



Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation News

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June 2026

Wuthathi On Country Celebration 2026

Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC warmly invites all Wuthathi families to attend our On Country Celebration event on 22 September this year. This event will acknowledge and celebrate Wuthathi Peoples' enduring connection to Country.



"Our top priority for this year is the On Country celebration on Tuesday 22 September, which is long overdue from our handover in 2016," chair Keron Murray (pictured below) says.

"It was always our desire to have the On Country celebration on country, but there was no infrastructure.

"Since then, we've put in the tracks and we've got the base. We've also got a few additional camp spots our custodians are currently managing.

"We have had long wet seasons this year and last year. This year we've secured an events planner, Perina Drummond, who will be conducting and organising the event and we want it to be a really good day."

The celebrations will mark the return of land and associated rights through the Indigenous Management Agreement (IMA), Land Title Deeds, and associated licences, which secure the preservation and protection of Wuthathi cultural heritage for future generations.



It will be an acknowledgement of the collective efforts of WAC, Elders, community members and government partners who have worked together to achieve this outcome.

It is an opportunity to recognise the importance of the Captain Billy Landing South area and surrounding Country and to honour the cultural, historical and spiritual connection Wuthathi people have maintained to these lands and waters.

The celebration will bring Wuthathi families, Elders, youth and partners together on Country to commemorate this achievement, strengthen community connections, share cultural knowledge, and recognise the ongoing role of Wuthathi people as custodians of their traditional lands.

The event will also highlight future opportunities created through the hand back, including improved access, joint management arrangements, and the continued care and stewardship of Country under Wuthathi leadership. **SEE INSIDE FOR MORE!**

Everything is on track, Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC chair Keron Murray writes...



We're moving ahead of schedule.

We've got so much on – we've got multiple projects we are committed to managing, as well as managing Country and securing commitments to land tenure.

The headwaters of the Olive River, aka Richardson Bramwell, and our sea claims are ongoing.

Wuthathi have been engaged in a series of workshops to go through future transfer protocols, as part of our new Indigenous Management Agreement, in a series of four workshops that have developed the actual transition for the delivery of each executive agreement as they are transferred over to Wuthathi.

That will mean WAC is the executor of the land, not the government. There will always be some things that sit with the government, but the primary responsibility for management

will rest with us.

Our TUMRA, for example, is a pilot for Traditional Owner-led management of the northern Great Barrier Reef – caring for Country through an Indigenous lens.

Our IPA brings all of the government agencies out of the silo and enables a holistic management plan caring for ngaachi and kara kara.

You can't manage land based on tenure or grant funding.

It's impractical, so we are looking at whether it can be a single, multi-jurisdictional head agreement, where we report on the annual outcomes.

Independent grant funding is impractical because you want to manage land holistically, not by imaginary lines and time frames.

We recently held a special AGM to present the financials for the year because the auditor wasn't ready at the time.

Our next AGM is coming up in

November after the On Country Celebration.

It is a voting year, so I encourage all members to have a hard think about becoming a director.

It's a great, rewarding and fulfilling position, but it does take time and dedication.

Our current directors are very proactive and doing a really good job.

There has been a change, where Deanne Macumboy is no longer a director for Johnson Morton.

I'd like to thank Deanne for her multiple years of service and congratulate Benedict Macumboy, who has taken up the position and wish him all the best.

So far, he's been going really well, he's young and passionate, and a great addition to the WAC Board of Directors.

Keron



On Country Celebration 2026
Attendee Registration



2pm Tuesday 22 September 2026 Ranger Base site Wuthathi Country

A limited number of camp sites will be available for families wishing to stay on Country immediately before, during and after the event.

Elders, staff and event crew will have priority at the ranger base site during the event.

Registration is required for all event attendees for access passes, vehicle management purposes, catering requirements (on the day only) and camping on Country.

To register for a camp site, use the QR code or email Perina at eventsplanner@wuthathi.com

I am pleased to present this Wuthathi News as an opportunity to provide an update on the progress, performance and priorities of Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC General Manager Louisa Taylor Ahmat writes...

Overall, WAC is in a strong and improving position, with significant work underway to strengthen our systems, build our workforce and prepare for long-term sustainability.

