



# **GUNGGANDJI LAND AND SEA COUNTRY PLAN**

**Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation**

**MARCH 2013**

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**Australian Government**

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***Cover photos of Gunggandji Land and Sea Country***

**Front cover photo:** Cape Grafton and Mission Bay (photo by Dermot Smyth)

**Back cover photo:** Yarrabah and Mission Bay (photo supplied by Robin Schrieber)

**WARNING**

**We wish to advise that the names and photographs of people who have passed on are contained within this plan.**

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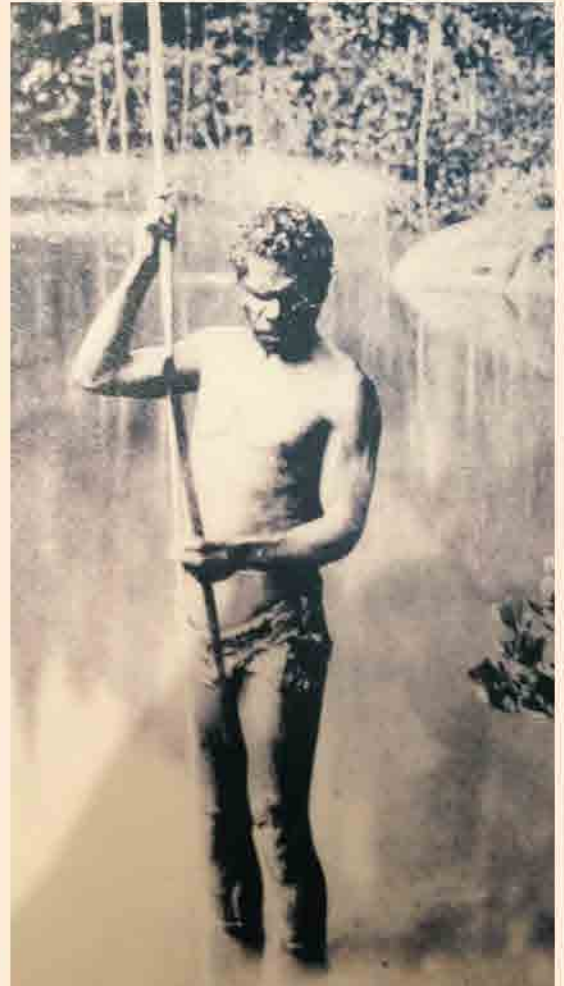
Photo supplied by Robin Schrieber

## VISION FOR GUNGGANDJI COUNTRY

Our vision is for healthy land and sea country and strong Gunggandji culture that we can pass on with pride to the next generation and far into the future.

Gunggandji People are committed to:

- Care for our country;
- Strengthen & pass on our knowledge, language and culture;
- Benefit our community through managing country;
- Sustainably use our resources on land and sea;
- Collaborate with Yarrabah community in caring for country;
- Collaborate with our neighbours to protect and manage country;
- Collaborate with government agencies and other partners;
- Share our country & culture with visitors.



**Menmuny**  
also known as King John Barlow  
(Photo courtesy of Menmuny Museum)



**Left to Right:**  
Bryce Barlow, Kathy Balabatraska,  
Hope Patterson, Carol Warta,  
Stafford Murgha, Dorita Wilson,  
Bob Sands, Alice Yeatman (deceased),  
Violet Elliot, Kathy Joinbee  
(Photo by Kerry Trapnell courtesy of QPWS)

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This Plan is another significant step along the journey that Gunggandji People have taken over many years towards recognition of our role as owners and managers of our land and sea country. Following our native title determination in 2011 (see section 3), Gunggandji People saw the need to make a plan on how to carry out our cultural and legal responsibilities to manage our land and sea country. This Plan is an expression of our commitment to our country and culture, and to future generations of Gunggandji People and others who depend on our land and sea environments and resources.

## *Purpose of the Plan*

The purpose of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan is to:

- Identify important natural and cultural values of Gunggandji land and sea country – located around Yarrabah and offshore areas east of Cairns, north Queensland, Australia;
- Communicate the vision, aspirations and proposals of Gunggandji people to manage land and sea country;
- Develop a strategic framework for collaboration between Gunggandji people, residents of Yarrabah, government agencies and others to manage and sustainably use the natural and cultural resources of Gunggandji land and sea country.

## *Developing the Plan*

In 2011 Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation received funding from GBRMPA's Reef Rescue Land and Sea Country Indigenous Partnerships Program to develop a Land and Sea Country Plan. In 2012 we contracted Dr Dermot Smyth of Smyth and Bahrdt Consultants<sup>1</sup>, to assist the corporation to develop the plan for Gunggandji country, including the following stages:

- Consultations with Gunggandji People;
- Consultations with Yarrabah residents, including hunters and Elders;
- Consultations with Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council;

- Consultations with government agencies with an interest in Gunggandji land and sea country, including:
  - Qld Parks and Wildlife Service
  - Fisheries Queensland
  - Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
  - Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA)
  - Commonwealth Dept of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC)
  - Cairns Regional Council
  - Terrain NRM
- Consultations with commercial fishers, recreational fishers and conservation interests through the GBRMPA Cairns Local Management Advisory Committee;
- Research on documented natural and cultural values, possible threats to those values and current management arrangements;
- Development of a draft Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan;
- Follow-up consultations and finalisation of the Plan.

The Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan will be made available in two forms:

1. A poster summarising Gunggandji People's vision for country and the key values, threats, priority actions and implementation partnerships;
2. A supporting document (this document) that includes additional technical information relevant to each section of the plan poster.

These documents will also be made available on the Gunggandji website in due course.



Photo courtesy of Wet Tropics Images

<sup>1</sup>[www.sbconsultants.com.au](http://www.sbconsultants.com.au)

## 2. GUNGGANDJI COUNTRY AND NATIVE TITLE

Gunggandji Country includes the coastal land and waters immediately to the east of Cairns, incorporating False Cape, Mission Bay and Rocky Island, the township of Yarrabah, Cape Grafton, Green Island, Fitzroy Island, the beaches, coastal waters and hinterland south of Yarrabah and parts of the Murray Prior Range to the west.

The immediate focus of this Plan is the native title determination area in the northern part of the Yarrabah Deed of Grant in Trust Area and parts of Fitzroy Island and adjacent sea country, including Green Island. Further details on the native title determination are provided in section 2 below.

Gunggandji country contains a great diversity of environments including the rainforest clad slopes of the Murray

Prior Range, grassy coastal plains, freshwater wetland, beaches, mangroves, salt pans, rocky headlands, coral reefs, continental islands and the coastal waters of the Coral Sea.

Further information on the cultural and natural values of Gunggandji country is provided in sections 4 and 5.





**Celebrating the Gunggandji Native Title determination**  
 Left to right: Munnunmy Murgha, Amos Bulmer, Desmond Murgha,  
 Kyzen Murgha, Amaziah (Shem) Murgha and Shatner Patterson  
 (Photo courtesy of Cairns Post)

On 19 December 2011, the Federal Court of Australia made a consent determination recognising the Gunggandji People's native title rights over country, to the east of Cairns in Far North Queensland. The determination area covers about 8297ha of land and waters, including the northern part of the Yarrabah Deed of Grant in Trust ('DOGIT'), including Yarrabah township, the foreshores of Mission Bay, Cape Grafton, Turtle Bay, Wide Bay and Oombunghi beach, part of Malbon Thompson Forest Reserve and two parcels of land on Fitzroy island.

Gunggandji People negotiated with representatives of the Queensland Government, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, Cairns Regional Council, Ergon Energy Corporation Limited, Black and White (Quick Service) Taxis Pty Ltd, Telstra Corporation Limited, Southern Cross Media Australia Pty Ltd, Seven Network (Operations) Limited, Miles Electronics Pty Ltd and residents of the Yarrabah DOGIT to reach agreement about the Combined Gunggandji People's native title rights and the rights of others with interests in the claim area.

