



# Wuthathi

## Aboriginal Corporation

# News

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## Taking action on biosecurity

Wuthathi has completed their operational Biosecurity Management Plan and is looking for further support to continue build a biosecurity program, IPA Coordinator Sophie Holt says.

She said biosecurity management was one of 12 operational areas within Wuthathi Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) and Healthy Country Plan (HCP).

"Wuthathi has continued to build on its biosecurity program and plan with funding support from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's (DAFF) Biosecurity Business grants," Sophie said.

"The plan was developed from Wuthathi people's knowledge of country, biosecurity strategies within the Wuthathi IPA/HCP Plans, the results of a biosecurity planning workshop hosted by Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation in April 2022, and input from partners such as DAFF, Queensland Parks & Wildlife Service, Cape York Natural Resource Management and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Management Authority.

"The plan is holistic and approaches biosecurity from a Wuthathi First Nation perspective, in terms of the need to address all biosecurity threats to country across State and Commonwealth jurisdictions," Sophie said.

"We are therefore working towards conducting surveillance for emerging pests not yet known to be in Northern Australia and working towards managing current known weeds and pests on Ngaachi."

Custodian Coordinator Clayton Enoch said the Biosecurity Plan paved the way for the signing of a fee for service contract with DAFF where Wuthathi Custodians

would be employed on Country by the department to conduct:

- post-mortem training;
- two Coastal Surveillance patrols;
- aquatic health surveys; and,
- plant host mapping (plant disease surveys).

"In November we invited a multi-disciplinary team from the North Australian Quarantine Strategy up onto Country for a biosecurity field trip," he said. "That was about developing our relationship and partnership, showcasing the incredible environmental and cultural values of Wuthathi Country, and sharing some of the key on the ground challenges faced in working to protect our land and sea.

"Sophie and I then travelled to Darwin to take part in a biosecurity roundtable and provide input into strengthening support for First Nations biosecurity management."

Sophie said Wuthathi had applied for further funding through DAFF biosecurity business grants to construct weed wash down stations to help limit the spread of weeds on Country.

"We are also looking to our partners for assistance in starting up a Wuthathi-run Feral Animal Management program, centred around capacity building for our Custodians and essential equipment acquisition," she said.

"This would have significant environmental and cultural heritage outcomes if supported."



# From our General Manager ...



We are entering another big year for Wuthathi people – as the Elders Tribal Council releases its protocol for the management of Ngaachi and Karakara, the Board is completing a review of the Rule Book to better integrate Wuthathi Kincha Lore with ORIC governance, and the Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) Plan is dedicated, General Manager Jim Turnour writes...

Strong governance and planning have been the corner stones of Wuthathi growth over the past two years.

The corporation now generating more than \$2 million in income with 15 ongoing employees plus casuals is going from strength to strength.

The Wuthathi people have fought for generations to protect their Ngaachi and Karakara and are now returning to manage it through partnerships with government and non-government organisations.

A key challenge for the organisation has been integrating siloed government funding across tenure boundaries to deliver a holistic First Nation place-based approach to the management of country.

We appreciate the efforts our partners are making to help us improve outcomes within the constraints of government programs, and we are continuing to work with them on this.

The IPA Plan has a section about partnerships that details Wuthathi's aspirations to move towards relational contracts with partners and away from principal agent transactional contracts.

Relational contracts involve long term commitments with partners agreeing on shared visions, values, strategies and actions, then working together to achieve these.

There is shared accountability for implementing plans and reporting provides an opportunity to review

and adapt plans, not simply audit and acquit contracts.

Wuthathi people are bound together in long term relationships with the Queensland and Australian governments through National Park joint management, TUMRA and Thukuru (Raine Island) agreements.

They also have developing philanthropic partnerships with non-government organisations, and it makes sense to work together to implement the IPA plan that everyone has endorsed.

We are encouraging all our partners to review their structures to better align them with Wuthathi's First Nation place-based approach to the management of Ngaachi and Karakara (land and sea country).

## The Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation AGM was held on 2 December 2022 at the Colonial Club Cairns.

Attendance was 54 in total, including 20 via video conference from Lockhart River and Bamaga in small groups and individually.

Members heard reports from the Chairman, Finance Officer, Indigenous Protected Area and Custodian Coordinator on the range of work being undertaken by the corporation.

Highlights for the year included:

- Four Wuthathi Custodians based permanently at Shelburne Bay Ranger base;
- Upgrades to ranger base including drilling of bore and access tracks on country;
- Custodians undertaking a range a projects to manage country including wetland and water monitoring, sea grass monitoring, biosecurity surveys, pest and weed control, track maintenance

works etc;

- Final draft of Indigenous Protected Area plan submitted to Australian Government for dedication of Wuthathi Shelburne IPA;
- Wuthathi TUMRA extended for further 7 years with new funding including for cultural values mapping;
- Raine Island recovery project continuing with new Coordinator to be employed by Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation starting in January 2023;
- Ongoing Land and Native Title Dealings:
  - o One Claim
  - o Captain Billy Landing TONC
  - o Sea Claim

Income more than tripled during the 2021-22 financial

year to \$2,215,942 with the addition of new grants including Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger, Infrastructure, Great Barrier Reef Foundation and Biosecurity, with uplifts in other grants including TUMRA and Joint Management. Changes to the rule book related to memberships and dispute resolution to ensure it remained compliant with the CATSI Act were also discussed and agreed by the meeting.