A key focus for me during this period has been ensuring we are getting our house in order by strengthening our foundations so the organisation can grow and deliver for the Wuthathi people.

I'm pleased to report WAC is currently in a strong financial and operational position, with clear progress across governance, workforce development and program delivery.

Priorities in the coming months will focus on:

- Communicating and preparing for the upcoming On Country Celebrations.
- Finalising the vessel and associated infrastructure to support our growing operational footprint.
- Strengthening and embedding our internal processes and procedures to strengthen our workplace culture.
- Continuing to build and mature our governance priorities.



Native Title and Land Management

As an RNTBC, our core responsibility is to manage our native title and land management obligations.

WAC continues to manage key responsibilities relating to future act notices and cultural heritage protection.

In partnership with PBC Link, we are developing and strengthening our internal processes to ensure these responsibilities are managed in a consistent and efficient manner.

Work is underway to further improve these processes to ensure:

- Timely and appropriate responses
- Protection of Wuthathi rights and interests
- Identification of opportunities that may provide benefit to Wuthathi people

This work is critical in ensuring that WAC continues to uphold its responsibilities to Country and to its members, while positioning the organisation to respond effectively to future matters.

Annual General Meeting

A date claimer for the 2026 Annual General Meeting (AGM) has also been set for Saturday, 28 November 2026 and will be communicated to members in the coming months.

As we move forward, it is important that we remain focused on:

- Strengthening our foundations
- Building long-term sustainability
- Preparing for continued growth

There is still significant work ahead; however, the steps being taken now are towards strengthening our corporate governance and ensuring we have the right systems, structures and capability in place to support the future of WAC.

These efforts are laying the groundwork for a strong, capable and sustainable organisation that reflects the aspirations of Wuthathi people.

Meet our On Country Celebration Events Planner, Perina Drummond ...



Raised in Zenadth Kes, Perina acknowledges her Wuthathi connections through the Nara Jira Para family.

Perina brings more than 10 years of event planning and management experience across fashion, arts, tourism and community celebrations around the country.

Louisa

The Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC held its 2025 Annual General Meeting in Cairns earlier this year. Families were there in person and online from the Northern Peninsula Area, Lockhart River and interstate. A Special General Meeting, scheduled for Friday, 17 April 2026, successfully finalised our obligations for the year. For more details on proceedings, please reach out to our directors. We extend our sincere thanks to all Wuthathi families for their ongoing attention and support.



Financial Performance

WAC has delivered a strong financial result this year, with a surplus which reflects improved financial management, careful cost control and solid funding outcomes. WAC has achieved this through:

- Increasing cash reserves, supported by a strong operating result.
- Reducing overall liabilities through continued program delivery and responsible financial management
- Continuing to invest in important assets and operational capacity.
- Engaging locally based accountants (Haplin Accountants), who have strong experience supporting Aboriginal Corporations.
- Developing draft financial policies in partnership with PBC Link - an independent service provider for Prescribed Bodies Corporate (PBCs), Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs), Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs), and Traditional Owner Corporations.
- Implementing ongoing improvements to financial systems, including the transition from MYOB to Xero.

These improvements are strengthening transparency, accountability and decision-making across the corporation.

We continue to strengthen our financial governance and through one-off funding opportunities, including donations, and the timing of grant funding carried across reporting periods, WAC is in a strong position.

As we continue to explore economic development opportunities to build our foundations, there is a clear and ongoing need to secure stable and long-term income sources to support the future sustainability of the organisation.



Governance and Compliance

WAC has made solid progress in strengthening governance, and some of these key improvements include:

- Completion of outstanding grant acquittals
- Positive feedback from funding bodies
- Governance training for Directors and staff to strengthen understanding of roles and responsibilities
- Development of Director information packages in preparation for the 2026 AGM (election year)

Whilst we have worked tirelessly to improve and strengthen our governance, there are still areas that require further development, including:

- Continued review and alignment of governing documents
- Review and update of the Rule Book.
- Strengthening governance systems and internal processes

WAC has engaged Paul Cochran from Youme Training to support the organisation in unpacking and strengthening our governing frameworks. This work has provided greater clarity around roles, responsibilities and strategic direction, and has helped identify key priorities that will guide the organisation over the next 12 months.