The Gunggandji People also negotiated seven Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) that establish how their respective rights and interests will be carried out on the ground. Parties reached agreement with the assistance of case management in the Federal Court of Australia, ILUA negotiation assistance from the National Native Title Tribunal, and legal representation of the Gunggandji People by the North Queensland Land Council. The Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation has been established as the Native Title registered Body to

manage the native title rights on behalf of all native title holders.

### ***Exclusive native title rights recognised***

The Federal Court recognised the Gunggandji People's "exclusive" native title rights over about 7508 ha of land. The group therefore has the right to possess, occupy, use and enjoy these areas, to the exclusion of all others. It is important to note, however, the various ILUAs entered into by Gunggandji People (see below) ensure that the existing rights and interests of the broader Yarrabah Community and block holders are protected.

### ***Non-exclusive native title rights recognised***

The Court also recognised Gunggandji People's non-exclusive native title rights over about 789 ha of land and waters above and below the high water mark in the determination area. This includes the rights to:

- be present on the land, including by accessing and traversing the determination area;
- take and use traditional natural resources from the determination area for personal, domestic and non-commercial communal purposes;
- hunt and fish in or on, and gather from, the water for personal, domestic, and non-commercial communal purposes; and,
- take and use the water for personal, domestic and non-commercial communal purposes.



Les Murgha and grandson, Gary Mennunmy Murgha Jr

## **Relationship between native title rights and other rights**

The consent determination recognises the Gunggandji People's native title rights and interests while protecting the rights of the other parties, with respect to those areas where the non-exclusive rights of the native title holders have been recognised. If there is inconsistency between native title rights and interests and the valid interests of others in such areas, the other interests take precedence over the native title rights. The group will exercise its non-exclusive rights alongside the rights of others and parts of the determination area will continue to be shared by all those with an interest in the area, including members of the public.

## ***Agreements relating to the determinations***

During case management conducted by the Federal Court of Australia and ILUA negotiations conducted by the National Native Title Tribunal, the Gunggandji People negotiated ILUAs with a range of parties. The ILUAs set out how the parties' rights and interests will be carried out on the ground.

***A Local Government ILUA*** between the Gunggandji People and Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council provides for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, while establishing how development in the future will proceed in the local government area.

***A Blockholder ILUA*** between the State of Queensland, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council, Gunggandji People and individual blockholders to enable the grant of leases for historical blockholders and establish an opt-in process for future blockholders to obtain a lease with the consent of the Gunggandji people.

***A DOGIT Transfer ILUA*** between the State of Queensland, Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council and Gunggandji people to consent to part of the land, subject of the DOGIT being transferred, and consent to another part being declared non-transferrable, pursuant to the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991*. This ILUA expires on 1 January 2014, subject to a deed of the transfer of land under the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991 (QLD)* having been delivered.

***A Local Government ILUA*** between the Gunggandji People and Cairns Regional Council provides for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage, while establishing how development in the future will proceed in the local government area.

***A Protected Areas ILUA*** between the Gunggandji People, Wet Tropics Management Authority and the State Government establishes how the native title rights and interests will be exercised in parts of various conservation parks and forest reserves within the claim area. This ILUA commits the State of Queensland to negotiating a long term agreement to address each party's concerns about land management, employment, cultural heritage protection etc. The ILUA identifies the following matters that may be included in the long term agreement:

- Establishment of new walking tracks for use by Gunggandji People in commercial tourism enterprises;
- Training and accreditation of specific Gunggandji People as conservation officers under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 (Qld);
- Fire management;
- Collaborative weed and feral animal control;
- Establishment of scientific research areas;
- Development of a cultural awareness program from QPWS and WTMA staff;
- Identification and declaration of Restricted Access Areas to protect sites of cultural significance;
- Development of a Management Plan.

***An ILUA between the Gunggandji People and the State Government*** to provide for future act consent for the creation of tenures to facilitate the services provided by various communication tower operators.

***An ILUA between Ergon Energy Corporation Limited and the Gunggandji People*** was also finalised. It provides for continued access by Ergon Energy to the determination area so that it can carry out its functions.



Photo courtesy of Wet Tropics Images/ Mike Trenery



## ***History of native title claims, negotiations and determinations***

The following summary of native title decisions, negotiations, agreements and determinations is adapted from information provided by the National Native Title Tribunal<sup>2</sup>.

### **Prior to 2001**

- The Federal Court of Australia combined two separate native title determination applications (QUD6005/98 Gurubana Gunggandji and QUD6014/98 Les Murgha and Vincent Schreiber) to become the “Combined Gunggandji” (hereafter referred to as the Gunggandji People) application in 2001.

### **27 April 2001**

- The Gunggandji People native title determination application was filed with the Federal Court over the northern part of the Yarrabah DOGIT, reserves and unallocated State land and parcels on Fitzroy Island.

### **27 April 2001**

- The Gunggandji People's application was referred to the National Native Title Tribunal for mediation. Mediation commenced with various parties but was delayed due to the resolution of blockholder interests. Two of these interests were referred to the Federal Court of Australia.

### **27 September 2007 – 31 August 2009**

- The first blockholder issue application filed with the Federal Court in September 2007 with a court hearing held on 28 November 2007<sup>3</sup>.
- A second blockholder issue application with the Federal Court in March 2008, with court hearings held 30 June, 1 and 2 July 2008<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>National Native Title tribunal 2011 *Combined Gunggandji People's native title determination – 19 December 2011*. For further information on this determination see <http://www.nntt.gov.au/News-and-Communications/Newsletters/Native-title-Hot-Spots-archive/Documents/Hot%20Spots%2031/Combined%20Gunggandji%20People%20v%20Qld%20HS31.pdf>

<sup>3</sup>Refer to the decision handed down by the Federal Court: *Murgha v State of Queensland* [2008] FCA 33 Dowsett J, 25 January 2008.

<sup>4</sup>Refer to the decision handed down by the Federal Court: *Combined Gunggandji People v State of Queensland* [2009] FCA979 Dowsett J, 31 August 2009.

### **November 2009 – 15 April 2010**

- Mediation with the National Native Title Tribunal re-commenced. The Tribunal conducted substantive mediation between the parties to assist them to reach agreement through various ILUAs.

### **15 April 2010**

- Mediation ceased with the National Native Title Tribunal. The claim was referred to intensive case management by the Federal Court.
- The Federal Court convened approximately 18 case management conferences with the parties.

### **15 April 2010 – 14 March 2011**

- National Native Title Tribunal facilitated s.24CF ILUA negotiations to reach agreement in relation to a number of ILUAs.

### **3 and 4 October 2011**

- The following ILUAs were registered and placed on the register of Indigenous Land Use Agreements: Yarrabah Blockholders ILUA, Yarrabah DOGIT Transfer ILUA, Yarrabah Towers ILUA, Yarrabah Local Government ILUA, Combined Gunggandji People and Ergon Energy ILUA and Yarrabah Protected Areas ILUA.

### **19 December 2011**

- Justice Dowsett of the Federal Court of Australia made the consent determination of Gunggandji People's native title at Yarrabah.



Robert Sands, Les Murgha and Robert Patterson celebrate the Gunggandji Peoples' native title determination in 2011  
(Photo courtesy of Cairns Post)

21 September 2012

- Gunggangdji People recognised with Mandingalbay Yidinji people as the joint native title holders for the southern part of the Yarrabah DOGIT area in the Combined Mandingalbay Yidinji – Gunggangdji People native title determination<sup>5</sup>.

