

# It's a Plan

## Caring for Country and Culture



## What's the Plan all About?

The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan) was put together by Traditional Owners with support from the Rainforest CRC, FNQ NRM Ltd and many people in State Government and Commonwealth Government agencies. The Plan highlights the natural and cultural resource management issues and aspirations that Traditional Owners have for Country and culture. It identifies a range of strategies and actions to address these issues.

## Our Vision for Country

We are the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management Region. We have custodial obligations and responsibilities for our traditional estates, which include the land and waters of this region.

We belong to many different language groups and we are culturally diverse. Our tribal groups include Banjin, Bar-Barrum, Djabugay, Djiru, Girramay, Gulgay, Gunggandji, Jirbal, Koko Muluridji, Kuku Yalanji, Ma:Mu, Ngadjon-Jii, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Warunguu, Yidinji and Yirganydji. There are also named clan groups within these tribal groups.

### Increased Access and Use of Country

We want to be able to go back to Country and look after it and take our Elders and our children there. It's important that we can fulfill our obligations and look after special places, keep our culture strong and manage Country like our ancestors.

### Aboriginal Knowledge of Country

Our knowledge of Country and culture is really important to us. We want to revitalise this knowledge, keep it strong and make sure that it's passed on to young people.

### Places of Cultural Significance

We want special places on Country, including sacred sites, to be protected and managed by our mob, the right people for that place.

### Aboriginal Material Culture

Many of our special artefacts were taken from our people without permission and are now stored in museums and other places. These artefacts are an important part of our heritage. We want to bring them back to Country so that our children can learn from them, and look after them for their children.

### Aboriginal Languages

We want to maintain and revive our languages so that our children can understand and speak language and pass it on to their children.

### Plants and Animals

We want to be key partners in conserving plants and animals of cultural significance. The plants and animals are really important to us both culturally and spiritually.

### Hunting Gathering and Cultural Maintenance

We want our rights to hunt and use resources on Country to be supported by government and people living here. That's an important part of our culture. It needs to be recognised in policy, planning and management. We need to be involved in managing those animals that we hunt to make sure they are doing OK.

### Water Resources

There are really important places along rivers and creeks for us, and we have lots of stories about these places. All this needs to be recognised and respected.

### Tourism

Our mob want to be fully involved in tourism to make sure that our culture is presented with integrity and respect. We want to develop partnerships with tour operators and to develop our own businesses, like tour guiding, art and crafts.

### Forestry, Fisheries and Aquaculture

We want successful Aboriginal businesses on Country, like bush tucker, fisheries and aquaculture businesses, that provide economic, social and cultural benefits to our mob.



## Making the Plan Work

Making the Aboriginal Plan work requires a coordinated approach and commitment from the Commonwealth, State and Local Governments, Indigenous organisations, research and educational institutions, regional and community groups, industry and the corporate sector.

### Traditional Owners

The Plan identifies the issues that affect your ability to look after country. It gives strategies and actions for changing and improving the current situation.

### Indigenous Organisations

The Plan highlights some of the ways Indigenous organisations can assist and support Traditional Owners.

### Commonwealth Government

Commonwealth Government agencies can support Traditional Owners with economic development, capacity building, training and resources.

### Queensland State Government

Queensland State Government agencies need to play a big part in making the Plan work. They can do this by recognising Traditional Owners' interests as core business in all of their activities.

### Local Government

The Plan outlines ways in which Local Government can work with Traditional Owners to protect places of significance and develop partnerships for looking after Country.

### Regional and Community Groups

For Integrated Catchment Management groups, conservation and community-based organisations, the Plan points to opportunities for joint projects in dealing with feral animals and weeds, and the revegetation of degraded country and waterways.

### Research and Education Organisations

Research and educational organisations can play a really important role by encouraging and supporting research projects by Traditional Owners. These organisations can also support training and education schemes to make sure that Traditional Owners have the necessary skills to look after Country.

### Industry and the Corporate Sector

Industry groups, such as commercial fishing and aquaculture, tourism and forestry, as well the corporate sector, can support Traditional Owners to become involved in economically-viable and culturally-sustainable enterprises.







Wet Tropics

# Aboriginal

CULTURAL AND NATURAL

## resource management plan



Caring for Country and Culture



Wet Tropics

# Aboriginal

CULTURAL AND NATURAL

## resource management plan



Caring for Country and Culture



# Caring for Country and culture

The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural  
and Natural Resource Management Plan





The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan) was prepared by the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team in conjunction with the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management (NRM) region. The vision to develop the Aboriginal Plan came from Traditional Owners, and the way in which the Aboriginal Plan has been developed has been driven by Traditional Owners. The establishment of Traditional Owner advisory structures to guide the process has ensured accountability to Traditional Owners throughout the process of developing the Aboriginal Plan.

The Aboriginal Plan is the intellectual and cultural property of the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics NRM region. The photographs contained in this plan should not be used in any form or for any purpose without the expressed permission of Traditional Owners as per the conditions of the photography agreements (contact Leigh Harris - Ingeous Studios at leigh.harris@blademail.net). Information in this plan may be used but must be cited appropriately as per the permission granted by Traditional Owners.

The development of the Aboriginal Plan was funded by the Cooperative Research Centre for Tropical Rainforest Ecology and Management (Rainforest CRC) based in Cairns, and FNQ NRM Ltd. Its development was supported through the Natural Heritage Trust.

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## OTHER ABORIGINAL PLAN DOCUMENTS AND PRODUCTS

Aboriginal Plan Poster, CD-ROM and Website  
Developing the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan – Workshop Proceedings and Critique

## LINKS TO THE WET TROPICS NRM PLAN

Volume 1: Background to the Plan  
Volume 2A: Condition Report: Biodiversity Conservation  
Volume 2B: Condition Report: Sustainable Use  
Volume 2C: Capacity Building and Institutional Change  
Volume 3: Caring for Country and Culture - The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (this plan)  
Volume 4: Sustaining the Wet Tropics: A Regional Plan for Natural Resource Management (Wet Tropics NRM Plan)  
Volume 5: A Regional Investment Strategy 2004-2007

## Referencing the Aboriginal Plan

The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan should be cited as:  
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## For Further Information about the Aboriginal Plan

For more information about the Aboriginal Plan and for copies of the plan and other plan documents contact the Aboriginal Rainforest Council (07) 4035 5213, FNQ NRM Ltd (07) 4061 6477, or the Rainforest CRC (07) 4042 1246.

These products are also available on the Rainforest CRC website ([www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au](http://www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au)) and the FNQ NRM Ltd website ([www.fnqnrm.com.au](http://www.fnqnrm.com.au)).

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**FNQ NRM LTD**



# Our Vision

## Our Vision for Country

We are the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics Natural Resource Management Region. We have custodial obligations and responsibilities for our traditional estates, which include the land and waters of this region.

We belong to many different language groups and we are culturally diverse. Our tribal groups include Banjin, Bar-Barrum, Djabugay, Djiru, Girramay, GuIngay, Gunggandji, Jirrbal, Koko Muluridji, Kuku Yalanji, Ma:Mu, Ngadjon-Jii, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Warungnu, Yidinji and Yirrganydji. There are also named clan groups within these tribal groups.

Although we have many similar aspirations, we also have different priorities in caring for Country. It is important for people to recognise our cultural differences. Authority and decision-making for Country happens at a local level for each tribal group.

We want to continue our obligation to care for our Country by keeping our languages and our knowledge strong. We want to look after special places and sites as well as the plants and animals by being on Country.

We want to pass on our knowledge to young people. This is important for the cultural survival of all the tribal groups in the Wet Tropics.

We want all government people and community people to respect our culture, knowledge and authority for this region. Together we can work to look after this place for the benefit of all of the people living in the Wet Tropics.







## Statement from the Indigenous Board Director FNQ NRM Ltd

The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan) is a major achievement for the Traditional Owners of the region. It is a positive step towards ensuring that government, non-government organisations, industry groups and the broader Wet Tropics community recognise the rights and custodial obligations that Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics region have for their Country.

The Board of FNQ NRM Ltd recognise the diversity of the different Traditional Owner groups in the region, and acknowledge their special connections, knowledge and inherited custodial obligations for the region. The Board also realise that Traditional Owners' knowledge of Country and customary management practices for the land and sea are extremely important in the conservation and management of natural resources.

We congratulate the Traditional Owners and the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team (WTAPPT) for their proactive approach to ensuring that Traditional Owners' concerns and priorities were addressed in the new regional arrangements for natural resource management (NRM). The Traditional Owners' vision to develop the Aboriginal Plan and their substantial commitment to realising this vision is commended. The Aboriginal Plan is one of the first Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plans within Australia to be developed as part of the new regional arrangements for NRM. It is one of the key supporting documents to the Wet Tropics NRM Plan and as such elements of the Aboriginal Plan were also integrated directly into the Wet Tropics NRM Plan. Most importantly, the Aboriginal Plan is also a regional Plan for Traditional Owners in its own right.

Under the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT2), the emphasis is upon regionalism and the creation of new NRM planning regions for this purpose. Often Traditional Owners' connections to and responsibilities for Country are at a local scale, which is at odds with the regional NRM planning concepts. Aware of the challenges posed by regionalism, the Aboriginal Plan attempts to span the distances between locally-based Aboriginal landscapes and the larger-scale spatial and social formations of NHT2.

The Board encourages support of the Aboriginal Plan by the Commonwealth Government, the State Government, Local Governments, pastoral lease holders, the agricultural sector, the tourism industry and the broader community. A substantial commitment of resources and funding from various government, private and philanthropic sources is also critical to the success of the Aboriginal Plan. The effective implementation of this plan will contribute to improved NRM outcomes as well as social, cultural and economic outcomes for Aboriginal people. It will also contribute towards various Commonwealth, State and regional policies and will support the self-determination of Traditional Owners and other Aboriginal people in the region.



**Troy Wyles-Whelan**  
Indigenous Board Director – FNQ NRM Ltd

On behalf of the

### **FNQ NRM Ltd Board Directors 2005**

Mike Berwick (Chair), Ken Atkinson (Upper Herbert), Ray Byrnes (Local Government), Caroline Coppo (Catchment), Chris Gloor (Coastal and Marine), Bill Shannon (Industry), Peter Stanton (Conservation), Peter Valentine (World Heritage) and Troy Wyles-Whelan (Indigenous).





## Statement from the Indigenous Technical Support Group

The Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics area, with the support of the Indigenous Technical Support Group (ITSG), decided that they would develop their own plan for looking after Country. The Wet Tropics is one of the first NRM regions to develop a unique Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan in Australia

Challenging the established system and taking a new path is never easy. There is always pressure to conform to the 'rules' and believe that the mainstream processes for natural resource management will take care of Aboriginal issues in Australia. The reality on the ground is that, whilst the reef and rainforest generate enormous wealth for non-Aboriginal people in Far North Queensland, many Traditional Owners live in poverty. This plan, based on sound cultural and natural resource management strategies, is one avenue to addressing the economic, social and cultural issues that face Aboriginal people on a daily basis.

At the beginning there was some trepidation felt by the ITSG and Traditional Owners about developing a separate Aboriginal Plan and whether this was the best approach to take. These issues and concerns were addressed openly with Traditional Owners and they decided that developing a separate plan was the best approach. There were many challenges to overcome to make sure that Traditional Owners' interests were adequately accommodated in the Wet Tropics NRM Plan, the formation of FNQ NRM Ltd and in the development of this plan. The on-going engagement of Traditional Owners has been crucial to the success of the Aboriginal Plan.

The Aboriginal Plan, like other plans, has its limits. It in no way replaces customary means for caring for Country, which Traditional Owners may practice on a day-to-day basis. Nor does the Aboriginal Plan adequately address the trauma, stress and frustration experienced by Traditional Owner landholders when Country is used in inappropriate ways. It is not a 'quick fix' for current environmental ailments and previous social injustices. In many ways, the limits of the Aboriginal Plan reflect the hurdles that still remain regarding cross-cultural understandings of Country and culture. Recognition and respect are critical to overcoming these obstacles.

We acknowledge that developing the Aboriginal Plan has been a complex and confronting process for the FNQ NRM Ltd staff and Board Directors. We hope that the Board Directors and staff of FNQ NRM Ltd will continue to support Traditional Owners interests in natural resource management because there is still a long way to go. The leadership and commitment demonstrated by the Traditional Owner representatives, Victor Maund and Elsie Go-Sam, was critical to the successful development of the Aboriginal Plan. The hard work and dedication shown by Libby Larsen (Planning Officer), Lyle Johnson (Indigenous Project Officer) and Jean Fenton (Indigenous Project Officer) was, and is exceptional. The latitude shown by the FNQ NRM Ltd, Native Title Representative Bodies, the Rainforest CRC, State and Commonwealth agencies is appreciated.