This next phase of work will focus on ensuring that our governance documents, systems and practices are well aligned, practical and reflective of Wuthathi values, so that we are well positioned to support both current operations and future growth.

Human Resources and Workforce Development

We have made strong progress in growing and strengthening our workforce, and Wuthathi continues to strive to be an employer of choice.

We aim to foster a workplace that is supportive, respectful and aligned with our shared values and aspirations.



Some key achievements include:

- Recruitment of key roles, including Land Operations Manager, Finance Officer, Office Manager, Junior Rangers Custodian Coordinator and Technical Support Officer, along with transitioning casual staff into full-time employment.
- Ongoing training and capacity building across the workforce.

Like many organisations, we continue to face challenges in attracting and retaining skilled, committed and capable staff.

It is important to WAC that we find the right people who align with our values and equally ensure that WAC is the right fit for them.

A shared vision and common purpose are critical to building a strong and positive workplace culture.

Additional challenges include:

- High workload pressures across teams.
- The need to further strengthen our organisational structure.
- The reality that many roles remain dependent on ongoing funding.

WAC is working closely with HR Dynamics to strengthen our organisational systems and workforce capability. This includes:

- Introducing Performance Development Plans
- Strengthening performance management processes
- Reviewing the current organisational structure to better support service delivery, staff wellbeing and long-term sustainability

This work is an important step in ensuring that WAC continues to build a capable, supported and sustainable workforce into the future.

Community Engagement

WAC continues to represent its members through ongoing engagement with partners and key stakeholders.

A significant strength of WAC is the strong leadership provided by the Chair of the Wuthathi Elders Tribal Council and the Chair of Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC, who are proactive and readily available to provide strategic direction that supports the operations and long-term vision of the organisation.

This includes:

- Participation in national conferences.
- Ongoing relationship building with government and sector partners through regular engagement and collaboration opportunities.

Community engagement is fundamental to Wuthathi's success.

By maintaining and strengthening these relationships, WAC is positioned to:

- Secure future funding opportunities
- Support the delivery of programs
- Ensure the Wuthathi voice is heard and respected in decision-making.





Risk Management

WAC continues to place a strong focus on strengthening risk management and compliance systems across the organisation. This work is essential to ensuring that WAC operates in a safe, responsible and sustainable manner as we continue to grow.

Key areas of focus include:

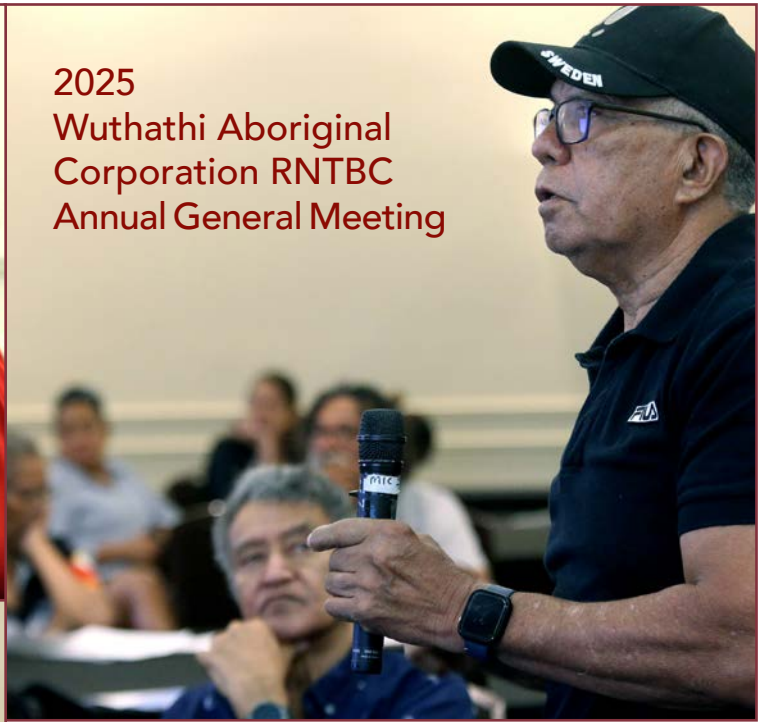
- Reviewing safety and compliance practices across all operational areas.
- Improving record-keeping and the tracking of staff certifications and qualifications.
- Strengthening internal systems, processes and controls.
- Building greater awareness and accountability across the organisation in relation to risk and compliance obligations.