The map below shows the Gunggangdji People's native title determination area (in red) and the Combined Mandingalbay Yidinji – Gunggangdji native title determination area (in blue). The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area is indicated by cross hatching. Note that the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area includes the north-west portion of the Gunggangdji People's native title determination area.



<sup>5</sup>It is anticipated that a new Native Title Registered Body to manage the Combined Mandingalbay Yidinji – Gunggangdji People's native title determination area will undertake further planning in this area, which is not the focus of the current Gunggangdji Land and Sea Country Plan.

### 3. OUR HISTORY

Gunggandji People have been the Traditional Owners of our coastal lands and waters since time immemorial. Our ancestors sustainably used and managed the resources of our land and sea country and they witnessed great changes over thousands of years. Our traditional stories tell of the rising of the sea and the flooding of large areas of coastal grasslands that now lie under the Coral Sea. Our ancestors witnessed the formation of Green Island, Rocky Island and Fitzroy Island as the sea rose higher.

We adapted our lives, our technologies and the way we managed resources as the environment changed around us. But the land under the sea is still part of Gunggandji country and we still care for sacred sites and Dreaming tracks that are now covered by the Coral Sea.

We continued to adapt as European invasion and settlement gradually impacted on our country, on our resources and our people. We witnessed Captain Cook sail his ship Endeavour into Mission Bay in 1770 and we documented his visit and later visits by other European mariners in our rock paintings.

Our first contact with Europeans was with beche-de-mer (sea slug) fishermen who established fishing camps on Fitzroy and Green Island in the 1850s to 1870s. Some of our people worked and traded with these fishermen, but sometimes we were exploited and treated badly by them. We also suffered raids from the Queensland Native Police who were clearing country for European settlement, but we were largely protected from the worst of the frontier violence by the natural barriers of the Murray Prior Range that separated our country from the growing township of Cairns.

Anglican missionary John Gribble established a mission at the present location of Yarrabah in 1892 with the support of Gunggandji elder Menmuny, who was later made 'King' of the Mission as the leader of an Aboriginal Council that enforced

mission rules. John Gribble died soon after establishing the mission and was replaced by his son Ernest who continued to encourage Aboriginal people from the surrounding region to join the mission. Over the next 120 years Gunggandji people adapted to the arrival of Aboriginal people from many parts of Queensland, as well as South Sea Islanders and Torres Strait Islanders who continue to live on our country and share our resources.

Fitzroy Island was part of the Anglican Aboriginal mission established at Yarrabah and was used to grow bananas, pawpaw, potatoes and cassava, but was subsequently excised from the mission and is now a national park.

The mission administration was replaced by Queensland Government administration in the 1960s, which in turn was replaced by an elected Community Council in the 1980s with the establishment of the Deed of Grant in Trust (DOGIT) over the former reserve lands. In 2005 the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council was established and then in December 2011 the determination of native title finally brought recognition that this land and by implication the adjacent marine areas together comprise Gunggandji country. We have negotiated agreements that protect the rights of other Yarrabah residents to live on our country and we are committed to work with them to sustainably use and manage the resources of our country.



Ernest Gribble and Mr Pearson (top centre) with Willie Loggin, Billy Church, George Christian, Paddy, Minniminy, Billy Woopah, Charlie, Pompo Katchewan, Maude, Toovy, Jimmy Katchewan, Marian, Alice, Tom, Albert, Franck, Neddy, Willie Ambrym, Maggie, Doon-goobooloo, Mundy-jibba, Rachel, Yarbini and Yer-in-I (Photo courtesy of Menmuny Museum)

## 4. CULTURAL VALUES

Gunggandji culture is intimately linked with our land and sea country and all of the environments, places, habitats, earth, water and species that form part of country. All of the so-called “natural” values that are described in the next section of this Plan are also part of our cultural values. Through implementation of this Plan we wish to reflect and maintain the interconnectedness of people, culture, land, water, animals, plants and sacred places. We depend on our environment, and our environment depends on us and our culture.

### *Country as a cultural landscape*

The concept of Gunggandji country is itself a cultural value and one that is now legally recognised through the native title determination process. Our decision to develop an integrated Land and Sea Country Plan (rather than separate plans for land and sea areas) reflects the fundamental cultural value that land and sea are inseparable parts of country and must be managed together.

Land and sea country as an integrated cultural landscape is reinforced by our creation stories and Songlines that bind land and sea environments together, often reflecting the great changes that took place when the sea rose up to flood our former coastal plains thousands of years ago. For example the Gunggandji language name for Fitzroy Island is Gulnyjarubay, which means “fist”, indicating that what used to be the “wrist” and “arm” of a once big mountain had been submerged by the rising sea.

Through the implementation of this Land and Sea Country Plan we are committed to keep alive the concept of Gunggandji Country as an integrated land/sea cultural landscape for generations to come.

### *Sacred sites and other significant places*

While all of Gunggandji country has cultural significance, some places have special spiritual and religious value and are often referred to as sacred sites. Sacred sites may be particular geographic features such as rock outcrops on land or sea, but they can also be places with little or no outstanding physical features, but which



Tiana Yeatman, Meryl Richards, Ailsa Lively, Janine Yeatman, Ailsa Lively, Julie Swartz and Scott Yeatman admire Gunggandji cultural interpretive sign on Green Island (Photo by Kerry Trapnell courtesy of QPWS)

nevertheless have great cultural significance. Some of these places have been mapped and described in archaeological surveys and others are only known to our Elders.

Other significant places include rock art sites which record thousands of years of our history, our adaptation to our changing environments and early contact with Europeans.

Through the implementation of this Land and Sea Country Plan we will collect and record information about our sacred sites on land and sea and ensure that their cultural significance is reflected in the management of our country.



Mrs Evelyn Noble with Kierran Noble (in front) and Ryan Canendo Jnr



Photo by Julie Swartz courtesy of QPWS

### ***Gunggandji knowledge and practices***

The survival of our ancestors over thousands of years depended on their knowledge and management of country, and especially their intimate knowledge of important animals and plants on land and sea – how to use them sustainably, how to hunt and gather, how to adapt to the seasons, how to survive cyclones, how to manage fire, how to process poisonous plants to make them edible and how to treat wounds and sickness with bush medicines. Some of this knowledge has been recorded in the past and some knowledge is still held by our Elders.

Through the implementation of this Land and Sea Country Plan we will systematically store, manage and apply this knowledge so that it will be available to our people for generations to come and can contribute to the proper management of Gunggandji country for the benefit of everyone.

### ***Language***

The Gunggandji language holds the wealth of our ancestral heritage, knowledge and cultural practices. We are keen to strengthen knowledge and use of our language among Gunggandji people as part of each of our land and sea management activities. By giving contemporary value and meaning to our language we will help protect all of the other cultural values referred to above.

### ***Cultural Heritage Strategy***

Over time we will develop a Cultural Heritage Strategy that draws together, protects and nurtures all the cultural values described above. The first step of this strategy is to develop a cultural heritage data recording and management system, which has been identified as one of the priority actions for implementing the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan.