In the future it is hoped that the process in the Wet Tropics will not be unique and that other NRM regions will demonstrate a similar independent spirit to ensure that Traditional Owners are meaningfully involved in natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.



**Rowan Foley**  
Covener - Indigenous Technical Support Group

On behalf of the

### Indigenous Technical Support Group

Paul Durante (North Queensland Land Council), Jean Fenton (Indigenous Coastcare), Rowan Foley (NR&M), Melissa George (Indigenous Project Officer - Burdekin Dry Tropics), Rowena Grace (FNQ NRM Ltd), Tracey Kluck (Indigenous Land Management Facilitator), Dr Sandra Pannell (Rainforest CRC), Phil Rist (Girringun Aboriginal Corporation), Peta Standley (Bushcare) and Leah Talbot (James Cook University).





## Statement from the Aboriginal Rainforest Council Inc

We, the Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC), on behalf of the 18 Traditional Owner tribal groups consisting of more than 20,000 Rainforest Aboriginal People within the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) would like to thank the Aboriginal Plan Project Team for their efforts and the manner in which they conducted themselves in the consultation and liaison process with the relevant Traditional Owners to develop the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan).

We, the Traditional Owners of the WTWHA, are excited to see some real acknowledgement of our rights and interests in natural resource management and the positive contribution that Traditional Owners have to offer towards land and sea management issues. For far too long we have been left out altogether or had token representation concerning land and sea management issues within the state of Queensland. This approach has not, and if continued will not give a true and honest indication of the aspirations and desires of Traditional Owner groups within the WTWHA.

The ARC acknowledges and understands the uniqueness and significance of the Aboriginal Plan and truly appreciates the opportunity to have constructive input into the process of developing the Aboriginal Plan.

It is a credit to the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team to have directly consulted with Traditional Owners to develop a plan which addresses the diverse and complex range of issues and aspirations that Traditional Owners have for the Wet Tropics region.

The ARC's 18 tribal groups take great pleasure in fully endorsing the Aboriginal Plan and have been proud to be involved in the process to develop the Aboriginal Plan. We look forward to the positive outcomes which flow from the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan, which seek to improve cooperative management of Rainforest Aboriginal land in the Wet Tropics.

We, the Traditional Owners, are also involved with the 'Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement' which will also bring about a better working relationship between land management agencies and Traditional Owners.



**Russell Butler Jnr**  
Chairperson of the Aboriginal Rainforest Council

on behalf of the

### **The Aboriginal Rainforest Council - Delegates**

Rhonda Brim (Djabugay), Russell Butler Jnr (Girringun), Marita Budden (Girringun), Seith Fourmile (Yidinji), Danny Hooligan (Girringun), Eliza Morta (Ngadjon-Jii), Hilton Noble (Gunggandji), Mervin Riley (Koko Muluridji), Kevin Singleton (Yirriganydji), Peter Wallace (Kuku Yalanji), Victor Maund (Ma:Mu), Wulgurukaba delegate.





## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thank you to the Traditional Owners of the region, whose vision it was to develop this plan. The Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team (WTAPPT) gratefully acknowledges their dedication to and support for this process, and their input into the plan. The contribution of their time and knowledge during numerous meetings and workshops has been considerable and invaluable. Thanks must also go to the elders of the Indigenous Working Group (IWG) for supporting the Indigenous Working Group (ITSG) and providing critical support and advice in the early phase of developing the plan. A very special thank you to Victor Maund and Elsie Go-Sam, who were the Traditional Owner representatives on the Joint Working Group that played an important role in the development of FNQ NRM Ltd.

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The Planning Team for the Wet Tropics NRM Plan, including Professor Geoff Mc Donald (Plan Leader, CSIRO) and Nigel Weston (Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC) and Catherine de Voil (Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC) have also been extremely supportive and have contributed to the plan development in many ways. Thank you to the Board Directors and staff at FNQ NRM Ltd, with special thanks to Rachel Wicks, (Acting Chief Executive Officer). We also acknowledge Barry Hunter Jnr's contribution in the facilitation of the workshops for the Draft Aboriginal Plan and in developing a summary of the plan.

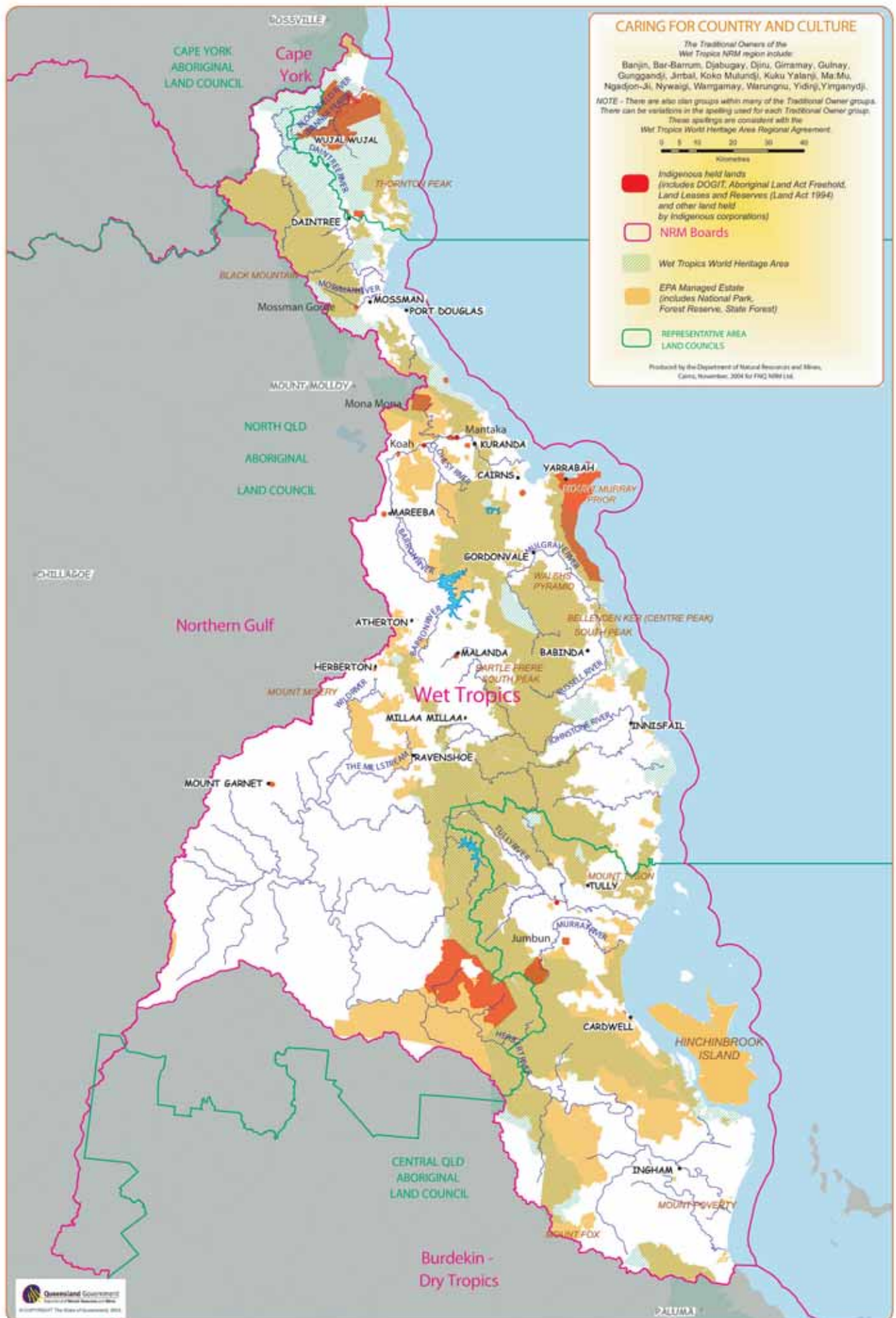
Thanks to the Aboriginal Negotiating Team (ANT) and subsequent Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC), Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, North Queensland Land Council (NQLC) for their support. We also acknowledge the input from the staff from Aboriginal Resource Management Program (ARM) at the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA), the Indigenous Engagement Unit (IEU) within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit (IPLU) at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA).

Other people from key organisations who have supported the plan development in various ways include:

Mark Annandale (DSD&I)	Bryony Barnett (CRC Reef)
Mike Bradby (NR&M)	Rob Burdon (Consultant)
Campbell Clarke (WTMA)	Rebecca Clear (Regional NRM Facilitator)
Cliff Cobbo (ILMF)	Michelle Cochrane (ARC)
Cavel Cora (Aboriginal CLO - WTMA)	Linda Craig (IEU - EPA)
Dr Sophie Creighton (Native Title Studies Unit - JCU)	Allan Dale (NR&M)
Jim Davis (Balkanu)	Nina Dawson (Girringun)
Brad Dorrington (deceased) (FNQ NRM Ltd)	Geoff Dyne (DEH)
Mark Fenton (EBC Consultants)	Margaret Freeman (Aboriginal Negotiating Team)
Angie Gattera (FNQ NRM Ltd)	Michaela Groenstyn (FNQ NRM Ltd)
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Jim Petrich (INF Facilitator)	Leah Pentecost (Girringun)
Lisa Stagoll (ARM – WTMA)	Daryn Storch (IEU - EPA)
Chicka Turner (IPLU - GBRMPA)	Basil van Horen (University of Queensland)
Ross Williams (EPA)	Steve Szabo (deceased) (DEH)

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# Structure of the Plan

The framework used to develop this plan is a compromise between an asset-based framework, as set by the State and Commonwealth Governments for NRM Plans, and a holistic framework that more clearly represents the way in which Traditional Owners view and manage Country. The asset-based approach requires values, threats and current management responses for each natural resource asset to be identified.

One of the requirements for developing this plan was that key elements of the Aboriginal Plan needed to be integrated into the Wet Tropics NRM Plan. As such, it was necessary to utilise the NRM, asset-based approach to ensure compatibility between this plan and the Wet Tropics NRM Plan. Thus, the structure of the Aboriginal Plan to a certain degree reflects the asset-based approach of the the Wet Tropics NRM Plan.

## Definitions and Concepts

The definitions of various key terms that are used throughout the documents are described in this section.

## Summary of Strategies

A list of strategies for the Aboriginal Plan derived from Chapters 3, 4 and 5 is given in this section.

## Chapter 1 – What is the Aboriginal Plan?

Chapter 1 gives an overview of what the plan is about, relevant legislation and policy, who the plan is for, the purpose and aims of the plan, and how it was developed.

## Chapter 2 – Overview of Wet Tropics Country

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the Wet Tropics region including; who the Traditional Owners are, Aboriginal cultural landscapes, Aboriginal customary law/lore, a discussion of some of the impacts of European settlement on Aboriginal cultures in the region, and a brief overview of the socio-economic status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the region today.

## Chapter 3 – Caring for Country

Chapter 3 firstly identifies the aspirations of Traditional Owners for natural and cultural resource management including key issues and concerns that they have in relation to caring for Country. The chapter is then divided into the key themes that have been developed from workshops. The values, current management arrangements and issues for each of these themes are identified. Importantly, a number of strategies and actions developed by Aboriginal people to address key issues are identified.

## Chapter 4 – Making the Aboriginal Plan Work

Chapter 4 identifies key strategic actions and priorities for the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan, capacity building priorities and the key role of different stakeholders and Aboriginal organisations in the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan.

## Chapter 5 – Monitoring and Evaluation

Chapter 5 provides details on the monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements for the Aboriginal Plan.





# Definitions and Concepts

There are some terms used in this Plan that require definition or explanation. In general they are used in the following way:

## Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Heritage

Aboriginal cultural and natural heritage exists throughout the lands and waters of Australia and all aspects of the landscape may be important to Aboriginal people as part of their heritage. Aboriginal heritage is dynamic, it includes tangible and intangible expressions of culture that link generations of Aboriginal people over time. Aboriginal people express their cultural heritage through their relationship with Country, people, beliefs, knowledge, law, language, symbols, ways of living, sea, land and objects, all of which arise from Aboriginal spirituality. Aboriginal heritage places can include landscapes, sites and areas that are particularly important to Aboriginal people as part of their customary law, developing traditions, history and current practices. All Aboriginal heritage places have associated Aboriginal heritage values. Aboriginal heritage values include spirituality, law, knowledge, practices, traditional resources or other beliefs and attachments (Australian Heritage Commission 2002:4).