This work is being supported through improved oversight, clearer processes and stronger coordination between operational and corporate functions.

As our operations expand, we recognise the importance of having robust systems in place that support safe work practices, informed decision-making and organisational accountability.

While progress is being made, this is an ongoing priority for WAC. Continued focus in this area will ensure the Corporation is well positioned to manage risks effectively and operate with confidence into the future.

2025 Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC Annual General Meeting



Strategic Priorities

Our focus remains on positioning WAC for long-term success, and we will achieve this by continuing to:

- Strengthen governance and internal systems.
- Secure long-term and sustainable funding.
- Improve workforce capacity and organisational structure.
- Expand economic development opportunities.
- Ensure safe, compliant and effective operations.

In addition to these priorities, WAC is actively working to build a more sustainable future by exploring a range of economic opportunities. With the support of Many Rivers, this includes:

- Tourism opportunities.
- Potential agricultural initiatives.
- Enterprise development planning.

These opportunities will play an important role in building economic independence and creating pathways for future growth and employment for Wuthathi people.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that while there are many opportunities available, our priority must remain on strengthening our internal systems, governance frameworks and operational capacity, which is critical to ensuring that we are well-positioned to support and sustain future growth.

By focusing on both strong foundations and strategic growth, WAC is working towards building a resilient, capable and self-determined organisation for the benefit of current and future generations of Wuthathi people.

Operational Activities (On Country Work)

Our operational teams continue to deliver strong outcomes across both land and sea programs.



Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC hosted the annual Wuthathi IPA Advisory Committee in April, bringing together partners and agencies committed to a holistic approach for managing Wuthathi Country.

We now have a fully complemented team, which is strengthening coordination across programs, supporting more consistent delivery of our work, and working closely alongside our key partners to achieve shared outcomes.

This has improved overall workflow, allowing teams to plan better, communicate and respond to operational demands both on Country and within the broader organisation.

Key highlights include:

- Improved coordination between land and sea teams through a unified work plan.
- Continued delivery across custodian programs, biosecurity and environmental monitoring
- Preparation well underway for the On Country Celebrations in September 2026

During the wet season, where access to Country is limited, the corporation utilised this time to build the capacity of our Custodians.

Many participated in accredited training, professional development and placements with partner organisations.

We extend our sincere thanks to our partners for providing these opportunities, which play a critical role in strengthening skills, knowledge and experience across our workforce.

As we now move into the dry season, our Custodians are back on Country and working diligently to progress key program activities, maintain infrastructure and continue caring for Wuthathi land and sea Country in line with our cultural responsibilities and operational priorities.



The IPA meeting was a valuable opportunity to share and reflect on the strong progress Wuthathi has made on Country, and to ensure our work continues to move forward in a coordinated, scientifically driven and culturally grounded way.



Custodians making tracks for Wuthathi

The year is ramping up for our Custodians Land Operations Manager Jessica Koleck says.

"While the ferry and road remained closed, we were able to partner up with our neighbours in March and April," she said.

"And with road closures, the Custodians travelled via the mail plane and worked closely with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services at Atambaya (Heathland Ranger Base).

"This was a great opportunity to get back out on Country, in previous years our Custodians were often stuck back in town due to the wet.

"We are grateful to them for their support.

"We worked together and we were able to get a start on a lot

of maintenance around Mutjati (Captain Billy's Landing), which included weed control, mowing and painting facilities, to ensure the area remains safe, accessible and well cared for."

At the end of April, roads opened and the team was excited to be able to get back onto the Wuthathi base.

They have since been working on a lot of preparation for the upcoming On Country Celebration, including work opening up Country for Wuthathi people to see in September.

"It was the biggest wet on record up at Heathlands, which has caused a lot of damage to

tracks and increased the spread of weeds," Jessica said.

"Custodians have been flat out slashing and repairing tracks, and spraying weeds to knock them back." *Continues...*





Training & Workshopping

Jessica said training behind the scenes was also ongoing.