Photo by Dermot Smyth



Left to Right: Bob sands, Camden Patterson, Shaun Murgha, Clyde Sands, (unknown 2), Gary Memmunny Murgha, Thomas Gymore, Scott yeaman, Ruth Ludwick, Juanita Patterson, Shatnar Patterson, (unknown 3)  
(Photo by Kerry Trapnell courtesy QPWS)

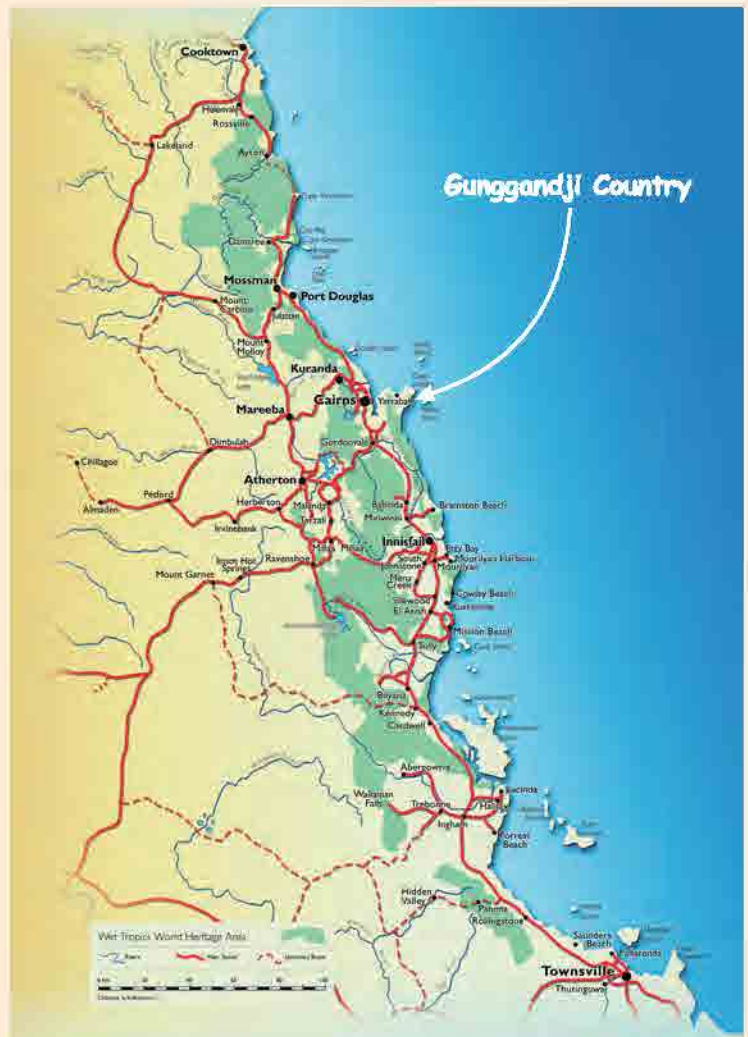
## 5. NATURAL VALUES<sup>6</sup>

Gunggandji country straddles two bioregions and two World Heritage areas.

The terrestrial component of Gunggandji country lies within the Wet Tropics Bioregion and partly within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and Gunggandji sea country lies within the Wet Tropics Coast Marine Bioregion and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.

The Wet Tropics Bioregion covers 1.85 million hectares of coastal ranges and lowlands in far north Queensland and contains 30 per cent of the entire vascular plant diversity of Australia and 32 per cent of Australia's terrestrial vertebrate fauna. Of the total 105 distinct regional ecosystems 23 per cent are classified as 'endangered' and a further 16 per cent as 'of concern'. The 'of concern' regional ecosystems include community types that were once extensive but have been widely developed for agriculture, and also several open forest systems that have been rapidly changed due to altered fire regimes.

The Wet Tropics region has exceptional biological richness and significance and is recognised as a major world centre of plant and animal diversity. It has the highest level of biodiversity and regional endemism within Australia and is characterised by large areas of mountainous ranges, wild and scenic rivers, intensive agriculture on rolling uplands and coastal floodplains, significant coastal wetlands, offshore coral reefs and a monsoonal climate.



Wet Tropic World Heritage Area (Map courtesy of Wet Tropics Images)



Photo courtesy of Wet Tropics Images

Much of the Wet Tropics Bioregion lies within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (see above map). The north-west portion of the Gunggandji People's native title determination area, including the northern part of Murray Prior Range, lies within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (see map on page 10), though all of Gunggandji country shares many of the natural values of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area.

<sup>6</sup>The description of natural values is based on information from several sources, including:

- National Heritage Trust and Bushcare Australia 2003 *Native Vegetation Management A needs analysis of regional service delivery in Queensland - Wet Tropics*
- <http://www.wettropics.gov.au/corporate-home>

The Wet Tropics Coast Marine Bioregion includes coastal and island waters from approximately Cooktown to Lucinda, including Fitzroy Island and Green Island. The inshore coastal region is dominated by very complex and extensive mangrove forests and very high intertidal faunal diversity. The very high seasonal rainfall washes terrestrial sediments into the Coral Sea, resulting in very muddy inshore waters and poorly developed inner shelf reefs.

Gunggandji country on the Yarrabah Peninsula fringes the Murray Prior Range and features two prominent granitic ridges. The lowlands between the ridges features freshwater and estuarine wetlands, beaches and dune systems, including parabolic dunes.

The Peninsula vegetation includes woodland vine forests, shrublands, sedge wetlands and complex mesophyll vine forests with dominant palms. Many of these communities are classified as 'of concern' and 'endangered' regional ecosystems. They support rare and threatened animal species, including the southern cassowary and estuarine crocodile and have high scientific and conservation values.



Photo courtesy of Wet Tropics Images



Photos courtesy of Wet Tropics Images

### ***Fitzroy Island (Gulnyjarubay)***

This rugged vegetated granitic island has high scenic values, a few small beaches and a fringing coral reef. The island and adjacent waters are areas of state significance. Freshwater springs and area of heath are found on the island and the vegetation supports a colony of spectacled fruit bats. The island is no longer part of the Yarrabah DOGIT, having been excised from the former Aboriginal Reserve during the Second World War.



View of Little Fitzroy Island from the summit of Fitzroy Island  
(Photo courtesy of QPWS)

### ***Green Island (Wunyami)***

Green Island is the most floristically diverse of all coral cays in the Cairns and Central sections of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Green Island supports a closed vine forest which is similar in species composition to vine forests found on the adjacent mainland, with 134 plant species identified. The complexity of the vegetation can be attributed for the most part to birds, in particular the pied imperial pigeon which regularly transports seeds and nutrients from the mainland, thus enriching species diversity. Accumulated leaf litter also provides a barrier to water loss and recharges soil nutrients.

### ***Fauna and Flora***

While biodiversity surveys have yet to be undertaken specifically within the Combined Gunggandji native title area, the fauna and flora of Gunggandji country is generally representatives of species found elsewhere in the Yarrabah DOGIT. Information obtained from the (former) Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM) Wildnet database indicates the following biodiversity values for the terrestrial component of Gunggandji country:

- 5 mammal species;
- 51 bird species, including one species (cassowary) listed as 'Endangered';

- 8 amphibian species, including two species (tapping green eyed frog) listed as 'Near Threatened';
- 89 plant species, including two species (*Parsonia bartiensis* and *Acacia hylonoma*) listed as 'Vulnerable' and one species (*Helicia nortoniana*) listed as 'Near Threatened'.

The actual number of species on Gunggandji country is expected to be considerably higher than indicated above. For example, a biodiversity survey undertaken by CSIRO found a total of almost 500 plant species on the nearby Malbon Thompson Range.

Seventeen migratory species recorded for the Yarrabah region are listed under the Bonn Convention, China-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (CAMBA), Japan-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (JAMBA) and/or Republic of Korea-Australia Migratory Bird Agreement (ROKAMBA) (see table below). These agreements protect migratory species by limiting the circumstances under which migratory species are taken or traded, protecting important habitats, exchanging information and building co-operative relationships.