For Aboriginal people, natural and cultural heritage is inextricably interconnected and people do not necessarily distinguish between the two. The legal approach reflected in legislation and policy has tended to protect and recognise the tangible aspects of heritage such as areas, objects and sites.

## Aboriginal Peoples, Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The definition used by the Commonwealth Government is that an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community in which he or she is associated (Barnes *et al.* 1997). In this plan, the terms Aboriginal peoples' and Torres Strait Islander peoples' are used in relation to government policies and programs including population statistics that relate to Indigenous groups and not specifically to Traditional Owners.

## Bama

*Bama* is the name used by a large proportion (but not all) of Aboriginal people in the Wet Tropics to describe themselves as Aboriginal people (Review Steering Committee 1998). Because not all Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics identify as *Bama* this term is not used within this plan.

## Capacity Building

Capacity building is about empowering people by ensuring that they have the right skills and the support needed to do something. Capacity building is one of the overarching objectives of the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT) funding program. The National NRM Capacity Building Framework defines capacity building as something that relates to a range of activities by which individuals, groups and organisations improve their capacity to achieve sustainable NRM. It focuses on enhancing genuine community engagement in all aspects of NRM, from governance and planning to on-ground actions. Therefore, in addition to the transfer of technology and technical capability, capacity building should foster good governance and, social cohesion within communities and build both human and social capital.

## Clan

This term is used throughout the document to refer to cognatic descent groups, i.e. groups of people who trace descent from one or more apical ancestors through either their mother or father. These groups are often referred to in Aboriginal English as 'families'. In the more traditional communities of North Queensland, they may also correspond to local owner groups for sacred sites and traditional estates within the language named tribe.



## Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA)

A Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) is a voluntary agreement under s.41 of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 between the WTMA and the landholder or land manager, setting out how a piece of land on or neighbouring the WTWHA should be managed. This usually entails an amendment to the application of the Wet Tropics Management Plan. However, it must also contribute towards the primary goal of the WTWHA (Wet Tropics Regional Agreement 2005).

## Country

Country is an English term that has been appropriated by Traditional Owners to make sense of their connections to and responsibilities for the land and sea. It refers to the traditional estates of Traditional Owners and incorporates the biophysical environment and associated cultural property recognised according to Indigenous custom and tradition as belonging to a particular individual, family, or tribal group (Wet Tropics Regional Agreement 2005, Review Steering Committee 1998). It can have the political meaning of 'nation', but refers to a clan or tribal area rather than a nation-state such as Australia. Country means the place of origin; literally, culturally or spiritually. It is more than just a geographical area: it is shorthand for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that geographical area. For coastal Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples it includes both land and sea areas which are regarded as inseparable from each other (Smyth 1994).

## Indigenous

The term Indigenous (within Australia) is often used to refer to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. However Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not universally accept the use of this term (Australian Bureau of Statistics website). Within this plan the term Indigenous is only used when referring to relevant conventions and policies. Instead, the term Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples is used when referring to all Indigenous peoples in the region (including Traditional Owners).

## Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA)

An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) is a voluntary agreement made between one or more native title groups and others such as miners, pastoralists or governments. ILUA's can be made about the use and management of an area of land or water. An ILUA may be entered as part a native title determination or they can be made independently of a native title application. A registered ILUA is legally-binding on the native title holders and all parties to the Agreement (National Native Title Tribunal website).

## Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights (ICPR)

The intellectual and cultural property rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples refer to their rights to traditional knowledge about biodiversity, natural resources, cultural information and secret or sacred sites/areas; to property including artistic works, designs, images, cultural objects and other cultural expressions. ICPR includes the tangible and intangible aspects of cultural practices. ICPR refers to the resources and knowledge systems developed, nurtured and refined by Indigenous people and passed on by them as part of expressing their cultural identity. It includes the right to decide on matters regarding access to and management of information and resources (Janke 1998, Wet Tropics Regional Agreement 2005).

## Management Agreement (MA)

A Management Agreement (MA) is a voluntary, negotiated, cooperative agreement under s.42 of the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998 between Aboriginal people, land holders and the WTMA about carrying out activities in the WTWHA which are normally prohibited under the Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998. This usually entails an amendment to the application of the Wet Tropics Management Plan, and must also contribute to the primary goal of the WTWHA (Wet Tropics Regional Agreement 2005).

## Murri

Murri is a term that is often used by Aboriginal people to identify Aboriginal people from Queensland (National Museum of Australia website).





## Native Title

Native Title is the recognition in Australian law that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a system of law and land ownership before European settlement. Under the *Native Title Act 1993 (Cth)* native title comprises the rights and interests in relation to land or waters (that are capable of recognition by the common law) possessed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under their traditional laws/lores and customs. Native Title rights and interests are vulnerable to extinguishment and may no longer exist because of competing interests that have been validly created in land.

The native title rights and interests of a particular Traditional Owner group will depend on the traditional laws and customs of those people. In a determination of Native Title the way that native title rights are recognised and practised may vary from group to group depending on what native title rights continue to exist and also the negotiated outcomes between all of the people and organisations that claim an interest in that area. In Aboriginal customary law/lore people with rights to use land and natural resources also have corresponding obligations and responsibilities for caring for Country. Thus traditional land ownership and existing native title rights and interests frequently have a close relationship with management of natural resources.

Native title may exist in areas such as unallocated state land (vacant crown land), national parks, forests, public reserves, pastoral leases, land held for the benefit of Aboriginal people, beaches, oceans, seas, reefs, lakes, rivers, creeks, swamps and other waters. Native title holders have a right to continue to practice their law/lore and customs. These rights and interests can include; accessing Country, hunting, gathering, collecting, visiting Country to protect important places and making decisions about the future use of the land or waters (National Native Title Tribunal website).

## Traditional Owner

The term Traditional Owner is widely used today throughout Australia to describe the original custodians or tribal group with responsibility for a particular area of Country. For the purposes of this plan a Traditional Owner is an Aboriginal person who has traditional or familial links and/or connection to particular traditional lands and/or waters (homeland estate) under traditional law/lore, including rights, interests and responsibilities (Wet Tropics Regional Agreement 2005).

## Tribe

In the Australian context, tribes are language-based groups rather than actual political or social action groups. In the North Queensland region, languages are associated with specific territories, having been placed there by the creative ancestors of the “dream-time”. Thus, for example, Jirrbal refers to a language which is associated with a known territory. The Jirrbal people are those people who are affiliated to that language and its territory, and are collectively referred to by anthropologists as a “language named tribe”. A person becomes a member of such a tribe by inheriting the affiliation from a parent who belonged to the tribe.

## Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement (Wet Tropics Regional Agreement)

The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement (Wet Tropics Regional Agreement) is an agreement between Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA); the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA); Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Queensland Department of Natural Resources Mines and Energy (NR&M) and the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage (DEH) relating to the involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of the WTWHA.





"This artwork represents the coming together of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups, with shared respect for each other." Peter Freeman - (Jirrbal), 2005

# Summary of Strategies



**Who are Potential Partners**

The column, 'potential partners', identifies key government agencies that have responsibilities for implementing that strategy as well as other groups and organisations that can provide resources and support. This list is not exhaustive. Traditional Owners are not listed as potential partners because they are directly involved in the implementation of all strategies.

**For Further Information About Each Strategy**

More information about each strategy, including the key actions associated with each of the strategies identified below, can be found in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. The page numbers for this information are given for each theme.

## Increased Access and Use of Country (Page 55)

STRATEGY 1.	Potential Partners
Each Traditional Owner group to have agreements with relevant stakeholders regarding access to and use of Country.	NTRBs, ILC, ICC, NNTT, ARC, GBRMPA, CAT, Girringun, WTMA, EPA, FNQ NRM Ltd, DATSIP, graziers, farmers, Local Government, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Aboriginal Knowledge of Country (Page 61)

STRATEGY 2.	Potential Partners
Develop mechanisms for the protection of Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property.	ARC, JCU, NR&M, WTMA, DEH, EPA, Balkanu, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, Girringun, AIATSIS, TQ, CSIRO, universities, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 3.	Potential Partners
Develop and implement programs and projects that document knowledge and facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices.	ARC, Balkanu, Girringun, DOC, DET, DEWR, ICC, DPC, Rainforest CRC, CSIRO, DOC, CRC Reef, AIMS, ACTFR, AHC, DEST, DEH, AIATSIS, EPA, WTMA, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Places of Cultural Significance (Page 67-68)

STRATEGY 4.	Potential Partners
Increase involvement of Aboriginal people in managing places of cultural significance.	NNTT, NTRBs, ICC, WTMA, AHC, EPA, NR&M, EPA, QPWS, DATSIP, DET, Local Government, FNQ NRM Ltd, DLGPS&R, GBRMPA, DEH, ANTA, DEWR, graziers, farmers, ARC, TAFE, Girringun, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 5.	Potential Partners
Ensure protection of Aboriginal cultural landscapes and culturally significant places in policy, planning and management arrangements.	NTRBs, Girringun, ARC, NR&M, Local Government, industry, DPI&F, DEH, ICC, FNQ NRM Ltd, graziers and farmers, EPA, QPWS, AHC, other government and non-government stakeholders.

STRATEGY 6.	Potential Partners
Re-list the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape.	ARC, Girringun, NR&M, AHC, DEH, EPA, Rainforest CRC, AIATSIS, FNQ NRM Ltd, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Aboriginal Material Culture (Page 71)

STRATEGY 7.	Potential Partners
Repratriate and appropriately manage Aboriginal material culture.	NTRBs, Queensland Museum, Girringun, ARC, NR&M, local government, industry, DEWR DET, FNQ NRM Ltd, ANTA, graziers and farmers, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Aboriginal Languages (Page 75)

STRATEGY 8.	Potential Partners
Determine the current state of Aboriginal languages in the region.	RALMC, AIATSIS, Rainforest CRC, ARC, research institutions, Girringun, ICC, FATSIL, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 9.	Potential Partners
Develop and implement Aboriginal language programs.	RALMC, universities, Rainforest CRC, AHC, TAFE, primary and high schools, FATSIL, Girringun, ARC, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 10.	Potential Partners
Increase awareness of Aboriginal languages.	RALMC, Rainforest CRC, Girringun, FATSIL, ARC, EPA, WTMA, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Plants and Animals (Page 80-81)

STRATEGY 11.	Potential Partners
Document traditional knowledge of plants and animals (in a culturally appropriate way).	Balkanu, Girringun, CSIRO, ACTFR, AIMS, ARC, WTMA, JCU, EPA, Rainforest CRC, DEH, DPI&F, FNQ NRM Ltd, NR&M, QPWS, GBRMPA, CRC Reef, universities, private sector, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 12.	Potential Partners
Increase the level of involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of weeds and feral animals.	Girringun, ARC, NR&M, DPI&F, QPWS, Local Government, DSD&I, Balkanu, ICM groups, FNQ NRM Ltd, FNQROC, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, community groups, WTMA, ANTA, CSIRO, other government and non-government stakeholders.



*(Plants and Animals continued)*

STRATEGY 13.	Potential Partners
Increase the level of involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of research, policy, planning and management arrangements for plants and animals.	ARC, NR&M, DPI&F, QPWS, EPA, DEH, local government, FNQ NRM Ltd, TAFE, DEWR, DET, ANTA, FNQROC, ICM groups, Balkanu, community groups, WTMA, CSIRO, AIMS, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, other research institutions.
STRATEGY 14.	Potential Partners
Increase employment opportunities for Traditional Owners in the management of plants and animals.	FNQ NRM Ltd, ARC, EPA, QPWS, GBRMPA, DEWR, DET, WTMA, TAFE, NR&M, ANTA, DPI&F other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Hunting, Gathering and Cultural Maintenance (Page 86)

STRATEGY 15.	Potential Partners
Increase the awareness of NRM stakeholders and the broader community about Aboriginal resource use.	DPI&F, ARC, Giringun, WTMA, DEH, EPA, ICC, GBRMPA, QPWS, NNTT, FNQ NRM Ltd other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 16.	Potential Partners
Traditional Owners values and priorities for using resources are identified and protected.	DPI&F, ARC, industry, Giringun, NTRBs, GBRMPA, EPA, QPWS, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Water Resources (Page 89)

STRATEGY 17.	Potential Partners
Increase recognition and protection of Traditional Owners' values for waterways.	ARC, Giringun, NR&M, DPI&F, local government, GBRMPA, EPA, ACTFR, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 18.	Potential Partners
Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in research, planning and management of waterways.	ARC, Giringun, local government, GBRMPA, EPA, Rainforest CRC, ACTFR, CRC Reef, NR&M, DPI&F, and other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Forestry (Page 92)

STRATEGY 19.	Potential Partners
Increase the capacity of Aboriginal people to develop and implement successful forestry initiatives.	IBA, DAFF, ICC, DEWR, FAB, DSD&I, industry, ARC, ANTA, Balkanu, Rainforest CRC, JCU, TAFE, DET, Giringun, JCU, private sector, other government and non-government stakeholders.

