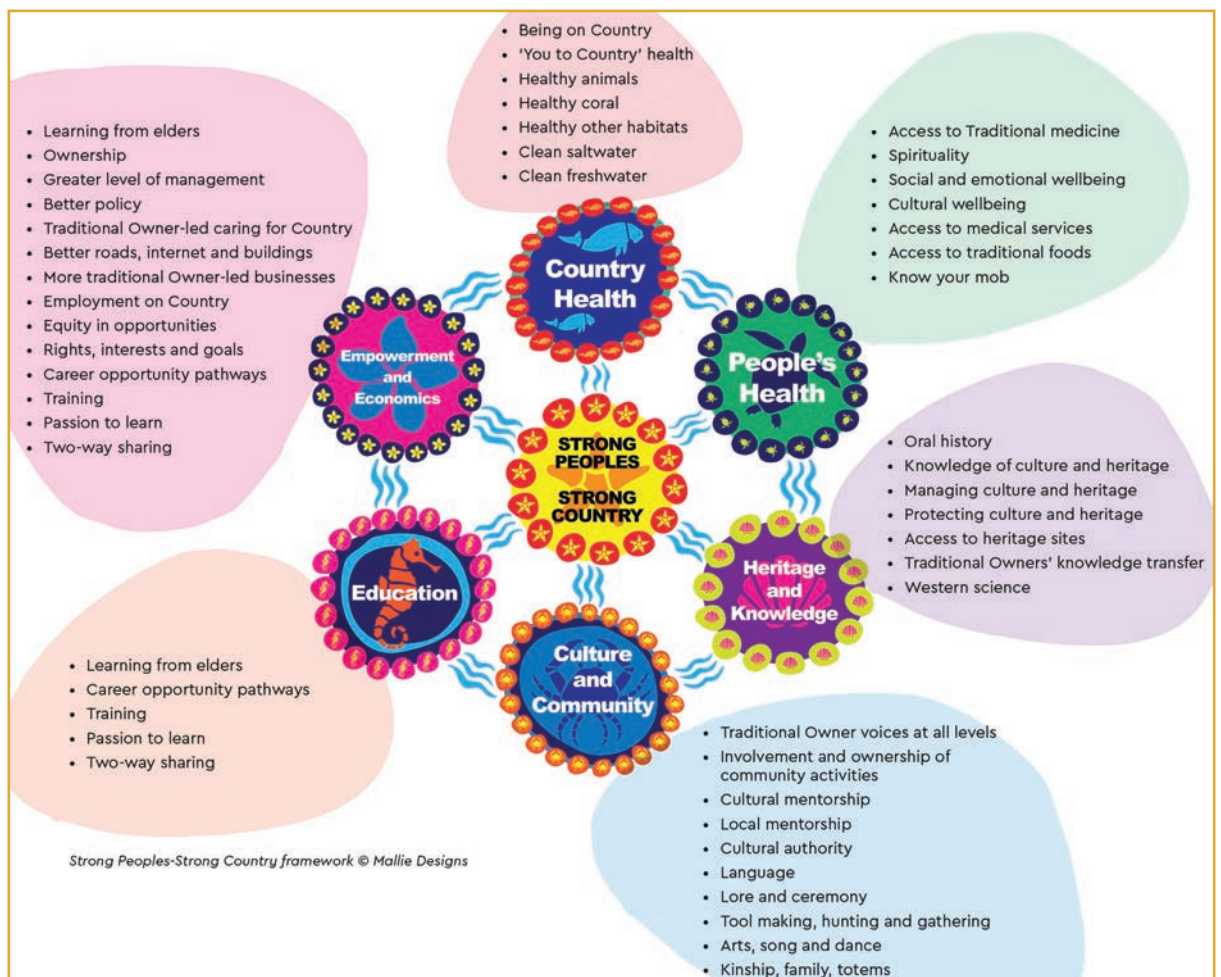
This pilot project will further inform the development of an SPSC framework and how it could be used to more broadly monitor the health of the reef incorporating Traditional Owner perspectives.

The Wuthathi Integrated Monitoring and Reporting Project and piloting of SPSC framework is funded by the partnership between the Australian Government’s Reef Trust and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.

WHAT IS THE STRONG PEOPLES – STRONG COUNTRY FRAMEWORK?

The Strong Peoples-Strong Country framework is grounded in Traditional Owner values.

It shows how the health and condition of the Great Barrier Reef is connected to the quality of life for us as Traditional Owners. These connections between Country, People, and Culture are reflected in six strongly connected ‘hubs’ (shown in the circles). Each hub has attributes (listed below), and the strength of each attribute contributes to the overall strength of the hub.



Looking forward to going home

Everyone needs to work together to get back to Country and make it a better place for future generations, and I'm proud to see Wuthathi 'moving forward', Elder Council Member Auntie Moira Macumboy says...

My name is Auntie Moira Macumboy. I am a Wuthathi Elder. I'd love to go back to Country and live there.

I am really looking forward to going up in September for our meetings.

I have such strong memories of going to Wuthathi country when I was young, with my dad, mum and old fella Pablo (cutneck), and also of camping at Cape Grenville.

I have been involved with Wuthathi for a long time, back when Ray Wallis was Chairperson.

I like to help our young ones and work all together to make our Country a better place for this next generation.

It is really good when we all come together and have our meetings and discuss what is best for our Country and young generations, and to support our Custodians.



ON COUNTRY: Moira Macumboy.

It is great to have a meeting for Elders to get together; that's what happened in old times, the old people would get together.