Photo courtesy of QPWS



**Species recorded in the Yarrabah Region listed under international agreements**

<b>Scientific name</b>	<b>Common name</b>	<b>Bonn Convention</b>	<b>CAMBA</b>	<b>JAMBA</b>	<b>ROKAMBA</b>
<b>Birds</b>					
<i>Charadrius mongolus</i>	lesser sand plover	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Fregata minor</i>	great frigatebird		Yes	Yes	
<i>Anous stolidus</i>	common noddy		Yes	Yes	
<i>Sterna sumatrana</i>	black-naped tern		Yes	Yes	
<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	little tern	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	lesser crested tern		Yes		
<i>Merops ornatus</i>	rainbow bee-eater			Yes	
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	common sandpiper	Yes			
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	ruddy turnstone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Calidris ruficollis</i>	red-necked stint	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	great knot	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Numenius madagascariensis</i>	eastern curlew	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	whimbrel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Tringa brevipes</i>	grey-tailed tattler		Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	terek sandpiper		Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Sula leucogaster</i>	brown booby		Yes	Yes	
<b>Reptiles</b>					
<i>Crocodylus porosus</i>	estuarine crocodile	Yes			
<i>Chelonia mydas</i>	green turtle	Yes			

A list of terrestrial animal and plant species recorded for the Yarrabah Local Government Area is available at: [http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/wildlife-online/generate\\_a\\_species\\_list\\_for\\_a\\_selected\\_area.php](http://www.ehp.qld.gov.au/wildlife/wildlife-online/generate_a_species_list_for_a_selected_area.php)



Photo courtesy of QPWS

### **Marine natural values**

Gunggandji sea country lies within the northeast province of the Interim Marine Bioregionalisation of Australia<sup>8</sup>, which displays the distinctive marine ecosystems around Australia.

The Management Plan for the Wet Tropics Coastal Region<sup>9</sup>, which was repealed by the Queensland Government in October 2012, notes that the region contains significant natural, cultural, economic and social resources and processes worthy of protection and conservation, including features of international, national and state significance.

Many of the following features of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area occur in Gunggandji sea country within the Wet Tropics Coast region:

- 54 % of the world's mangrove species;
- More than 1500 fish species;
- 242 bird species;
- 22 whale and dolphin species;
- 500 seaweed species;
- 15 seagrass species;
- 6 marine turtle species;
- 400 coral species.



Photo courtesy of QPWS

Many of these species have cultural and economic value to Gunggandji People and other Indigenous groups. Dugong and green turtles are of particular interest and concern. They are highly valued food species and they are associated with ancient and continuing cultural practices. Both species are slow-growing and vulnerable to a range of pressures (e.g. hunting, boat strikes, habitat loss and impact of cyclones) over the extensive marine area in which they live. A key priority of this Land and Sea Country Plan is to develop a sustainable management framework for dugong and marine turtles (discussed further in section 8).



Photo courtesy of QPWS

<sup>8</sup><http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/imcra/pubs/map1-pb.pdf>

<sup>9</sup><http://www.chp.qld.gov.au/coastal/regional-plans/index.html>

The table<sup>10</sup> below provides an overview of the region's major coastal resources and their associated ecological, economic, cultural and social values.

### Coastal values for the Wet Tropics Coastal Region

Coastal values	Resource type									
	Beach and dune systems	Coastal wetlands	Coastal forests and heathlands	Headlands	Rocky foreshore	Coral reef systems (including associated cays and islands)	Soft bottom (benthic) systems	Mid-water column (pelagic) systems	Coastal and estuarine waters*	Sandy bottom systems
Habitat for native plants and/or animals (including rare and threatened species); wildlife corridors	✓ <i>a</i>	✓	✓ <i>c</i>	✓	✓	✓ <i>d</i>	✓	✓	✓ <i>e</i>	✓
Habitat for migratory species (including shorebirds)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓	
Nursery habitat	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓ <i>f</i>	✓
Biological diversity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Biological productivity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fisheries/collecting		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Biotechnology			✓			✓			✓	
Indigenous Traditional Owner values	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coastal-dependent land use	✓	✓				✓			✓	
Tourism	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	
Sand and gravel extraction	✓	✓							✓	✓
Shore and sediment stabilisation	✓	✓	✓ <i>b</i>	✓	✓				✓ <i>f</i>	
Dissipative barrier to erosive forces	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓ <i>f</i>	
Water quality	✓	✓ <i>b</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓ <i>b,f</i>	✓
Cultural heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Coastal-dependent primary production		✓							✓	
Scenic amenity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Recreational amenity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Navigation (lighthouses, shipping channels)		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	



Gunggandji cultural interpretive sign on Green Island  
 Left to Right: Dorita Wilson, Carol Warta, Ailsa Lively, Lynell Richards  
 (Photo by Kerry Trapnell courtesy of QPSW)

<sup>10</sup><http://www.chp.qld.gov.au/coastal/regional-plans/index.html>

## 6. POSSIBLE THREATS TO COUNTRY

The Land and Sea Country Plan identifies the following possible threats to the cultural and natural values of Gunggandji country. While there may be other potential threats and management issues, Traditional Owners consulted during the planning process identified the following as the priority threats to be addressed during the implementation of the Plan.

### *Unsustainable hunting*



Photo courtesy of QPWS

Hunting dugong and marine turtles (especially green turtles) is an important part of Gunggandji culture, identity and traditional economy. Our ancestors have sustainably hunted and depended on these animals from the time since the sea first flooded over our coastal land. Dugongs and marine turtles have only ever lived in these coastal waters in the presence of Gunggandji people.

We also recognise that many other Indigenous people that have come to live on our country at Yarrabah over the last 100 years also brought with them a tradition of hunting dugong and turtles and that these animals are also important to them and their dependents.

Everyone living at Yarrabah has an interest in making sure that there will always be dugongs and turtles living in our waters for our children and for the generations to come. We will all be the losers if we allow populations of these animals to decline or disappear from our waters.

Currently the hunting of dugong and turtle is essentially unregulated and no-one knows exactly how many animals are being taken and whether the harvest rate is sustainable – but our elders tell us that that these animals were more plentiful and easier to find in the past. We are aware some people have been taking more than their fair share, including taking animals for sale rather than for their own consumption; this is both illegal and against Aboriginal custom.

Gunggandji Traditional Owners, hunters and other Yarrabah residents consulted during the development of this Plan all recognised the need to better manage these culturally important animals. Various options were discussed for managing this issue but it was clear that further consultations and negotiations are required to develop a management arrangement that is fair and effective. In particular, the planning consultations identified the need to develop a management framework that:

- Recognises the rights of Traditional Owners;
- Accommodates the cultural interests of other Yarrabah residents; and
- Ensures the long term wellbeing of dugong and marine turtle populations.

Mechanisms to achieve these aims include the possible development of a Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreement (TUMRA) and/or a permit system that will ensure fair and sustainable access to these resources and enable effective monitoring of their populations. A TUMRA is a voluntary agreement between Traditional Owners on how marine resources will be used and by whom in a specified area within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. A TUMRA does not impact on native title rights and can include provisions to enable hunting of dugong and turtle by other Indigenous people with the consent of Traditional Owners. Once Traditional Owners have negotiated an agreement it is accredited by Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority under the *Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act* and funding is usually available to assist TUMRA implementation by Traditional Owners in collaboration with marine park management agencies.

The decision whether or not to negotiate a TUMRA rests with Gunggandji Traditional Owners. If it is decided not to proceed with negotiating a TUMRA, some alternative form of management arrangement will have to be developed. Additional information about TUMRAs is provided in Attachment 2.

### ***Damage from pigs and other pest animals***

Ten pest (non-native) animals have been recorded for the Yarrabah region, including offshore islands and are likely to occur on Gunggandji country. These are:

These are:

- Feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*)
- Wild dogs (*Canis familiaris*)
- Feral cats (*Felis catus*)
- Black rats (*Rattus rattus*)
- Cane toads (*Rhinella marina*)
- Indian myna birds (*Sturnus tristis*)
- Asian house geckoes (*Hemidactylus frenatus*)
- Three introduced aquarium fish recorded in the coastal ranges:
  - Spotted tilapia (*Tilapia mariae*)
  - Platty (*Xiphophorus maculatus*)
  - Guppy (*Poecilia reticulata*)



Feral pig

The following ecologically threatening processes caused by three of these pest animal species have been recognised under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth)*:

- Predation by feral cats;
- Predation, habitat-degradation, competition and disease-transmission by feral pigs;
- Biological effects, including lethal toxic ingestion, caused by cane toads.