STRATEGY 20.	Potential Partners
Protect Traditional Owners' knowledge of traditionally used plants including technologies and access to these resources.	DSD&I, industry, ARC, Balkanu, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, AIATSIS, JCU, Giringun, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Tourism (Page 96-97)

STRATEGY 21.	Potential Partners
Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in the Tourism Industry	ARC, TQ, Giringun, IBA, DSD&I, ATA, ANTA, industry, DEWR, DITR, DET, TTNQ, TAFE, STCRC, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 22.	Potential Partners
Resource and support the development of Traditional Owner tourism businesses.	ARC, STCRC, Giringun, IBA, DSD&I, ATA, industry, TQ, IBA, DITR, TTNQ, Rainforest CRC, GBRMPA, CRC Reef, WTMA, EPA, private sector, TAFE, DEWR, DET, DATSIP, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 23.	Potential Partners
Ensure that the intellectual and cultural property rights of Traditional Owners are recognised by the tourism industry.	ATA, ARC, STCRC, Giringun, IBA, DSD&I, industry, WTMA, EPA, TQ, GBRMPA, TTNQ, TAFE, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## Fisheries and Aquaculture (Page 100)

STRATEGY 24.	Potential Partners
Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of the commercial fishing industry and aquaculture enterprises.	DAFF, ARC, DSD&I, CRC Reef, DPI&F, IBA, industry, ANTA, Giringun, ICC, DATSIP, IBA, DET, NQIAWG, DEWR other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 25.	Potential Partners
Develop Aboriginal fisheries and aquaculture enterprises.	CRC Reef, DPI&F, ARC, DATSIP, ICC, NQIAWG, ANTA, DSD&I, Giringun, DET, DEWR, DAFF, IBA, industry, private sector, other government and non-government stakeholders.



## Making the Aboriginal Plan Work (Page 119-122)

STRATEGY 26.	Potential Partners
Ensure all Traditional Owner groups have strong and effective governance structures for land and sea management.	ARC, DATSIP, ICC, Giringun, EPA, NR&M, DEH, DPC, FNQ NRM Ltd, local government, industry, private sector, NTRBs, DET, DEWR, DPI&F, DSD&I, GBRMPA, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 27.	Potential Partners
Achieve 10% staffing of Aboriginal people in NRM and cultural heritage management.	Giringun, ARC, EPA, NR&M, QPWS, FNQ NRM Ltd, DPI&F, DEWR, DET, Local Government, ICM groups, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 28.	Potential Partners
Develop and implement Country-based and community management plans for land and sea Country for Traditional Owner groups.	ARC, Giringun, NTRBs, CAT, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, FNQ NRM Ltd, EPA, GBRMPA, NR&M, DATSIP, ICC, DPI&F, Local Government, private sector, CSIRO, DEH, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 29.	Potential Partners
Develop a cultural landscape mapping program to document the range of Aboriginal values at a local and regional scale.	Giringun, ARC, DEH, WTMA, CAT, NTRBs, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, ICC, DATSIP, CSIRO, EPA, AIATSIS, AHC, NR&M, FNQ NRM Ltd, TAFE, DET, DEWR, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 30.	Potential Partners
Develop and implement cultural education programs and educational materials for NRM stakeholders about Traditional Owners' values, concerns and issues for caring for Country.	ARC, Giringun, TAFE, EPA, AHC, AIATSIS, NR&M, ICC, DATSIP, NNTT, NTRBs, FNQ NRM Ltd, private sector, Local Government, ICM groups, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 31.	Potential Partners
Develop and implement culturally-appropriate mechanisms to ensure that Traditional Owners' values and interests are incorporated into policy, planning and management.	Giringun, ARC, DEH, WTMA, Rainforest CRC, CSIRO, EPA, AIATSIS, AHC, NR&M, industry, FNQ NRM Ltd, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 32.	Potential Partners
Develop and implement culturally appropriate training packages for Aboriginal people in cultural and natural resource management.	ARC, DET, DEWR, Giringun, TAFE, EPA, NR&M, FNQ NRM Ltd, Rainforest CRC, DSD&I, CRC Reef, ANTA, Local Government, ICM groups, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 33.	Potential Partners
Attract funding and resources for the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan.	ARC, Giringun, FNQ NRM Ltd, ICC, DATSIP, DSD&I, DEWR, other government and non-government stakeholders.
STRATEGY 34.	Potential Partners
Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan.	ARC, Giringun, FNQ NRM Ltd, Rainforest CRC, private sector, EPA, QPWS, NR&M, JCU, GBRMPA, other government and non-government stakeholders.

## CHAPTER 1

# What is the Aboriginal Plan?



"This artwork depicts the Aboriginal groups throughout the North Queensland area coming together with a common purpose in the caring for Country and Culture." Peter Freeman - (Jirrbal), 2005







# Introduction

The Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan) has been developed by the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics NRM region and the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team (WTAPPT) with support from various government and non-government organisations over a three-year period. The plan highlights the natural and cultural resource management issues and aspirations that Traditional Owners have for Country and culture in the Wet Tropics. It identifies a range of strategies to address these priorities and aspirations. Importantly, the Aboriginal Plan recognises the holistic approach practiced by Traditional Owners in caring for Country.

The Aboriginal Plan is a major achievement in recognising the important role that Traditional Owners have in managing natural resources. It demonstrates Traditional Owners' commitment and desires not only to care for Country, but also to ensure the long-term survival of their cultures. More than this, the Aboriginal Plan acknowledges the long struggle of Aboriginal people in Far North Queensland for recognition and respect. This plan can also be viewed as a call for change – both institutional and social. In this respect, one of the fundamental aims of the Aboriginal Plan is to instigate a new era in land and sea management. Hopefully, by raising awareness of Traditional Owners' concerns and issues, this plan will bring about major improvements in the way Traditional Owners are involved in land and sea management and foster new partnerships between Traditional Owners, government agencies and the broader community.

The Aboriginal Plan was developed as part of the Wet Tropics NRM planning process and the regional arrangements for the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). Traditional Owners in the region took a proactive approach to ensure their environmental issues and priorities were clearly identified in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan. They did this by making a collective decision to develop this plan, which is both a key supporting document to the Wet Tropics NRM Plan and a plan within its own right.

This plan should be used by the Commonwealth Government, Queensland Government, Local Governments, Aboriginal organisations, industry groups, research institutions, philanthropic organisations, the corporate sector, landholders, regional and community organisations. A substantial commitment is required by these organisations to implement this plan. The successful implementation of this plan will lead to improved approaches to managing natural resources, as well as improved economic, social and cultural outcomes for Traditional Owners.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The objectives of the Aboriginal Plan are:

- i. To inform the Wet Tropics NRM Plan (as one of the key supporting documents) and the associated Regional Investment Strategy developed by FNQ NRM Ltd from the Wet Tropics NRM Plan;
- ii. To educate government and non-government organisations and the broader community about the aspirations and issues that Traditional Owners have in regards to caring for Country and culture and to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities that these groups have in the implementation of the strategies and actions in the Aboriginal Plan;
- iii. To attract investment and resources for the strategies and actions identified in the Aboriginal Plan from a range of sources including the Commonwealth Government, the State Government, Local Government, philanthropic organisations, the corporate sector, industry groups, landholders, research institutions, conservation and community groups; and
- iv. To inform legislation, policy and management arrangements for natural and cultural resource management in the region.

# Guiding Principles

The following principles were developed with Traditional Owners during the consultation phase for this plan (See Table 1). These principles represent a positive step towards recognising the rights and obligations that Traditional Owners have in the management of cultural and natural resources. Recognition and support for these principles by government and non-government agencies, industry and community groups is the foundation for the development of equitable partnerships with Traditional Owners for managing cultural and natural resources.

**Table 1.** Guiding principles for Traditional Owner involvement in cultural and natural resource management

- The Wet Tropics NRM region is recognised as a diverse set of living Aboriginal cultural landscapes of 17 Traditional Owner Groups (many of which include several clan groups).
- Traditional Owners are recognised as the original owners of the Wet Tropics NRM region with ongoing rights and obligations.
- Traditional Owners' rights to be consulted and meaningfully involved in NRM at all stages of project planning, from inception through to implementation and monitoring, are recognised as being a core protocol for all NRM activities.
- Traditional Owners' priorities for cultural and natural resource management of their Country are recognised as being legitimate in their own right.
- The intellectual and cultural property rights held by Traditional Owners are respected in all NRM activities.
- Aboriginal cultural values for Country (including cultural heritage and native title rights) are recognised and protected in all NRM projects.
- Aboriginal knowledge of Country is recognised as being parallel to mainstream scientific knowledge systems in NRM activities.



Left: (left to right) Troy Whyles-Whelan (Indigenous Board Director, FNQ NRM Ltd), Libby Larsen (Planning Officer, Rainforest CRC), Cliff Cobbo (ILMF), Hilton Noble (Community Liaison Officer WTMA, and ARC delegate), Russell Butler Jnr (Traditional Owner Advisory Committee and ARC Chairperson) at a Traditional Owner Advisory Committee meeting, Cairns, 2004 .





# Who Should Use the Plan?

The Aboriginal Plan has been developed with a wide range of users in mind (see Table 2). This plan should be used as a guide by these groups in conjunction with consultation with Traditional Owners.

**Table 2.** Key groups and organisations who should use the Aboriginal Plan.

Traditional Owners	Banjin, Bar-Barrum, Djabugay, Djiru, Girramay, Gulngay, Gunggandji, Jirrbal, Koko Muluridji, Kuku Yalanji, Ma:Mu, Ngadjon-Jii, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Warungnu, Yidinji, and Yirrganydji.
Traditional Owner Support Organisations	Aboriginal Rainforest Council Girringun Aboriginal Corporation Cape York Land Council North Queensland Land Council Central Queensland Land Council Queensland Indigenous Working Group
Commonwealth Government	Indigenous Coordination Centres Wet Tropics Management Authority Indigenous Land Corporation Department of Education, Science and Training Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Department of the Environment and Heritage Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources Department of Employment and Workplace Relations National Native Title Tribunal Australian Heritage Council Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
Queensland Government	Environmental Protection Agency Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Department of Employment and Training Department of Natural Resources and Mines Department of Communities Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation Department of State Development and Innovation Department of Premier and Cabinet Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy Department of Corrective Services Department of Education and the Arts Tourism Queensland Queensland Museum Queensland Health



Local Government	Atherton, Cairns, Cardwell, Douglas, Eacham, Herberton, Hinchinbrook, Johnstone, Mareeba, Yarrabah and Wujal Wujal Councils.
Regional and Community Organisations	FNQ NRM Ltd, Integrated Catchment Management Groups, Landcare Groups and Conservation Groups.
Industry and Corporate Sector	Tourism, agriculture and grazing industries, bioprospecting, commercial fishing and aquaculture, forestry, mining, and the corporate sector.
Research and Educational Institutions	CSIRO Rainforest CRC Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies CRC Reef Australian Institute of Marine Science Sustainable Tourism CRC James Cook University University of Queensland Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research TAFE
Landholders	Graziers and farmers.





# Policy and Legislation

There are a number of existing national, state and regional policies, plans and processes that are relevant to this plan, some of which are listed in Table 3.

The Queensland Government initiative 'Meeting Challenges Making Choices' and the 'Ten Year Partnership Program' aim at improving the social well-being of Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are supported by a series of state level agreements. In particular, the 'Looking After Country Together' initiative developed under the 'Ten Year Partnership Program' states:

*By 2012, Indigenous people will have significant access to and involvement in the management of land and sea Country. Indigenous people will have the resources and skills needed to effectively plan for and sustainably manage land and sea Country to meet their aspirations.*

**Table 3.** Relevant policy, legislation and planning processes (statutory and non-statutory).

## International Conventions

The Convention of Biological Diversity, Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, The Draft Declaration of the Universal Rights of Indigenous Peoples, The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

## Commonwealth Legislation

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protection Act 1984, Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, Native Title Act 1993, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act 1975.*

## Commonwealth Strategies

National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development (1996), National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity, Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Commitment to Advancing Reconciliation, Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation's (CAR's) Road map for Reconciliation.