I am looking forward to going up to Country, looking forward to going home and to see what is happening, especially seeing the new ranger base.

I am also looking forward to discussing where the community will be – going back to Country! I am tired of living on other people's land.

I want to say as an Elder we must all work together.

I think we have done a tremendous job in recent times and us Wuthathi are moving forward and that is really great.

I was born on Thursday Island on 26 June 1956.

My Wuthathi ancestor is Johnson Moreton.

My Father was Victor Macumboy; he married my mother, an Umpila lady, Mary Brown.

My grandmother is Mary Moreton, she is the daughter of Johnson Moreton.

She married twice - her first husband was Fred Macumboy (my grandfather), her second husband was Tommy Silver.

My grandmother's sister, Eliza, married George Moreton, 'Brown Snake.'

Florence Pascoe nee Moreton was my grandmother's other sister. Johnson Moses was my grandmother's brother.

I have nine siblings (four from a different father).

Topsy, my sister, was my eldest sibling, then two boys before me – I was the fourth sibling.

Then came my other brother, Percy, then Nicholas, James, Cecil and Brian, who are also members of the Wuthathi Elders Council.



Administration Officer Jessica Namai was born in Blacktown, Sydney, and grew up on Horn Island and Injinoo.

"I spent my childhood in Horn Island and then my teenage and adult years in Injinoo," she said.

"I've had multiple jobs in the past, teachers aid, domestic cleaning, kitchen hand, waitressing, housekeeping, shop assistant – I've worked these different roles while I was in my teenage years.

"By the time I reached 20, I was working in Administration and 13 years

Staff profiles

on I'm still working in this role.

"Since October last year I've been working for Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation and I love it here!"

She said she hoped she could bring all her previous job experiences to the table.

"I love working with and for my mob and working for WAC has been wonderful.

"I have learnt a lot and still have a lot to learn and am keen on getting all the relevant skills to be the best I can be for the job.

"The team is great and I have great mentors here from staff members to Directors and Elders.

"WAC has grown a lot since I've been here, I have grown a lot and I feel like we are growing together!"

Community Research Assistant (Strong Peoples-Strong Country Pilot Project) Yodie Batzke was born on Thursday Island, where she spent her early childhood before her parents relocated to Cairns in 1971.

"My family ties and connection to Torres Straits and Cape York have always been maintained and I acknowledge both my Aboriginal (Wuthathi) and Torres Strait Islander (Boigu) heritage," she said.

"My favourite job was establishing our first business in Canberra ACT in 1996 in consultancy services to various Commonwealth Government Agencies.

"Over the past 4 years, I have also enjoyed being a trainer and support teacher to Aboriginal and Torres



Strait Islander students attending Wontulp Bi-Buya Bible College and studying Cert III to Diploma in Theology and Ministry.

"As a former WAC Director, I have a deep appreciation of the journey we have taken as Pama.

"It is a journey I first became involved in at 21 years of age and now, as an employed staff member, I hope to bring to Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation skills and abilities that will help advance our core business activities in achieving Wuthathi's vision."

Cassowary encounter goes viral



Senior Custodian Cameron Wilson. Pic by Sophie Holt



Photo by Clayton Enoch.



Cassowary pics by Sophie Holt.



A recent track inspection in a remote part of Country led to Wuthathi Custodians and the track inspection team experiencing a close encounter of the Cassowary kind!

The determined bird didn't just scare the group off, it secured internet fame when a video of the chase went viral online.

The team was returning to the Ranger Base after a day's work and had just passed through several beautiful patches of rainforest.

Senior Custodian Cameron Wilson said he suddenly had a feeling 'something' was following him.

"It felt like something was

watching me", Cameron said.

"Suddenly I saw it – it kind of shot out at me and forced me off the track.

"I got off my bike and was behind it and a tree, while the rest of the crew caught up.

"It was quite menacing, making a kind of hissing sound.

"We suspect there is a nest in the area."

When the rest of the crew caught up the Cassowary then turned its attention to Custodian Coordinator Clayton Enoch.

Once he left the scene, after a not-so-pleasant encounter with a green ant nest while being chased, the six-seater side-by-side became the target.

General Manager Jim Turnour was said to have exhibited extraordinary rally driving skills, as he plunged the side-by-

side through the thickly forested track, with the Cassowary in red-eyed pursuit.

Clayton said it was an adrenaline-producing awe-inspiring experience. "This was the experience of a lifetime – we were in awe of this bird," he said.

"We have always known them to be on Wuthathi Country, but it was fantastic to encounter one in this way.

"Wuthathi Ngaachi is home to one of the northern most populations of Southern Cassowary in Australia."

Wuthathi IPA Coordinator Sophie Holt said the species was important.

"Cassowaries are listed as a priority for protecting in the Wuthathi Indigenous Protected Area and Healthy Country Plan, alongside several other threatened species known

to inhabit Wuthathi Ngaachi," she said.

"It was an absolutely incredible experience to see this bird on Country with Wuthathi Custodians."

The story attracted a lot of media attention, raising well-timed awareness of the work being done on Wuthathi, giving the team opportunities to leverage public and philanthropic support for Wuthathi.

Clayton and Cameron even appeared on Channel 7's *Sunrise* during August, and the story featured across several media outlets.

Check out the chase here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mz75h3rKxks>

And the team's *Sunrise* appearance here - <https://7news.com.au/sunrise/queensland-park-rangers-lucky-escape-from-aggressive-cassowary-c-7895765>

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