During the development of this Land and Sea Country Plan, Traditional Owners and others identified pigs as the most significant threat caused by pest animals. Implementation of the Plan provides an opportunity to develop best practice monitoring and management of these pest species in collaboration with our management partners and neighbours. Managing pest animals also provides an economic opportunity for Gunggandji people to actively engage in monitoring and control measures, through ranger employment or contracting arrangements.

### ***Weeds***

Weed (non-native) plant species occur on disturbed areas of Gunggandji country, particularly areas that have been cleared for community housing, infrastructure, horticulture and other development. However, many parts of Gunggandji country, particularly rainforest areas and mangroves are largely free of weeds.



Declared weed: Singapore Daisy

A survey of Fitzroy Island<sup>11</sup> recorded about 20 weed species, many of which are also likely to occur on mainland areas of Gunggandji country. Weed species of particular concern are:

- Singapore daisy *Sphagneticola trilobata* and lantana *Lantana camara*, which are both declared Class 3 pests under the Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Regulation 2003;
- Giant sensitive plant *Mimosa diplotricha* var. *Diplotricha*;
- Giant Parramatta grass *Sporobolus fertilis*;
- Devil's ivy or pothos *Epipremnum aureum*;
- Dwarf poinsettia *Euphorbia cyathophora*;
- Wandering jew *Tradescantia spathacea*;
- Natal grass *Melinis repens*.

<sup>11</sup>Fitzroy Island National 16 Park and Marine Management Area – management plan 2011

Implementation of the Plan provides an opportunity to develop best practice monitoring and management of these weed species in collaboration with our management partners and neighbours – as outlined in section 9 below.

### ***Uncontrolled development***

Decision-making about land use, resource use and development on Gunggandji country has occurred through a variety of mechanisms over thousands of years – from the traditional times, through the mission period, through the government administration, through the period of Community Council management and more recently through decision-making of the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council. Over the last 120 years many decisions were made without the consent of Gunggandji People and some of our cultural and natural values have been impacted by uncontrolled development.

With the recognition of our native title and the negotiation of our ILUA with the Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council in 2011, a new era has started in which the voice of Gunggandji People can be properly heard when development decisions are made. Under the terms of the ILUA, management of our country will be returned to Gunggandji People while our land will remain within the Yarrabah Local Government Area.

Uncontrolled development represents a potential threat to the cultural and natural values of our country, including cultural sites, fauna, flora, water quality and food resources on land and sea. Implementation of our Land and Sea Country Plan provides an opportunity to develop best practice decision-making about new developments, as well as monitoring and managing the impacts of new and existing developments.



Photo courtesy of GBRMPA

### ***Diminishing cultural knowledge, practices and language***

Diminishing cultural knowledge, practices and language poses a possible threat to our decision-making about Gunggandji country and our cultural and natural values. We need to strengthen these aspects of our culture to ensure that we pass on our country and culture in good condition to the next generation and beyond.

Implementation of our Land and Sea Country Plan provides an opportunity to record and apply Gunggandji language, knowledge and practices into day to day management of country through the work of Gunggandji Rangers, through education and through communicating with visitors.

### ***Lack of resources for managing country***

Gunggandji country is being returned to us through recognition of native title with many more management issues and challenges than in pre-colonial times. For example:

- Our country is now home to many more people than in traditional times;
- There are many more pressures on our traditional land and sea food resources;
- There are pest animal and plant species that are threatening our precious environments and resources;
- Our cultural sites on land and sea are under threat from inappropriate development or accidental damage.

Our land is being returned to us without compensation for the damage that has been done and the new threatening processes that have arrived over the last 120 years. Lack of resources to address these challenges represents a grave threat to our culture and country.

However, through the implementation of our Land and Sea Country Plan we are committed to address these issues and we invite all our management partners to contribute in whatever way possible to meet the challenges that were not of our making. We are determined to see these management challenges as opportunities for Gunggandji people to strengthen our culture and to create economic benefits in the management of country – through the employment of rangers, the development of contract environmental management enterprises

and through direct employment with our partner agencies. However, these outcomes will only be possible if together we find the resources to implement the vision and strategies outlined in this Plan.

### ***Climate Change***

Climate change is another grave challenge to our country that is not of our making. However, like all other coastal Indigenous groups around Australia, Gunggandji people have demonstrated our ability to adapt to climate change over thousands of years. Our ancestors have lived through a 100 metre rise in sea level, great changes in rainfall, the arrival of new animal and plant

species and the great upheavals caused by volcanic activity as river courses changed and new land forms emerged.

We want to continue this long tradition of successful adaptation by learning more about current climate change threats and contributing to solutions for the benefit of Gunggandji People and other residents of the region. Through the implementation of this Land and Sea Country Plan we seek to be involved in monitoring and minimising the impacts of climate change and collaborating with our management partners to find adaptive solutions where necessary.