## Queensland State Legislation

*Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Act 1993, Nature Conservation Act 1992, Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993, Aboriginal Land Act 1991, Land Act 1994, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003, Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995, Integrated Planning Act 1997, Water Act 2000, Fisheries Act 1994, Forestry Act 1959.*

## Queensland Plans and Strategies

Queensland Government's Managing for Outcomes (MFO), Meeting Challenges Making Choices, Queensland Government's Commitment to Reconciliation in Queensland, Queensland Government's Towards a Queensland Government and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ten Year Partnership, Tourism Queensland Indigenous Tourism Strategy, Master Plan for Queensland Park System, Queensland State Coastal Management Plan, Wet Tropics Management Plan 1998.

## Regional Plans and Strategies

ATSIC Regional Plans, Sustaining the Wet Tropics A Regional Plan for Natural Resource Management (Wet Tropics NRM Plan), Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement, Which Way Our Cultural Survival - Review of Aboriginal of Aboriginal Involvement in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Wet Tropics Conservation Strategy, The Great Barrier Reef 25 Year Strategic Plan, Cardwell-Hinchinbrook Regional Coastal Management Plan, Wet Tropical Coast Regional Coastal Management Plan, Far North Queensland Regional Plan (FNQ 2010), ATSIC Regional Plans, Local Government Planning Schemes.

# Preparing the Plan

## ORIGINS OF THE PLAN

### Regional Arrangements for Natural Resource Management

The State Government and Commonwealth Government's support for community-based NRM has moved from a project-based approach to strategic investment at a regional scale. To oversee this investment, over 60 Regional NRM Bodies have been established across Australia (FNQ NRM Ltd and Rainforest CRC 2004).

As part of the new arrangements, Regional NRM bodies are required to develop integrated Regional NRM Plans. These Regional NRM Plans form the basis for the development of investment strategies which identify regional priorities for investment from a range of sources, especially the Natural Heritage Trust (NHT). In 2001 the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Body in conjunction with the Rainforest CRC commenced the development of the Wet Tropics NRM Plan.

In the Wet Tropics NRM region Traditional Owners have embarked upon a unique process, which involved developing this plan, to ensure that their rights and interests in NRM were recognised in the development of the Wet Tropics Plan and the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Body. This process is described below.

### First Regional Traditional Owner Workshop

In March 2002, a two-day Traditional Owner regional workshop was held in Cairns to discuss issues relating to the new regional funding arrangements for NHT. The workshop was organised by the Regional Bushcare Facilitator and the regional Indigenous Land Management Facilitator. It was supported by the North Queensland Land Council (NQLC), Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, QPWS and the Bushcare Program, the Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC), Cape York Development Corporation and the Rainforest CRC. Rowan Foley from NQLC facilitated the workshop.

The workshop aimed to:

- Explain NHT funding and the purpose of the various programs;
- Discuss the involvement in the first phase of NHT;
- Highlight the changing backdrop for NRM processes; and
- Discuss a way forward to increase Indigenous involvement at all levels during the planning and delivery of the second phase of NHT.

The workshop identified that during the first phase of NHT Aboriginal people in Queensland received less than 1% of the funding outside of the Cape York Peninsula (Hill and Nursey-Bray 2002). The workshop participants identified the following key factors as responsible for the unsatisfactory level of Aboriginal involvement in NRM activities to date:

- Inadequate consultation and poor Indigenous representation in planning; and
- Seriously defective regional NRM structures which do not provide for adequate representation and involvement of Aboriginal people.



Above: Ma:Mu elder, Victor Maund, discusses land and sea management issues at a workshop held in Innisfail 2003, while Jean Fenton (Indigenous Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd) takes notes. (Photo: L.Larsen)



Above: Lynley Halliday (Traditional Owner Advisory Committee and Yidinji proxy ARC delegate) with Marita Budden (Deputy Chair ARC) at a Regional Workshop to prioritise strategies and actions for the Aboriginal Plan, May 2004. (Photo: L.Larsen)





## Second Regional Traditional Owner Workshop

In August 2002, a second regional workshop for Traditional Owners was held in Cairns. The workshop was facilitated by Jim Petrich and convened by Rowan Foley. This workshop considered several options for engaging in the development of the Wet Tropics NRM Plan. At this workshop a decision was made to embark on the development of a separate Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan (Aboriginal Plan) that would address the full spectrum of Aboriginal NRM issues. It was agreed that key elements of this plan would be integrated into the Wet Tropics NRM Plan.

## WET TROPICS ABORIGINAL PLAN PROJECT TEAM

### The Indigenous Technical Support Group

Established in 2002, the ITSG consisted of ten individuals from a number of Commonwealth Government and State Government departments as well as Indigenous and non-government organisations with expertise in NRM and Indigenous issues. The ITSG played an integral role in the development of the Aboriginal Plan and the establishment of the regional arrangements for NRM in the Wet Tropics. Members of the ITSG facilitated workshops, attended NRM meetings and provided guidance and support to the Planning Officer and the Indigenous Project Officers (Smyth 2004).

### Planning Officer and Indigenous Project Officers

In March 2003 a Planning Officer was appointed by the Rainforest CRC to work exclusively on the development of the Aboriginal Plan. An Indigenous Project Officer was appointed at the same time by the Wet Tropics NRM Board. In July 2003 an additional Indigenous Project Officer was appointed by the Wet Tropics NRM Board to initially through to September 2003, and for a further six months in 2004. The Indigenous Project Officers worked closely with the Planning Officer to develop the Aboriginal Plan.

Monthly planning meetings between the ITSG, the Planning Officer and the Indigenous Project Officers were conducted until the formation of the new Traditional Owner Advisory Committee in mid 2004.

### Traditional Owner Advisory Committee

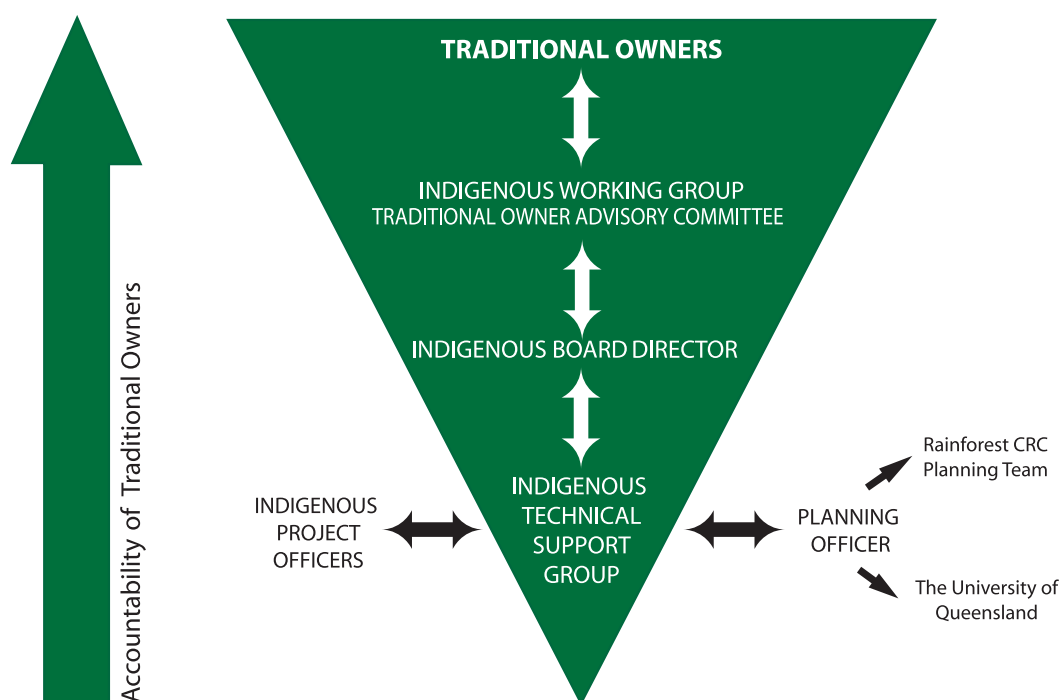
In September 2003 discussions to develop a Traditional Owner Advisory Committee (TOAC) to replace the ITSG began. The TOAC, established in mid 2004 comprises of nine persons from the Aboriginal Rainforest Council, a Bar-Barrum representative, the Indigenous Board Director for FNQ NRM Ltd, and the Indigenous support person to the Indigenous Director. The TOAC has an important role to play in the implementation of both the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics NRM Plan.



Above: Regional workshop to discuss the appointment of the Indigenous Board Director for FNQ NRM Ltd and Aboriginal Plan methodology at the Sisters of Mercy, Cairns, August 2003. (Photo: Indigenous Technical Support Group)

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

One of the key considerations driving the development of the Aboriginal Plan was that it would be undertaken in accordance with the priorities and desires of the Traditional Owners. The model for decision-making for the plan development process is highlighted in Figure 1.



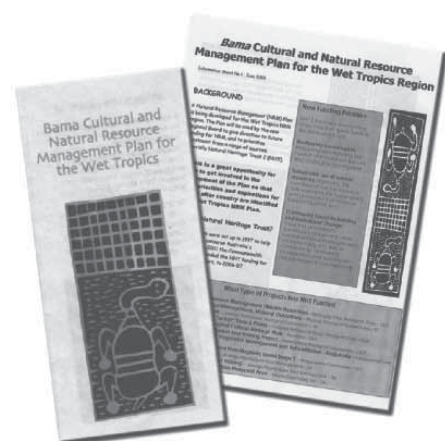
*Figure 1. Aboriginal Plan decision-making structure*

### Meetings

A number of meetings were conducted over a two-year period with key groups and organisations such as the:

- Indigenous Engagement Unit (IEU) within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
- Aboriginal Resource Management Program (ARM) within the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA);
- Yarrabah Community Council;
- Department of State Development and Innovation (DSD&I);
- Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation;
- Yalanji Negotiating Team;
- Tropical North Queensland TAFE;
- National Native Title Tribunal;
- Aboriginal Negotiating Team (for the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement) and subsequent Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC);
- Girringun Aboriginal Corporation;
- Cape York Land Council;
- North Queensland Land Council;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC);
- Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC);
- Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit (IPLU) in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA); and
- Local Traditional Owner organisations.





Above: Brochures were distributed widely to inform Traditional Owners and the broader community of the proposed Aboriginal Plan.

## Publicity

Information about the Aboriginal Plan was communicated to Traditional Owners and the broader community via brochures, workshop reports and radio broadcasts. Two brochures about the Aboriginal Plan were prepared and distributed to Aboriginal organisations and groups in 2003. This was followed by a full colour information sheet in early 2004, which was distributed to all stakeholder groups involved in the NRM planning process. Members of the APPT were also interviewed on the regional Indigenous radio station 4K1G and Bumma Bipperra.

## Desktop Research

A desktop study was undertaken in 2003 to review Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) socio-economic information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Wet Tropics region to assist in the plan development.

## Traditional Owner Workshops

A third regional two-day workshop was held in Cairns in August 2003. This workshop was facilitated by Rowan Foley and Rob Burdon (Burdon Torzillo & Associates Pty Ltd). At the workshop Traditional Owners endorsed a methodology for the Aboriginal Plan development which included; time-frames, a consultation process, guiding principles and the plan format and structure.

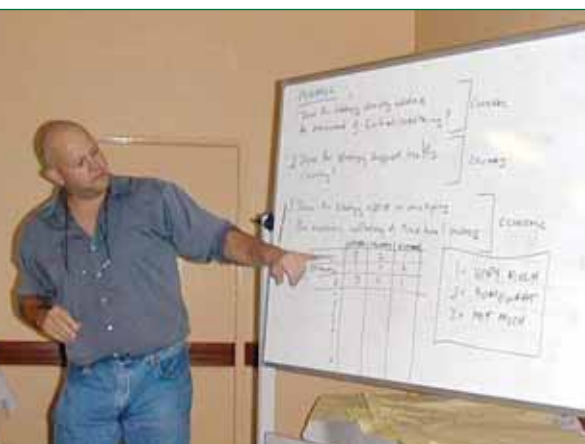
Over ten local one-day workshops were then undertaken with Traditional Owners between September and December 2003 in Cairns, Kuranda, Innisfail (3 workshops), Ingham, Cardwell, Malanda, Atherton, Gordonvale and Kowrowa. They were organised and facilitated by the Indigenous Project Officers and the Planning Officer. The type of information recorded from the workshops is highlighted in Figure 2.

These local workshops were followed up by a fourth regional one-day workshop held in February 2004 held in Cairns. Dermot Smyth (Consultant, Rainforest CRC) facilitated the workshop with the Indigenous Project Officers and the Planning Officer. The purpose of the workshop was to further develop the strategies and actions resulting from the local workshops at a regional scale.

