

Guanaba

The Gold Coast, Queensland



At the foot of Mount Tamborine near the Queensland-New South Wales border, the 100 hectares (one square kilometre) of Guanaba Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) features dense rainforest and vine thickets, eucalypt woodlands and picturesque creeks.

Located 90 kilometres south of Brisbane near the township of Tamborine, Guanaba's vegetation and steeply forested landscape form part of the greater Mount Tamborine escarpment. This escarpment is a richly diverse complex of 10 ecosystems with around 945 plant species, and is also the stronghold for several nationally threatened animals.

As well as protecting these plants and animals, IPA funding is helping local Aboriginal people restore their cultural traditions, which have suffered from the changes wrought by white settlement and removal from the land.

The IPA lands were purchased in 1998 by the Indigenous Land Corporation on behalf of the Ngarang-Wal Land Council. Guanaba is part

of the traditional lands of the Kombumerri people, a clan of the Yugambah, who lived along the Gold Coast and its hinterland for at least 24,000 years.

Following the colonial settlement of Australia, a party of European explorers led by John Oxley, the Surveyor-General of New South Wales, travelled through the region in 1823 searching for a site suitable for a new convict settlement.

Timber-cutters attracted by the local high-quality timber such as silky oak, hoop pine and red cedar arrived in 1854. Settlers followed in their wake, and cleared large areas of rainforest which were later developed into cotton plantations and cattle properties in the 1860s.

Following settlement, land use changes such as clearing, timber getting and cattle raising resulted in the disappearance of native wildlife, which the Yugambah relied on for food. Guanaba's plants escaped much of this early destruction because of the steepness of the land and difficulties in access and removing timber.

In the late 1890s, colonial government policy resulted in the removal of many of the Gold Coast peoples to reserves. Despite this enforced separation from their lands, Yugambah still felt responsible for traditional law, ceremonies and spiritual places. These traditions were kept alive through artwork, dances and songs until the 1940s.

With the passing of this generation it has become more difficult to keep up the traditional ways, and Guanaba is a place where the younger generation is being educated in traditional knowledge and cultural practices. IPA funding has supported a cultural heritage assessment of the property to assist this ongoing community education process.

Guanaba is linked to the state-managed Mount Tambourine National Park by a privately-owned vegetation corridor. IPA land management activities reflect this relationship and are undertaken with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service advice and assistance. These activities focus on conserving Guanaba's high levels of biodiversity through a weed removal program, and soil and catchment protection to prevent erosion on steep slopes.

Several of Guanaba's animal species are listed under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The long-nosed potoroo, brush-tailed rock-wallaby and three-toed snake-toothed skink are listed as vulnerable. The spotted-tail quoll, Fleay's frog and giant barred-frog are listed as endangered.

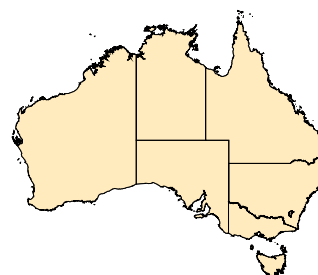
Wild dogs and cane toads are the main feral animal threats to wildlife, and to gain a better understanding of the feral animal problem, the Ngarang-Wal Land Council is working with students from Griffith University's School of Environmental and Applied Science, and with Greencorps, on a comprehensive feral animal survey and management strategy.

The declaration of Guanaba IPA in November 2000 was made under World Conservation Union (IUCN) *Category IV—Habitat/Species Management Area: Protected Area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention*.



Guanaba IPA is part of Australia's National Reserve System, a nation-wide network of reserves especially set up to protect examples of Australia's unique landscapes, flora and fauna for current and future generations.

For more information about Indigenous Protected Areas visit www.environment.gov.au/indigenous/ipa or contact the Department of the Environment and Water Resources Community Information Unit. Email: ciu@environment.gov.au Freecall: 1800 803 772



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Photo Credits: Front – Guanaba's rainforest landscape, Tony Dillon. Back – (Left) The endangered Fleay's Frog. (Right) Soaring rainforest palms, Bruce Rose. (Bottom) Guanaba Creek, Tony Dillon. **Art Credit:** Taken from original artwork ©Eunice Nungarayi Woods.