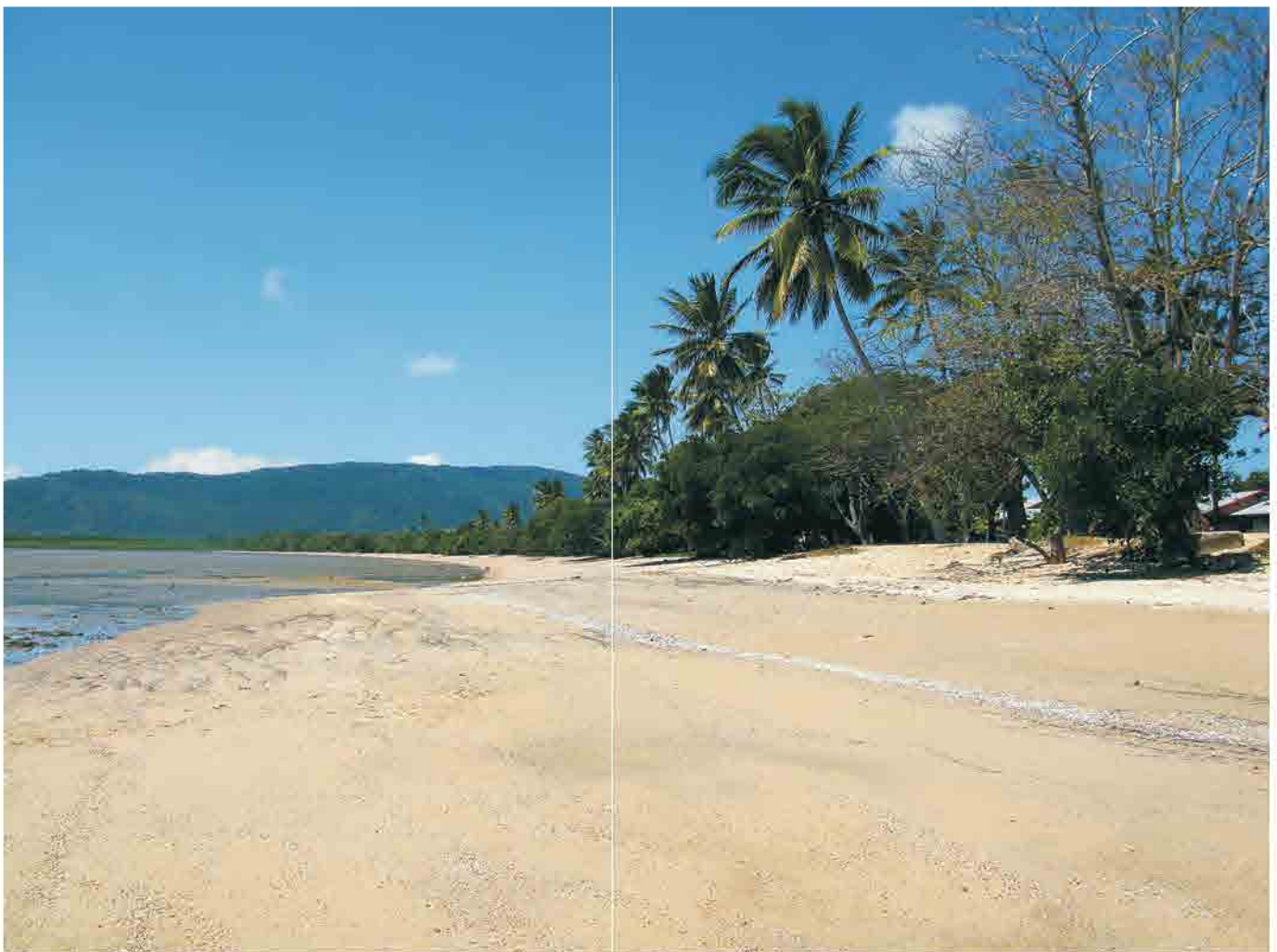


Photo supplied by Robin Schrieber

## 7. PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS

We are exercising our cultural authority over country and our native title rights in developing this Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan. But we recognise that other people live on our country and have some shared rights and interests on our country. We have therefore taken a collaborative approach to developing this Plan and we will take a collaborative approach to its implementation.

During the development of the Plan we undertook:

- Consultations with members of the three Gunggandji groups (Guru-Buna Gunggandji, Guru-Gulu Gunggandji and Yarraburra Gunggandji);
- Consultations with Yarrabah residents, including hunters and elders;
- Consultations with Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council;
- Consultations with government agencies with an interest in Gunggandji land and sea country, including:
  - Qld Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS)
  - Qld Dept. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)
  - Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)
  - Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA)
  - Commonwealth Dept of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC)
  - Cairns Regional Council (CRC)
  - Terrain NRM
- Consultations with commercial fishers, recreational fishers and conservation interests through the GBRMPA Cairns Local Management Advisory Committee.

We acknowledge the contributions and support that each of these groups, organisations and their representative have made to the development of the Plan. We are committed to working with all of these partners in implementing this Plan, including through the specific opportunities outlined below.



### ***Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council (YASC)***

Opportunities for YASC to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Implement the ILUA we have negotiated with YASC;
- Collaborate on land management within the Local Government Area;
- Explore opportunities for sharing resources to support Council and Gunggandji Rangers;
- Collaborate in seeking funding for joint projects;
- Collaborate in meeting the needs of Yarrabah residents to access and use resources on Gunggandji country, while recognising the rights and interest of Traditional Owners;
- Collaborate in the establishment of a Gunggandji Ranger Service, including opportunities for shared resources and joint training;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.



### ***Cairns Regional Council (CRC)***

Opportunities for CRC to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Implement the ILUA we have negotiated with CRC;
- Collaborate in the management of Gunggandji country that lies within CRC Local Government Area;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.





# Queensland Government

## **Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS)**

Opportunities for QPWS to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Implement the protected area ILUA we have negotiated with State of Queensland;
- Support the engagement of Gunggandji people in the management of all protected areas on Gunggandji country, including national park, forest reserve and marine park;
- Explore the option of establishing an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) on Gunggandji land and sea country to provide a framework for coordinating the management of land and sea protected areas;
- Collaborate with Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation to develop and implement training and employment programs for Traditional Owners to be involved in the management of Gunggandji country;
- Collaborate in the establishment of a Gunggandji Ranger Service, including opportunities for shared resources and joint training;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.

## **Queensland Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)**

Opportunities for DAFF to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Consult with Gunggandji Traditional Owners regarding the management of Forestry Reserves on Gunggandji country;
- Consult with Gunggandji Traditional Owners regarding the management of all fisheries (Indigenous, recreational, commercial) in Gunggandji sea country;
- Develop training and employment opportunities for Traditional Owners to participate in the management of forests and fisheries, including developing an awareness

of potential biosecurity threats in Gunggandji country;

- Collaborate with Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation in the establishment of a Gunggandji Ranger Service, including opportunities for shared resources and joint training;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.



## **Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA)**

Opportunities for WTMA to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Implement the protected area ILUA we have negotiated with WTMA;
- Assist Gunggandji Aboriginal Corporation to secure funding and other resources to implement the Land and Sea Country Plan within the Wet Tropics and adjacent areas;
- Explore the possibility of establishing an Indigenous Protected Area to join up Gunggandji country, including within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area;
- Consider opportunities for Gunggandji People to be involved in WTMA programs, projects and committees;
- Collaborate with Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation in the establishment of a Gunggandji Ranger Service, including opportunities for shared resources and joint training;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.



Photo by courtesy of Wet Tropics Images / Mile Trenerry



## **Australian Government**

### ***Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA)***

Opportunities for GBRMPA to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Support Traditional Owners and the Yarrabah Community to negotiate a TUMRA or other mechanisms to ensure sustainable management of dugongs and marine turtles in Gunggandji sea country;
- Support Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation to develop its capacity, including through the establishment of the Gunggandji Ranger Service, to collaborate in the management, research and monitoring of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.

### ***Department of the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC)***

Opportunities for DEWHA to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Provide or help secure funding to establish the Gunggandji Ranger Service;
- Provide or help secure funding to enable Gunggandji Aboriginal Corporation to explore the option of establishing an Indigenous Protected Area as a framework for joining up Gunggandji country and coordinating the management of protected areas on Gunggandji land and sea country;
- Provide or help secure funding to support the recording and protection of Gunggandji cultural sites and knowledge;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.



### ***Terrain Natural Resource Management (Terrain NRM)***

Opportunities for Terrain NRM to contribute to the implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan include:

- Explore and support funding opportunities for the management of natural resources on Gunggandji country;
- Assist Gunggandji Aboriginal Corporation to negotiate whole of government support for the implementation of the Land and Sea Plan;
- Participate in an Advisory Group to support the implementation of the Land and Sea Country Plan.



Photo courtesy of Queensland Government

## 8. PRIORITY ACTIONS

The following priority actions were determined by Gunggandji Traditional Owners during consultations in the development of this Land and Sea Country Plan. While there are other possible management actions that could be undertaken on Gunggandji country, and additional management needs may emerge over time, the following activities will be given priority in the initial implementation of this Plan, commencing immediately.

### ***Gunggandji Ranger Service:***

The collaborative approach outlined in this Plan will only be possible if Gunggandji people are supported to develop their own land and sea management capacity. A well trained, well resourced Gunggandji Ranger Service is therefore essential for the implementation of this Plan and for the sustainable management of our country.

The Gunggandji Aboriginal Corporation proposes to develop the Ranger Service in two stages:

1. Appoint a Land and Sea Management Coordinator and Community Liaison Officer to build the foundations of an effective management capacity and to plan for the establishment of the Ranger Service, including training and work programs, collaboration with partner agencies, sustainable funding, equipment and other resources;
2. Appoint, train and employ Gunggandji Rangers and implement Land and Sea Country Plan in collaboration with partner agencies.

### ***Dugong & Turtle management:***

Developing a sustainable management framework for dugong and marine turtles on Gunggandji sea country is a high priority for Traditional Owners, the wider Yarrabah Community and government agencies. Following the appointment of the Land and Sea Coordinator and Community Liaison Officer, and with funding and other support from partner agencies, Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation will consult and negotiate all relevant stakeholders to achieve an outcome that respects the rights of Traditional Owners, recognises the interests of other Indigenous residents and is consistent with sustainable dugong and turtle populations.