"Paul Sexton has his CYPAL Indigenous Officer certificate and three more Custodians have finished their training," she said.

"Our Senior Custodian, Cameron, has also been working on his Leadership and Management Certificate, completing two more units in May.

"In early June, Cameron, along

with Custodians To'Mekai, Robinson, Davis, John, Willy and Nathaniel, completed AHCINF208 - Fabricate and Repair Metal or Fabric Structures, where they welded cages to protect sea turtle nests from predatory species, mainly pigs.

"The training was held at Atambaya and was supported by Cape York NRM."

Jessica said the team also presented at a capacity building workshop in Bamaga in June,

which was hosted by The North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA).

"The workshop brought together eight Indigenous ranger teams and stakeholders for a week long knowledge-sharing event," she said.

"It was a fantastic opportunity for our guys to promote Wuthathi work, learn new skills and network with other teams."





Junior Custodians

Jessica said she and new Junior Custodian Coordinator, Jasmin Ford, had been working on revitalising the Junior Custodian program.

"Jasmin is highly qualified and skilled, and we're excited to have her on board," she said.

Jasmin has already organised several workshops with the Tribal Elders Council to develop what the Junior Custodian program should look like.

"So it's led by the elders, but operates in collaboration with school-based learning," Jessica said.

"We are planning to hold several community engagement sessions in Lockhart, Weipa and Bamaga over the next few months to spread the word about our new program and encourage Wuthathi youth to sign up."

She said Jasmin was working on production of the seasonal calendar with the Wuthathi Tribal Elders Council.

"The Elders have been putting information together for more than a year now, to help form the seasonal calendar," she said.

Wuthathi Junior Custodian Program

We invite Wuthathi Traditional Owners, families and community to support the next generation of young people to walk strong in culture and future pathways.





The Wuthathi Junior Custodian program is grounded in On Country learning, where Elders, Rangers and community leaders will guide young people through cultural knowledge, language, and connection to land and sea. Through this program, our youth will learn about the past, strengthen their place in the present, and prepare for the future — building skills for education, training, and employment. This work is about keeping culture strong, passing on knowledge, and supporting young people to grow into confident leaders for Wuthathi Country.

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"They've collated a range of indicators such as fruiting plants, changes in wind, and animal behaviour that indicate a specific season and link to everything else that is happening on Country at that time.

"Wuthathi has engaged David Fell to help finalise the draft calendar.

"There's a lot of work that's gone into the calendar so far, and it's exciting that we finally have a visual draft drawn up.

"It's great for everyone to see it all laid out.

"The calendar will play a critical role in helping to develop the activities the junior custodians do on country, as well as work our Custodian team is doing."

Jessica said lastly, but by no means least, a new position, Technical Officer Georgia Parsons, has started with the Wuthathi team.

"Georgia's role focuses on growing the capacity of the Custodians, especially in streamlining field operations, updating safe work procedures and developing the team's capacity to deliver scientific surveys on Country," she said.

"This will support Wuthathi to take ownership of projects on Wuthathi Country and build their own new programs into the future."



I am from Brisbane, where I grew up with my Mum, Dad and little brother, Junior Custodian Coordinator Jaz Ford writes...

I spent my childhood fishing and playing at my grandparents' place along the banks of the Brisbane River, enjoying the beach, surfing with my family and skating with my friends.

My background is in youth work, sport and recreation, school-aged care and project management roles and for the past 10 years I have worked and lived in remote communities across the Far North from Yarrabah, Groote Eylandt, Elcho Island, Mornington Island, Thursday Island, Wyndham and Cooktown.

I have been privileged to work alongside Traditional Owners to develop and deliver a range of community-focused youth, sport, recreation and on-country programs.

I am excited to join Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation as the new Junior Custodian Coordinator, where I hope to help bring to life



the aspirations of the Wuthathi Elders and Traditional Owners in delivering programs that connect Wuthathi young people to country, culture, education and future employment opportunities.

Turtles up for the count on Raine Island



A high rate of feminisation in turtles counted on Raine Island over the past few years has been the main cause for concern from Traditional Owner, and Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC director, **Smithy Wilson** (*right*) says.