In May 2004, a fifth regional two-day workshop with Traditional Owners was held in Cairns. Dr Mark Fenton (EBC Consultants) facilitated the workshop with input from the Indigenous Project Officers and the Planning Officer. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Finalise and endorse the strategies and actions;
- Sequence the strategies and actions into funding years;
- Score each of the strategies against agreed criteria (healthy culture, healthy Country, and economic) with benefit ratings of 1 (high) to 3 (low).

The strategies were then roughly grouped into higher priority, moderate priority and lower priority strategies. This information was then integrated into the Draft Wet Tropics NRM Plan for community consultation and the Draft Aboriginal Plan for consultation with Traditional Owners. The information collected from this workshop was also used in the development of the Regional Investment Strategy for the Wet Tropics NRM Plan.



Above: Mark Fenton explains the prioritisation process and scoring at a Regional Workshop in May 2004. (Photo: L. Larsen)



Above: Traditional Owners consider issues relating to the extension of the Natural Heritage Trust at a regional workshop held at the Sisters of Mercy in Cairns 2002. (Photo: Rainforest CRC)

## Draft Plan Consultation Process

In September 2004, the Draft Aboriginal Plan with a summary of the draft plan were sent to Traditional Owners and key organisations throughout the region. Feedback and submissions were encouraged from individuals, groups and organisations. Between October and November 2004 a series of workshops were conducted in Innisfail, Cairns, Wujal Wujal, Yarrabah, Mossman Gorge Community, Atherton and Cardwell to discuss the Draft Aboriginal Plan with Traditional Owners. In March 2005 the Draft Aboriginal Plan was endorsed at a one-day workshop in Cairns by the TOAC for printing and publication.



*Figure 2. Information recorded for the Aboriginal Plan from the first round of workshops*



Above: Some members of the Traditional Owner Advisory Committee, February 2005, (back left to right) Kevin Singleton, Peter Wallace, Dean Purcell, Russell Butler Jnr and Ernie Raymont. (front left to right) Ken Reys, Eliza Morta, Elsie Go-Sam and Lex Assan.





Above: KoKo Muluridji Traditional Owners at a plan workshop in September 2003.

(Photo: L.Larsen)

Below: Elsie Go-Sam (Traditional Owner Advisory Committee and Indigenous support person to the FNQ NRM Ltd Indigenous Board Director) at a regional workshop in Cairns, August 2003.

(Photo: L.Larsen)



Above: Malanda workshop September 2003 with Ngadjon-Jii Traditional Owners, Doug Stewart (EPA) and Steve McCann (TAFE) with students. (Photo: L.Larsen)



Above: Lillian Freeman, Margaret Go-Sam, Margaret Freeman (Co-Chair, Aboriginal Negotiating Team), Marita Budden, Fred Freeman and Ivan Masina at the Chjowai Centre, Innisfail October 2003 at an Aboriginal Plan workshop to discuss Jirrbal issues in caring for Country. (Photo: L.Larsen)



## CHAPTER 2

# Overview of Wet Tropics Country







# The Wet Tropics NRM Region

The Wet Tropics NRM Region is one of fifteen NRM regions in Queensland. It covers approximately 2.2 million hectares and is generally defined as including those Local Government areas from the Douglas Shire in the north to Hinchinbrook Shire in the south, extending west to include the Atherton Tableland and Mt Garnet. The region includes two Aboriginal Community Councils (Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah) and overlaps with three Native Title Representative Body regions (Cape York Land Council, North Queensland Land Council and Central Queensland Land Council). The regional boundary is based on the catchment management planning units of the Daintree/Mossman (incorporating Bloomfield), Barron, Russell/Mulgrave, Johnstone, Tully/Murray and Herbert Rivers, as well as Trinity Inlet. The seaward boundary extends three nautical miles into the Coral Sea and extends from the Bloomfield River in the north to Crystal Creek in the south (McDonald and Weston 2004).

The region includes 91% of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, which in turn is made up of numerous national parks, forest reserves, water reserves, Local Government held land, unallocated state land, freehold land and extensive leasehold land. Much of the Wet Tropics NRM region outside of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area has been largely cleared of its native forests for sugar cultivation, banana plantations, cattle grazing, dairy farming, other agriculture and urban settlement. The Wet Tropics NRM region also includes part of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area and Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

The Wet Tropics NRM region includes the Country of at least 17 Traditional Owner groups including Banjin, Bar-Barrum, Djabugay, Djiru, Girramay, Gulngay, Gunggandji, Jirrbal, Koko Muluridji, Kuku Yalanji, Ma:Mu, Ngadjon-Jii, Nywaigi, Warrgamay, Warungnu, Yidinji and Yirrganydjii. Many of these groups have several named clan groups<sup>1</sup>. The Wet Tropics NRM planning boundaries do not reflect the cultural boundaries of these groups and some Traditional Owner groups have Country in neighbouring NRM regions, such as the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region, the Northern Gulf NRM region and the Cape York NRM region<sup>2</sup>. Irrespective of European-based land holding tenures which have been imposed over traditional Country in the Wet Tropics, Traditional Owners maintain a strong sense of responsibility, connection and obligation to care for Country. Many groups are asserting their rights of traditional ownership through native title<sup>3</sup> and potentially from 80% to 98% of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area (WTWHA) is claimable under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) (Yarrow 1996).

Today many Traditional Owners live on or close to their Country, both within Aboriginal communities and in urban areas throughout the region. Aboriginal communities within the region include Yarrabah, a former Mission located 37 kilometres south-east of Cairns on Gunggandji Country, and Wujal Wujal, (also a former mission) located near the Bloomfield River in the northern part of the region in Kuku Yalanji Country. There is also a small community at Buru (China Camp) which is situated south-west of Wujal Wujal on Kuku Yalanji Country. Other communities in the region include Jumbun community which is located on Girramay Country about 15 kilometres south-west of Tully, Mona Mona, Mantaka, Kowrowa and

<sup>1</sup> There are 18 Traditional Owner groups in the WTWHA (and thus represented by the Aboriginal Rainforest Council) and 17 Traditional Owner groups in the Wet Tropics NRM region. This is because the southern boundary of the WTWHA extends beyond the Wet Tropics NRM boundary and includes the country of Wulgurukaba and Gugu Badhun Traditional Owners and the Wet Tropics NRM region extends further west than the WTWHA and includes Bar-Barrum Country.

<sup>2</sup> Kuku Yalanji Country also lies within the Cape York NRM region and the Northern Gulf NRM region; much of Bar-Barrum Country lies within the Northern Gulf NRM region; and groups in the southern part of the region such as Warrgamay, Nywaigi and Warungnu have Country in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region.

<sup>3</sup> Details of native title claims in the region, can be found on the National Native Title Tribunal Website <http://www.nntt.gov.au/>



Koah communities which are located near Kuranda. Mossman Gorge Aboriginal Community is located four kilometres west of Mossman on Kuku Yalanji Country.

In the Wet Tropics region there are 61 Aboriginal freehold properties (24,395 hectares), six Aboriginal leasehold properties (34,447 hectares) and seven Aboriginal reserves (1,696 hectares) (Department of the Environment and Heritage 2004). They include Mungalla Stud (Nywaigi Aboriginal Corporation) and Kirrima Holders (Badjubulla Aboriginal Corporation) which were purchased through the Indigenous Land Corporation's (ILC) program on behalf of Traditional Owners.

## Cultural Landscapes of the Wet Tropics

For Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics the whole landscape has significance and it is not seen as something that is conceptually apart from people, rather it is a humanised landscape. The distinction between natural places and cultural places has little meaning. The concept of 'cultural landscapes' has been used to describe Traditional Owners' perceptions and relationships with their traditional land and sea Country. The idea of a cultural landscape captures the relationship between Traditional Owners and the environment, and directs our attention away from looking at Aboriginal space as a collection of disconnected sites or places. This concept has been adopted by environment and heritage protection agencies at both the international and national level. For example, in 1995 the World Heritage definitions for cultural properties were expanded to include cultural landscapes (UNESCO 1995).

Traditional Owners' entitlement to ancestral lands and waters derives from customary law/lore. Sometimes called 'Bama' or 'Murri' law/lore, the law/lore is the source of customary beliefs and practices, protocols and procedures as well as traditional interests and rights. For Traditional Owner groups, the law/lore is also acknowledged as the source of all life forms and natural phenomenon that comprise their world.

Aboriginal law/lore also refers to the creative epoch at the beginning of time when the activities of totemic beings shaped and gave meaning to the world. According to the laws/lores and customs acknowledged by regional Traditional Owners, the topographic features of their traditional lands and waters were created by, or are the embodiment of, a number of ancestral and totemic figures (Horsfall 2002). These ancestral and totemic tracks also flow out over the seas embracing tidal areas, offshore reefs and islands, forming a crucial link with the land. In the process of creation, these creation beings left behind potent essences of themselves in the landscape or in physical objects. Many important cultural elements are manifested in the landscape as identifiable geographic forms, thus nature and culture are inseparable (Bottoms 1993). For example, Double Island is said to be the totemic rainbow serpent, 'Kudyu-Kudyu' (McConnel 1935 and Quinn 1991), while natural features in the Barron River Gorge and along the Redlynch Valley are identified as the body of the ancestral hero Damarri (Bottoms *et al.* 1995). Aboriginal people refer to these places as 'story-waters' or 'story-places'. Some of these stories are widely known others have a restricted distribution because of their sacred or personal nature. However, it is not just these places that are important to Aboriginal people, but the whole landscape, including its plants, animals, rivers, and mountains, is significant (Horsfall 2002).



Above: Dancers at the Ngadjon-Jii MoU signing in Malanda, February 2003 (Photo: R. Wilkinson)

4. Many Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics prefer the spelling lore as opposed to law. For this reason both spellings are used throughout the plan.





For the Traditional Owners, the physical features of the environment not only affirm the veracity of their law/lore, but they also stand as tangible proof of the presence of ancestral and totemic beings on and in Country. Traditional Country is both a mythological landscape encoding the activities and physical forms of creation beings, and an ancestral space continuously occupied by the spiritual incarnation of deceased Aboriginal people, referred to as the 'spirits' or the 'old people'. The presence of these ancestral beings is experienced by Aboriginal people in a number of ways. Traditional Owners often speak of being 'watched' or guided in their actions by their 'old people'. In this respect, the watchful and regulatory presence of the 'old people' throughout Country serves to mediate Traditional Owners' activities on Country and their engagement with the law/lore in a systematic way. Traditional Owners speak of acting in a 'proper way' when on Country, this means observing a range of cultural protocols when occupying and using traditional lands and waters. Observation of these rules may include, for example, 'speaking to Country', smoking places, being quiet, and/or leaving behind a portion of catch or food for the 'spirits' of the Country. The physical landscape, and in particular the story-places and story-waters associated with the law/lore, serves as evidence of the inalienable connection that exists between Traditional Owners, the ancestors, and law/lore (Tindale and Birdsell 1941).

It is this spiritual relationship to Country which sets Traditional Owner aspirations and rights apart from those of the broader NRM stakeholder groups, and adds further weight not only to Traditional Owner connections to country but also to its management.



Above: Din Din (Barron Fall in Kuranda) is a sacred cultural site for the Djabugay speaking people.