Consultations and negotiations will include consideration of a Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreement (TUMRA) and or other options that can achieve the desired outcome outlined above.

### ***Information gathering:***

Gathering, documenting and applying information from a wide range of sources is essential to the management of the cultural and natural values of Gunggandji country. Information sources include:

- Published and unpublished data;
- Information from elders and other knowledge-holders;
- Cultural heritage surveys and site recording;
- Biodiversity surveys and land and sea monitoring programs.

An important component of the information gathering program will be the establishment of an information management system, including a user-friendly computer data base for easy access and use by Traditional Owners and Rangers.



Photo courtesy of QPWS

### ***Managing country***

Following the establishment of the Gunggandji Ranger Service, or earlier if possible, strategies will be developed and actions implemented in collaboration with partner agencies to address the possible threats identified in this Land and Sea Management Plan, including:

- Pest animal management;
- Weed management;
- Fire management;
- Development control protocols;
- Patrols on land and sea;
- Research and monitoring as required.

### ***Supporting Culture***

In collaboration between Gunggandji Rangers, Elders and other Traditional Owners, programs will be developed that link the management of Gunggandji country with the strengthening of Gunggandji culture, language, knowledge and practices. The strengthening of culture and the application of Gunggandji knowledge will inform and complement all land and sea management activities. In particular, efforts will be made to facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge and practices between generations, such as the building of a “flattie”<sup>12</sup> to demonstrate the old ways of hunting and dugong and turtle, and facilitating the transfer of Gunggandji knowledge from Elders to young people.

### ***Protected Area management***

Large areas of Gunggandji land and sea country have been subjected to the establishment of protected areas on land and sea without the consent or involvement of Gunggandji people. Through the implementation of the Land and Sea Plan we are committed to re-engaging in the management of these protected areas in collaboration with our partner agencies. Options for re-engagement in protected areas include:

- Support Gunggandji Rangers to undertake management, patrols, research and monitoring in national park and marine park areas on country;
- Develop co-management arrangements, including the option of establishing an Indigenous Protected Area to provide a framework for coordinating the management of protected areas on Gunggandji country;
- Provide training and accreditation to Gunggandji Rangers to enable them to effectively manage protected areas on Gunggandji country;
- Provide training and employment opportunities for Gunggandji People within protected area management agencies operating on Gunggandji country – consistent with commitments made in the Protected Areas ILUA negotiated between Gunggandji People and the State of Queensland.



Photo by Kerry Trapnell, courtesy of QPWS

<sup>12</sup>A “flattie” is a locally made flat-bottomed wooden boat formerly used for hunting dugong and turtle in the Yarrabah region.

## 9. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Implementation of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan will commence in early 2013. Key implementation steps will include:

- Recruit and appoint Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Facilitator;
- Recruit and appoint Community Liaison Officer;
- Convene a meeting of the Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Advisory Group;
- Develop a work program for 2013 to initiate priority actions identified in the Land and Sea Country Plan and commitments made in funding agreements;
- Develop and implement a communication strategy to keep Traditional Owners, Yarrabah Community and other partners informed about implementation of the Plan.

A key task of the Land and Sea Country Facilitator will be to keep the Board of Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation and the Gunggandji Land and Sea Management Plan Advisory Group fully informed about the implementation of the Priority Actions identified in the Plan.



Photo courtesy of Wet Tropics Images

The Annual Report of Gunggandji PBC Aboriginal Corporation will contain a detailed summary of:

- Progress in implementing each Priority Action;
- Barriers to implementing each Priority Action;
- Resources, partnerships and capacity required to fully implement each Priority Action;
- Strategies and timelines in place to fully implement each Priority Action;
- A review of the operations of the Advisory Group;
- Summary of any actions taken to further support implementation of the Plan.



Photo by Kerry Trapnell, courtesy of QPWS

The Gunggandji Land and Sea Country Plan will be reviewed after a period to be determined by the Gunggandji PBC Board, no later than 2018 (i.e. 5 years after publication of this Plan).

## What is a Traditional Use of Marine Resource Agreement (TUMRA)?

Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRA) describe how Traditional Owner groups work with Australian and Queensland State Governments to manage traditional use activities in sea country.

A TUMRA may describe, for example, how Traditional Owner groups wish to manage their take of natural resources (including protected species), their role in compliance and their role in monitoring the condition of plants and animals, and human activities, in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. A TUMRA implementation plan may describe ways to educate the public about traditional connections to sea country areas, and to educate other members of a Traditional Owner group about the conditions of the TUMRA.

TUMRA are formal agreements developed by Traditional Owner groups and accredited by the GBRMPA and the Department of Environment and Resource Management (DERM). Each TUMRA operates for a set time after which it is renegotiated. There are currently five TUMRA regions in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

### *Girringun Region TUMRA*

The Girringun region Traditional Owners were the first Traditional Owners in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park to develop an accredited TUMRA. The agreement was endorsed by the six Girringun Aboriginal Corporation sea country groups: Djiru, Gulnay, Girramay, Bandjin, Warragamay and Nywaigi.

The Girringun Aboriginal Corporation has now developed its third TUMRA which was accredited by the Australian and Queensland Governments in December 2010. This TUMRA builds upon their first (2005) and second (2008) TUMRAs and applies to sea country between Rollingstone and Mission Beach.

### *Dharumbal TUMRA – Woppaburra Section*

In June 2007, the first Dharumbal TUMRA-Woppaburra Section was accredited, followed by a second TUMRA which was accredited in

September 2010. The TUMRA recognises that the Woppaburra Traditional Owners, the GBRMPA and the Queensland Government are willing to work together to share responsibility for managing the traditional use of marine resources and associated sea country issues for the Keppel Islands region.

### *Mamu Region TUMRA*

Accredited in June 2008, the Mamu Region TUMRA applies to the Innisfail area in north Queensland and details traditional management arrangements including the sustainable take of traditional resources. Mamu Traditional Owners have an ongoing involvement in the cultural heritage and management of their sea country. To fulfill their responsibilities as custodians of their sea areas the Mamu Traditional Owners aim to partner with Government agencies in monitoring, and in Indigenous Sea Ranger Programs.

### *Wuthathi Region TUMRA*

The Wuthathi people are the traditional owners for the Shelburne Bay area of Cape York and their TUMRA, accredited in June 2008, covers their traditional sea country area. The Wuthathi Traditional Owners have a clear vision for managing their sea country and their TUMRA forms an integral part of this.

The GBRMPA is assisting the Girringun, Dharumbal, Mamu and Wuthathi Traditional Owners to implement their agreements.

### *Port Curtis Coral Coast (PCCC) Regional TUMRA*

Accredited in August 2011, the PCCC Regional TUMRA is the fifth and largest agreement of its kind. It covers an area almost ten times the size of Canberra and the Australian Capital Territory or 26,386km<sup>2</sup>. The TUMRA area extends from Burrum Heads, south of Bundaberg, to – and including Curtis Island off Gladstone. Under the agreement Port Curtis Coral Coast Traditional Owner groups, which include Gooreng Gooreng, Gurang, Bailai and Tarebilang Bunda, are committed to initiating management strategies that will positively impact their sea country.

### ***Kuuku Ya'u Indigenous Land Use Agreement***

Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) are agreements about the use and management of land and waters that are made between one or more native title groups and other people or parties. The Australian Government through the GBRMPA is a party to the Kuuku Ya'u People's ILUA, with

implementation managed in the same way as a TUMRA. The Kuuku Ya'u Agreement is the first Marine Park ILUA. It recognises Traditional Owner native title rights and interests in the management of nearly 2000 square kilometres of sea within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, in an area north of Lockhart River.

### ***Further Information***

Further information on TUMRAs is available at:

<http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au/our-partners/traditional-owners/traditional-use-of-marine-resources-agreements>