A new Board was elected and Chairman Keron Murray thanked retiring board members Smithy Wilson and Arnold Wallace for their contributions over many years.

The Cape York Land Council also presented an information session on the new sea country claim being lodge over the TUMRA area by Wuthathi Traditional Owners.

# From our Chair ...

Our newsletter this time is full of the great work our WAC staff are doing, and I hope you enjoy reading our updates, Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation Chair Keron Murray writes...



It means there is not a lot for me to say, but one thing I do need to do is apologise to Chrissy Warren for not mentioning her at the AGM, as I thanked and acknowledged our outgoing/retiring Directors, who also included Smithy Wilson and Arnold Wallis, on the day.

Chrissy, I would like to thank you for all your hard work over the past many years, and all your contribution to WAC, not only as director but in roles that have included Secretary, and subcommittee member for Traditional Owners Negotiating Committee (TONC), Raine Island Working Group, Local Advisory Marine Committee (LMAC), Indigenous Reef Advisory Committee (IRAC), to name just a few - and some which you are still a part of - thank you for everything you do, our 'committee queen', and know you will have an opportunity at the next AGM to have your say.

We have completed the Sea Claim consults in the Torres Straits, Northern Peninsula Area and Lockhart River.

We have one more to go in Weipa at a date to be confirmed, and all is going well.

At this stage, our proposed Working Group members for the sea claim are Johnson Chippendale, Brian Macumboy, Smithy Wilson and myself.

The proposed sea claim boundary is the current Wuthathi TUMRA.

Working group members will also sit down with Gudang Yadhaykenu and the Eastern and Central Island Working Groups to discuss Raine Island and Moulter and MacLennan Cays.

A field trip has been planned for week of 14 April for the headwaters of the Olive River, and discussions between Wuthathi and Northern Kaanju about our boundaries.

As you can and will see, there is a lot going on.

The board, our Elders and staff are working our hardest for our mob and we are moving forward at a fast pace.

Finally, I would like to encourage everybody to fill out the Expression of Interest forms.

They are for young and old, and serve two purposes.

The first is for those wanting to go on trips, so we have all details on-hand as we need them if, for example, a Raine Island or other on

Country opportunity arises.

There is 'reward for effort' attached to that, for those who show the initiative in filling out the forms.

The other purpose is so we have a skills audit - so we know what skills our mob have for any work or services we may need into the future.

We also want to know what our young ones hope to achieve, so we can help them to get there if we can.

All of the work we do is not just about being a ranger, if you want to be a scientist or marine biologist, a photographer, even just a driver, you never know when we may need to call on you, or may be able to offer you that experience.

As we grow there will be all sorts of opportunities and if we know who wants to do what, we can try to help - but only if we know what you all want and what you hope for.

Stay safe peoples, and happy new year to all.



# Wuthathi / Shelburne Joint Management

A Joint Management meeting held on ... was a great opportunity for Elders, Directors, and ... great work being done by Custodians, V...



"Elders supported Senior Custodian Cameron Wilson with his Welcome and smoking for everyone before an induction and inspection of the new ranger base," he said.  
"A convoy of vehicles then travelled through a diversity of country and ecosystems being managed by Custodians and inspected track maintenance works being undertaken

with a mulcher.  
"The meeting stopped at H... River for lunch before travelling to beach at Maa'u Point for the updates.  
"The sea grass monitoring project had been undertaken in this area it was a chance to hear reports from Custodians and QPWS Rangers on the work they had been doing with JCU support from the Trust Partnership."  
"On the return to the ranger base the meeting encouraged the famous Cas... that had gone well after chasing W... Custodians during their first encounter.  
"The Custodian



# Wuthathi National Park Meeting on Country

Wuthathi Country in September last year. Directors and QPWS staff to have a look the WAC General Manager Jim Turnour says.



Cassowary had since got to know each other.

"It was a curious bird that again showed up to see what the long convoy of vehicles was about.

"Everyone stopped to share in this encounter and some great photos and videos were taken.

"On return to the base we had a chance to complete the formalities of the meeting.

"It was great to host the QPWS rangers from the Heathlands Ranger base and Joint Management staff from Cairns who hadn't had a chance to see and experience Wuthathi Ngaachi.

"It had also been several years since some Directors and Elders had been on country.

"Hopefully we will have another a chance to meet on country in 2023."