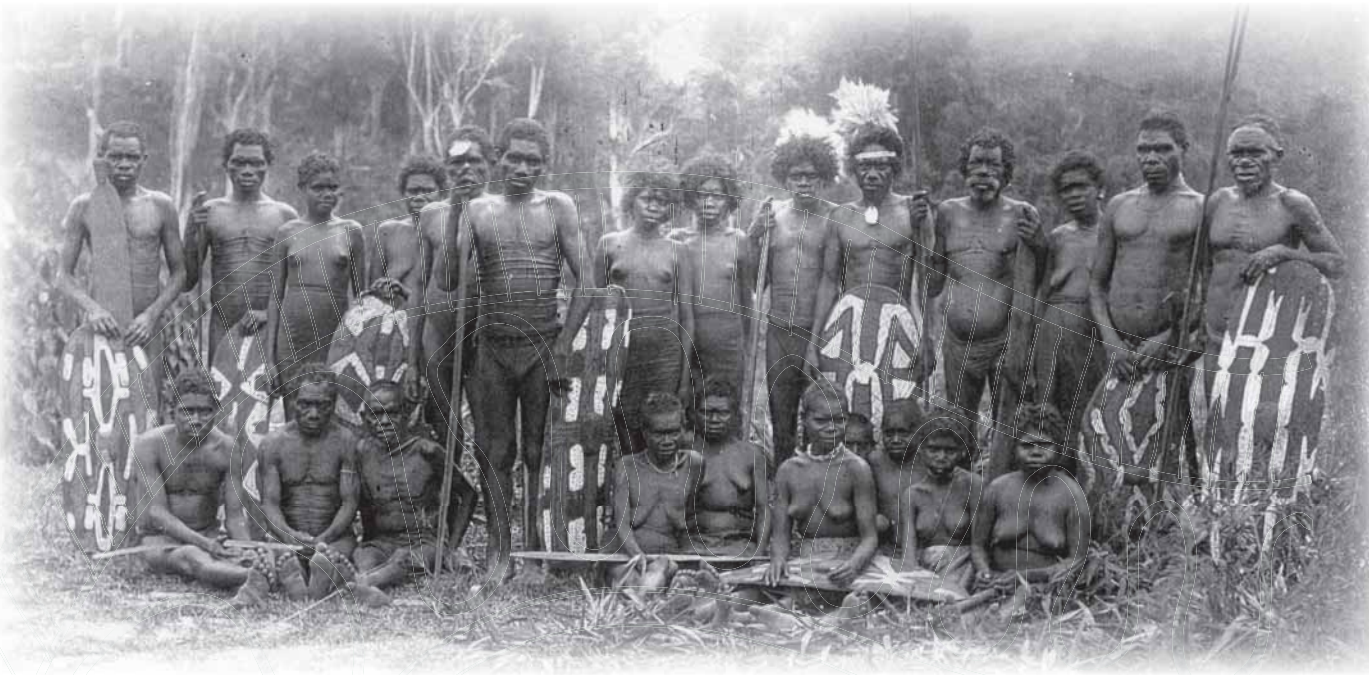
# History - Dispossession and Impact

## ABORIGINAL OCCUPATION OF THE WET TROPICS

The Wet Tropics region has been occupied by Traditional Owners since time immemorial (Bottoms 1999). The Wet Tropics Aboriginal cultures are considered to represent the oldest rainforest culture in the world, living in one of the most significant regional ecosystems in the world. As Horsfall (2003a) observes, it is considered that Aboriginal people have lived in the Wet Tropics area for as long as they have lived elsewhere in the continent. This view about the antiquity of Aboriginal occupation is reflected in local narratives about the creation of landforms in the region. For example, Ngadjon-Jii and Yidinji people have stories about the formation of Lake Eacham, which “provide a plausible account of a volcanic eruption” (Dixon 1991:41). Scientists have found that the crater lakes on the Atherton Tablelands were formed by volcanic eruptions around twelve thousand years ago. Other Aboriginal groups in the region possess stories about how the coastline was once out near the edge of the Great Barrier Reef, but the sea then rose until the shore reached its present position (Dixon 1976). Some scientists have interpreted these stories as describing the post-glacial sea level rise.

It was fair to shoot  
Aboriginal people for  
stealing stock, but not for  
Aboriginal people to retaliate  
and kill non-Aboriginal  
people who had stolen their  
land and trampled the  
natural resources within it.

Ritchie 1989 in NR&M 2001



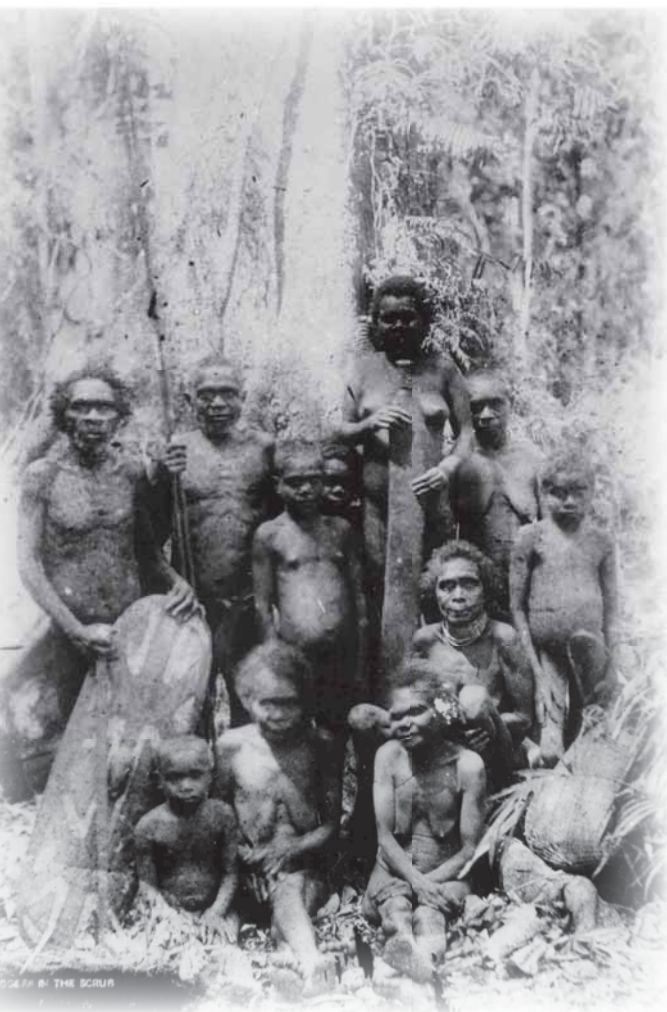
Above: Aboriginal Group, Bellenden Ker, with shields, spears and boomerangs, circa 1910. (Photo: Courtesy of the Cairns Historical Society)





The missionaries outlawed sacred rituals such as funerals and initiations and prevented elders from passing on language and culture.

NR&M 2001



(Photo: Courtesy of the Cairns Historical Society)

## EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT AND COLONISATION

Aboriginal people suffered many of the consequences of colonisation such as displacement, dispersal, massacres, introduced diseases, poisoning, discrimination and exploitation that occurred elsewhere in Australia (Smyth 2004). European settlement on the traditional country of Aboriginal people greatly disrupted access and use of natural resources by Aboriginal people (Loos 1982). Intermittent contact with coastal Aboriginal groups by European sailing ships occurred two hundred and fifty years prior to the first British colony being established in north Queensland (Reynolds 1981). From the 1840s and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, labourers were recruited either by deceit or kidnapping from coastal groups for use in the pearl shell and beche-der-mer industry. The taking of the young and able and the prostitution of women along the north coast had a disastrous effect on traditional life and gradually depopulated one area after another through the introduction of diseases (Loos 1982).

The first European land explorers in the area were Edmund Kennedy and his party in 1848 (Beale 1970). They landed in Rockingham Bay near the present town of Cardwell to travel north to the tip of Cape York Peninsula. Their encounters with Aboriginal peoples were not unfriendly until they fired on a group near the upper Tully River (Horsfall 2002). The town of Cardwell was settled in 1864, about the same time as pastoralists were moving along inland routes to settle behind the coastal ranges. Cooktown was settled in 1873, the same year as the result of gold finds on the Palmer River to the west. Timber-getters exploited the timber, especially the stands of red cedar along rivers such as the Daintree, Mossman and Johnstone Rivers (Horsfall 2002).

Pastoralists began settling the western margins of the Wet Tropics district around the same time. Tin was found on the Atherton Tableland in 1878 and red cedar was logged there from the late 1880s. Tin was also discovered on the Annan and Bloomfield Rivers to the north, and small amounts of gold were found in the Russell and North Johnstone River catchments. By the 1880s the more fertile land in the region was being cleared and settled, with the exception of Malanda which was not settled until 1907 (Horsfall 2002). Aboriginal people in many parts of the Wet Tropics district were placed under considerable pressure by the spread of Europeans who appropriated the most productive hunting and gathering grounds. As early as 1878, many Aboriginal people between Mossman and the Mulgrave River were starving (Loos 1982). As the country was cleared and settled, Aboriginal resistance increased. Crops and other goods were stolen, animals were speared and sometimes settlers were killed.

Loos (1982) argues that Aboriginal people gained a reputation for ferocity far beyond the actual numbers of deaths that can be attributed to them. The dense vegetation made it difficult for settlers to retaliate in their usual manner which was to hunt people down and kill them, often sending the Queensland Native Mounted



Police Force to do the job (Horsfall 2002). On the Atherton Tableland a scheme was initiated to supply Aboriginal people with rations so they would stop raiding settlers' farms (Loos 1982). Elsewhere, food was not supplied until the Aboriginal people were reduced to submission. By 1897 food was being distributed to over two thousand Aborigines between Cooktown and Ingham (Horsfall 2002).

Several churches set up missions to care for and 'civilise' Aboriginal people, and the Queensland Government set up reserves for the same purpose. In 1897 the Queensland Government passed the *Queensland Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* (Horsfall 2002). This enabled the government to control all aspects of Aboriginal life including forcibly removing people to reserves and missions, often far from their traditional lands. This was seen as a way of dealing with Aboriginal health and nutrition problems and protecting them from exploitation. It also took Aboriginal people away from land that Europeans wanted, preventing conflict, while the missions and reserves could provide labour pools for European settlers (Anderson 1986). 'Under the Act', almost every aspect of Aboriginal life could be controlled; what work they did, who they worked for, what they were paid, who they married. Aboriginal languages, customs and ceremonies were generally forbidden, and children were often separated from their parents so they could be brought up as 'civilised' Christians. People could and did apply for exemption from the Act, but this usually required that they and their children had no contact with family members and others who were still 'under the Act'.

The impact of European settlement in the region and the centralisation of Aboriginal people into townships has had a substantial effect on the ability of people to look after Country. It has become more difficult to access Country and therefore more difficult to undertake traditional management practices. However, many Aboriginal groups have continued to live on or close to their traditional Country, often achieving this through employment on farms and cattle properties, or living on missions and reserves established on their land. As a result many people have retained knowledge of their culture, including their languages and their connections and obligations to Country. Traditional Owners today continue to assert their rights to their Country.



Above: (right to left) Ngadjon - Jii antecedents, Harry Raymont, Ben English (aka Ben Cow), Grace Kidner, Frank and Judy Mears with son, Les, and two Ma:Mu men, at English's Jungle, Malanda circa 1930's (Emma Johnston *pers.comm*).

(Photo: Courtesy of the Cairns Historical Society)





## PROTECTED AREAS - LOCKING UP COUNTRY

The designation of protected areas in the Wet Tropics has restricted Traditional Owners from being able to access Country and has limited their ability to maintain cultural practices and look after Country. National Parks and reserves were first established in north Queensland from the early to mid 1900s. For example, Wooroonooran National Park (previously Palmerston National Park) was established in 1921, Malanda Conservation Park was first declared a reserve in 1939. Topaz Road National Park was declared a reserve for scenic purposes in 1935.

There have been some developments with regard to Indigenous involvement in protected areas at an international and national level. The World Conservation Union (IUCN) has established new categories of National Parks that recognise Indigenous peoples rights and their use of the environment. There are some examples of jointly managed Commonwealth National Parks within Australia, such as Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Kakadu National Park, both jointly managed by Traditional Owners and the Commonwealth Government. Other states such as New South Wales have also established jointly managed protected areas. However within Queensland there has been reluctance from the government to enter into joint management of national parks with Traditional Owners despite the fact that mechanisms for joint management exist under legislation such as the *Aboriginal Land Act 1991* and that native title claims exist over many national parks. To date no jointly managed National Parks or Marine Parks have been established in Queensland.

### The Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement

Traditional Owners opposed the designation of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area in 1988 and they objected to the failure of governments to recognise their strong affiliations with their traditional lands (Dale *et al.* 2000). Traditional Owners have persistently advocated that in addition to its natural values the WTWHA should be listed for its Aboriginal cultural values as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape (as with Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and Kakadu National Park). Traditional Owners believe that this would bring about greater recognition and protection of their values and interests in the management of the WTWHA. Preliminary research undertaken by Rainforest CRC researchers indicates that there is evidence to support the renomination of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area as a series of Aboriginal cultural landscapes (Horsfall 2002, 2003a and 2003b).

A review of Aboriginal involvement in the WTWHA commenced in 1995, which produced the report 'Which Way our Cultural Survival – The Review of Aboriginal Involvement in the Management of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area' (The Review). Among other issues, the Review investigated opportunities for joint management arrangements and proposed the establishment of an Interim Negotiating Forum (INF) for the purpose of negotiating a regional agreement for the Wet Tropics (Dale *et al.* 1997). The INF was comprised of an Aboriginal Negotiating Team (ANT) and a Government Negotiating Team (GNT). The resulting Regional Agreement was finalised in early 2005 (See Box 1). The Regional Agreement is between Traditional Owners of the WTWHA, the Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA), the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Natural Resources and Mines (NR&M) and the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH). The major components of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement are listed below.