"The last few seasons have been very hot, so in terms of nesting, the successful hatchlings have been 80-90 per cent females," he said.

"Given that global warming is a big thing, parts of the island are inundated with water, so a few years ago we trialled a sand relocation and profiling of those areas, which was a success, but there are still areas of impact."

He said they were working with a scientific advisory group of turtle and bird scientists, geomorphologists and others, including

Traditional Owners and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

"Within the program we've also started a new nesting site on Sir Charles Hardy Island," he said.

"It's a few nautical miles off Cape Grenville and it was an egg relocation program that's turned out to be a success.

"I think it's saving the species.

"We're looking at 50-100 years down the track, where we can actually relocate eggs to improve the species if, in future, Raine should actually be inundated with the rise in sea levels."





Two Raine Island Recovery Project-led field trips have produced some egg-citing results

Raine Island Trip outcomes

Hatching Success

The team dug 111 of the 154 nests that were marked in December – of these 89 of the nests could be used to calculate hatching success.

Most of the other nests couldn't be found (clutch destruction) or had a newer incubating nest on top so could not be disturbed.

The mean hatching success for excavated nests across all sectors was 68.9%.

There does not appear to be any significant difference between hatching success in 'control' and 'reprofiled' sectors.

Hatchling Counts

Hatchling surveys were done using 50m trenches in four sectors over two full nights and one half night.

A total of over 20,000 hatchlings were counted!

Nesting Turtles

One tally count completed on the evening of the 18th of February recording 582 turtles counted on the beach.

Titanium flipper tags applied to 50 primary turtles and one turtle that had a tag scar (suggesting it had been tagged previously but lost the tag at some point). Another three turtles were recaptured from the November or December trips

during the tagging night.

A number of other turtles were tagged/recovered in the rescues and dead turtle surveys.

Turtle Rescues

35 dead turtles were recorded on Moulter Cay and one turtle was rescued. The majority of turtle deaths on Moulter were from cliff falls and beach rock.

58 dead turtles were recorded on Raine Island and 18 turtles were rescued.

Causes of death or entrapment on Raine Island were a mix of cliff falls (23 turtles), cliff entrapment (19 turtles), exhaustion/dehydration (16 turtles), entrapment in fencing (13 turtles). A further 5 turtles were trapped by logs on the beach. Some major fencing maintenance will be required in the middle of the year.

Seabird Surveys

A full red-tailed tropic birds survey of the island was conducted finding:

- A total of 89 adult birds were counted with 18 birds having leg bands.
- 66 nests recorded (sum of eggs, chicks, young and adolescents).
- One nest with a chick was found in one of the old nesting boxes that were installed in 2016.

Moulter Cay seabird survey completed.

Other tasks

Sand samples were collected from various locations on Raine Island.

Temperature data loggers checked and downloaded.

Inundation loggers checked and downloaded.

Geomorphology berm and toe of beach survey conducted.

Sir Charles Hardy Trip Egg Relocation Results

100 clutches were relocated from Raine Island this season – 50 clutches in November and 50 clutches in December 2025

The average hatching success of these nests was 82.4% (± 1.92 SE), with similar success rates for clutches relocated in November (82.8%) and December (82.0%)

This is a higher result than last years relocation efforts and a higher result than the nests at Raine Island!

The team also collected the temperature data loggers that were in nests and downloaded the sand temperature data loggers.

This data needs further review but initially it looks like the temperature under the shade structure was around 2 degrees C lower at times.



A key milestone for WAC is the near completion of our new vessel, which will support our sea country responsibilities.

The vessel has successfully completed trials and meets high standards.

Elders will name the vessel in the coming months. Although the vessel build is nearing completion, there is still a lot of work that must be done relating to finalising safety systems and operational processes, training staff to build their sea time, confirming infrastructure requirements to house the vessel in Cairns and on country.

This project is a significant step forward in strengthening Wuthathi's management of our Karakara.



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

Employment

Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC has roles to play in all areas of our land management, from admin to custodianship. If you have a skill you think we can use, EOI's for Wuthathi people/custodians to work for WAC are always welcome.

Wuthathi Aboriginal Corporation
Expressions of Interest



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