# Custodians' drinking water permanently secure



Thanks to a bit of hard work and a bit of luck, our Wuthathi Custodian station now has a new section of road and a permanent supply of pure and clean drinking and cooking water.

Custodian Coordinator Clayton Enoch said they were at the point of running out of water late last year.

"We were filling our water tank when ever we needed to for drinking and cooking from the creek and this also supplied water for the showers and the toilet to flush and function properly," he said. "We had come to the point where we were going to run out of water in the creek.

"We knew at some stage that we would need to be able to hold or access more water during the dryer months of the year – the water at the base would last for about nine to 10 months and then would start to dry up.

"In October-November the creek stopped running and then became stagnant, and we could only use the water for showering and for the toilet to flush."

He said it meant the Custodians had to bring in their own water on a road badly in need of repair.

"We had organised for the bore contractors to come to the base to

drill for water but we needed to get some of the road fixed before they could bring in their trucks to do so," he said.

"The rains were just starting to fall as well, which meant we were racing to beat the wet season to get it all done.

"We contacted a few different companies to see if they could come and do that one section of road for us but they were all too busy with other work.

"After the Joint Management meeting Wuthathi General Manager Jim Turnour pulled over to yarn to a group working on the road between Bramwell and Wuthathi Ranger Base turnoff, and asked if they were interested in doing the work for us.

"They were, and after some negotiations the work got done. "We were lucky because just two days later the bore drilling contractors called to say that they were ready to come in."

He said they started the drill for water the next day.

"They drilled down to 69 metres

to find us some really good water," he said. "They said the water they tapped into was the best water they had ever seen, and they would be talking about Wuthathi water for some time to come.

"They also said it was some of the cleanest gravel they have ever seen. Now we have untouched clean drinking and cooking water that should never run out, fingers crossed.

"We understand this water is running underground for others in Cape York to use as well, so we will still make sure we look after it and not waste it, we are very glad to have it."



# An interview with ...



*Moira, Cecil, Nicholas, James and Brian Macumboy at the Anderson St offices.*

## **What does your Wuthathi Elders Tribal Council work mean to you?**

**Cecil:** Back on our Country we can teach our young ones our culture, story and story places.

**Nicholas:** Our old people passed away and we are the last cultural Elders. It is our duty to continue like them and show the way. Let people get on country, I'm the Elder of country, I go to country, look, visit country, I like to get people on country, get all the young people to learn them on country.

**Brian:** To keep and look after our Country, build community, manage our land and teach our mob our cultural ways. We want to help them live there, on Wuthathi Country.

**Moira:** It is very important, as was passed down by our Elders. Our job is to get back Country, and teach and support our people and our Wuthathi corporation.

## **How is this going to happen?**

We are working with the board and staff to finalise all the Elders' Council rules and protocols, then we can roll our cultural activities program and pass on our knowledge to future generations.

## **Staff profile: Raine Island First Nations Coordinator Andrew Simmonds**

Andrew Simmonds says he is excited to be taking on the role of Raine Island First Nations Coordinator, administered by WAC for the Raine Island ILUA Working Group.

Andrew grew up on the Atherton Tablelands, west of Cairns, and did his schooling in Atherton.

A first generation Australian, his parents emigrated from New Zealand.

"I was lucky to grow up on a property farming avocados and a small head of cattle on the shores of Lake Tinaroo," he said.

"My family were very passionate about the environment and involved in community-based conservation and land management, and I developed a real passion for the environment and an awareness of Australia's First Nations history.

"Prior to joining this role I have worked as a Great Barrier Reef Marine Park ranger, with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in biodiversity conservation management, as a manager of Ranger Operations and the Sea Natural Resource Management program for the Torres Strait Regional Authority, and as the project director of the Reef Island Initiative with government and non-government partners led by the Great Barrier Reef Foundation, amongst other things.

"I have always enjoyed working to support Traditional Owners leadership in land and sea management.

"In this new role, I am looking forward to really progressing Traditional Owner-led management of the Raine Island group which has such incredibly important cultural and natural values for Traditional Owners and the planet. Please contact me with anything to discuss."



# Captain Billy's Landing beach clean up planned for June 2023



Marine debris is a major threat to coastal Ngaachi and Karakara marine totems and animals, and listed as a threat in the Wuthathi Indigenous Protected Area and Healthy Country Plan.

A clean-up of Wuthathi coastline south of Captain Billy's Landing has been planned for 12-16 June 2023, in partnership with Tangaroa Blue, to collect and remove marine debris from the beaches.

Camping for the week will be at Captain Billy's Landing camp ground.

For more information or to register for the event please contact Clayton Enoch – Land and Sea Custodian Coordinator – 07 4249 3364 or Mathilde Gordon – Tangaroa Blue Major Project Manager – 0478 266 774.



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For more information about any of the stories in this newsletter please contact our Wuthathi office

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