The Establishment of the Aboriginal Rainforest Council as a Statutory Advisory Committee to broadly represent all Traditional Owners in the WTWHA (and other Aboriginal people particularly concerned with the land) in dealing with the WTMA and other management agencies of the WTWHA.

Recognition of Cultural Values through support for listing the WTWHA on the new National Heritage List for its cultural and natural values which may potentially lead to the nomination of the cultural values for World Heritage Listing.



Participation in Policy, Planning, Management and Permit Arrangements through principles/guidelines and a number of protocols. These protocols include:

- Consultation;
- Operational management;
- Policy development and strategic planning;
- Park planning;
- Permitting;
- Cultural heritage management and mapping;
- Environmental impact assessment; and
- Monitoring and reporting.

Participation in Decision Making through an agreement to include a second Traditional Owner on the WTMA Board of Directors which is the principal decision making body on WTWHA matters.

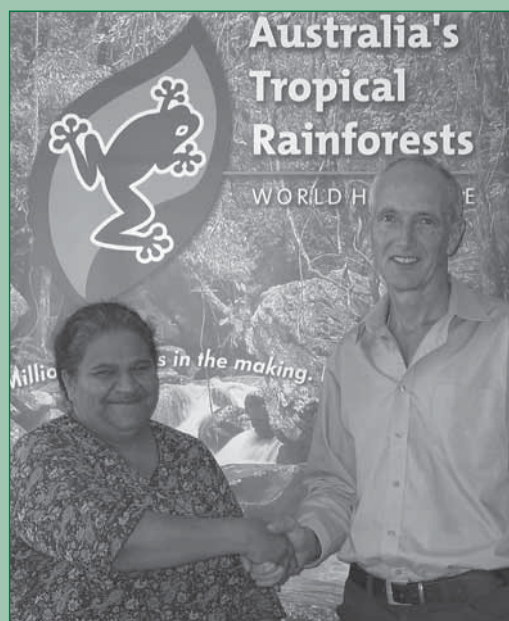
Although falling short of the joint management aspirations of Traditional Owners, the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement represents an extremely positive step towards the involvement of Traditional Owners in the management of the WTWHA.

### Box 1. Recognition of the Wet Tropics as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape: A Regional Agreement for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

“The Regional Agreement is a fantastic achievement. This will be a new beginning for our mob. At last Aboriginal people will have a meaningful role in management of our Country.

It means a lot to us to have both State and Commonwealth government agencies recognising Rainforest Aboriginal people and wanting to work more closely with us. We realise how significant this agreement will be when we look at our sons and daughters. It is their future we have secured. We acknowledge the hard work of our people who have contributed to this process. We dedicate our achievement to our Elders and to those we have lost in this long journey.

The 18 Rainforest tribal groups whose Country is in the World Heritage Area are one hundred percent behind this historic Regional Agreement. The Agreement will advantage about twenty thousand Aboriginal people, who feel that we will have been disenfranchised by World Heritage management arrangements” (Allison Halliday, Aboriginal Negotiating Team spokesperson).



Allison Halliday, Aboriginal Negotiating Team, with Russell Watkinson, Wet Tropics Management Authority in June 2004. (Photo: WTMA)





Left: Girrimay Elder, Abe Murita, teaches participants about gathering lawyer cane at a two-day basket weaving course held at Clump Mountain in 2004.



Above: Children enjoy cultural activities at Clump Mountain during the basket weaving course.



Above: Participants learn weaving techniques for making baskets.





# Population Profile

Indigenous Australians in the Wet Tropics region include Traditional Owner groups, Torres Strait Islanders and those Aboriginal people living away from their homelands. In this latter instance, many of these people were forcibly removed from their traditional Country and relocated to one of the missions or settlements in the region. These relocated Aboriginal people, together with their descendants, have made a home in the Wet Tropics. While coming from Country outside of the region, these people have formed close bonds with Traditional Owners through marriage and co-residence. They have established a sense of belonging to the region and the community through birth, occupation and employment.

Currently, very little social and economic information exists which has looked specifically at the demographic profiles of Traditional Owners for the region. Therefore, many of the statistics cited below while insightful, fall short of appropriately representing the demographics relating to the Traditional Owners.

Within the Wet Tropics, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people comprise 8.9% of the total population with 74.4% of those identifying as being of Aboriginal heritage and 15.2% identifying as Torres Strait Islanders. The remaining 10.3% identify as having both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, when compared to the total population, generally have more children below fourteen years of age and relatively fewer people live over 65 years of age in the region (Fenton 2004). While the median age across the region is 36, the median age of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in most of the Wet Tropics catchments is below twenty years of age.

These statistics reflect the disproportionate numbers of young people to elders and reinforce the urgent need to support programs that document and facilitate the transfer of cultural knowledge, including ecological knowledge, from elders to the younger generations.

## Health

Nationally and in Queensland the life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is approximately twenty years less than the wider Australian population (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2003). The estimated mortality rates for Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in middle age (40-64 years) are among the highest recorded in the world (Queensland Health 2004). Mortality rates are further compounded by statistics related to suicide. From 1996-1998 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people had a suicide rate twice the Queensland average (De Leo and Evans 2002). The causes of poor health of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland are complex, with the social and economic disadvantages experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples contributing to their poor health.

## Financial Security

The unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is higher than that of the general population (Steering Committee for the Review of Government Service Provision 2003). At a state level, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people contribute disproportionately to the numbers of people in Queensland living in poverty, and are more heavily dependent on social welfare payments than are non-Indigenous people. A 1994 Queensland Government survey showed that the overall unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was

Aboriginal health is not just the physical well-being of the individual, but the social, emotional and cultural well being of the whole community.

National Aboriginal Health Strategy Working Party





It is perhaps not so much how the capacity of Indigenous people can be developed to address NRM issues, but how innovative approaches to NRM and planning may be used to address serious issues of social and economic disadvantage for Indigenous people in the region.

Fenton 2004



Above: Tyler Rist working at the Girringun boat building shed.

33%, which was much higher than the overall Queensland rate of ten percent. Interestingly, the survey also highlighted that an estimated 31% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were employed by the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP).

In the Wet Tropics region Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have significantly higher unemployment rates when compared with the total population. In addition, when compared to the total population a significantly higher percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families had weekly incomes of less than \$299.00 (Fenton 2004).

### Housing

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people do not own their own homes and live in rented accommodation that is often of poor quality and overcrowded (ATSIC 2001). Nationally, in 1996 only 31% of homes were owned or being purchased by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples compared with 71% for the national population. These figures are similar for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples living in the Wet Tropics where in 1996 20% of Indigenous homes were owned or being purchased and 74% were rented.

### Education

Within Queensland the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have achieved post-secondary qualifications is about a fifth of the number of non-Indigenous peoples. Within the Wet Tropics there is a higher rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people without tertiary qualifications than the non-Indigenous population (Fenton 2004). Within the Wet Tropics there are also low skill levels in business administration amongst Aboriginal people, and many Aboriginal people are unable to access business training and support for the establishment of business enterprises (ATSIC 2003).

### Law and Justice

In 1994, 20% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia aged over 13 had been arrested at least once in the last five years. In Queensland this figure was 15% and in Cairns it was 13% percent. While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent 1 in 50 of the total population, statistics show they represent 1 in 5 prisoners nationally (ATSIC 2001).

## ADDRESSING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES

Traditional Owner involvement in NRM is not only about ensuring that peoples' rights and obligations for Country are recognised. It is also involves addressing the broader social and economic disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with respect to health, housing, education and economic well-being (Smyth 2004). Both the Commonwealth Government and the Queensland Government have acknowledged the lack of success of existing service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and have committed to developing practical solutions to addressing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disadvantage. Support for the strategies in this Plan will contribute towards the fulfillment of the Queensland Government and Commonwealth Government policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Many of the strategies in this Plan address issues such as unemployment, economic development, knowledge transfer, cultural continuity, education, training, skills development and self-determination.

The higher levels of economic and social disadvantage also have profound implications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' capacity to be involved in natural and cultural resource management. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are at a disadvantage when they have to compete for resources with mainstream groups and organisations. They also require higher levels of support and resources to be able to effectively participate in cultural and natural resource management.



# Management Arrangements for Cultural and Natural Resource Management

A brief description of the main government and non-government agencies and Aboriginal organisations that play a role in natural and cultural resource management in the Wet Tropics region is given below. The current roles of these organisations will be discussed throughout Chapter 3, and the role that they need to play in the implementation of this plan will be discussed in Chapter 4.

## TRADITIONAL OWNER ORGANISATIONS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

### Aboriginal Rainforest Council

The Aboriginal Rainforest Council (ARC) recently established as part of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement, is the peak advisory body for the 18 Rainforest Aboriginal groups in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area on natural and cultural resource management issues. The ARC is a Section 40 advisory committee to the WTMA Board and has formally established links with NRM agencies and Aboriginal organisations including FNQ NRM Ltd.

### Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, based in Cardwell, represents the land and sea interests of nine Traditional Owner groups in the southern part of the Wet Tropics region. These groups are; Jirrbal, Girramay, Warrgamay, Nywaigi, Banjin, Gulgay, Djiru, Warungnu and Gugu Badhun peoples. Girringun is managed by a governing committee that is comprised of an elected Elder and elected representative from each of the Traditional Owner groups.

### Local Traditional Owner Organisations

There are also numerous organisations at a local level that have been established by Traditional Owner groups that deal with a range of issues such as health, housing, cultural maintenance, native title and natural and cultural resource management. Some groups such as Djabugay and Kuku Yalanji have established organisations specifically for natural and cultural resource management, for example, the Djabugay Ranger Agency and the Kuku Yalanji Marine Resource Centre.

### Aboriginal Councils

There are two Aboriginal Community Councils in the region, Wujal Wujal and Yarrabah which were established under the *Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984* (Qld). The Councils were set up to hold title to the community DOGIT land and administer the Local Government and additional services in the Community. The Community Councils were to provide self-management for the Aboriginal communities that had previously been administered and controlled by the State Government. In 2005, the Aboriginal Community Councils will become Shire Councils and their functions will be more in line with regular Local Government Authorities.

### Native Title Representative Bodies

There are three Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRB) whose areas overlap within the Wet Tropics NRM region: Central Queensland Land Council (CQLC); North Queensland Land Council (NQLC) and Cape York Land Council (CYLC). NTRB's are established under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth) to assist Native Title Holders in protecting native title rights and interests and to prepare native title claims on behalf of the Native Title Holders and to represent the Native Title Holders in issues relating to native title. The Native Title Holders are the Traditional Owners of Country.

### Balkanu Cape York Development Organisation

Balkanu Cape York Development Organisation works predominantly in the Cape York region, supporting Traditional Owners and Aboriginal communities in land and sea management issues. Balkanu also assists Traditional Owners with business development projects. In the Wet Tropics NRM region, Balkanu works with the Wujal Wujal and Mossman Gorge communities.





## COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

### Indigenous Coordination Centres

With the termination of ATSIC, the Commonwealth Government has established regional Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICC) which operate as whole-of-government centres, housing staff from various departments, delivering services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

### National Native Title Tribunal

The National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT), established under the *Native Title Act (1993)*, is a Commonwealth Government agency that assists all parties to resolve native title issues through mediation and agreement making.

## STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

### Wet Tropics Management Authority

The WTMA is responsible for managing the Wet Tropics according to Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention. Within WTMA there is the Aboriginal Resource Management Program (ARM) whose staff includes three Aboriginal Community Liaison Officers (CLOs).

### Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) is responsible for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. Within GBRMPA there is the Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit (IPLU).

### Indigenous Land Corporation

The Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) assists Aboriginal people to acquire land and to manage Aboriginal owned land.

## QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

### Department of Natural Resources and Mines

Natural Resources and Mines (NR&M) works with other agencies, industry and the community to manage natural resources. NR&M is responsible for the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*.

### Environment Protection Agency

The Environment Protection Agency (EPA), which includes the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS), is responsible for environmental management. The Indigenous Engagement Unit (IEU) in EPA supports Aboriginal peoples' involvement in EPA programs.

### Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries

The Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) supports strategic industry development in biosecurity, forestry and fisheries.

### Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy

The Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP) provides a whole of government policy direction about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. DATSIP also plays a key role in coordinating activities across the Queensland Government to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's issues are addressed by all agencies. They are the lead agency for the Ten Year Partnership program.



## REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY NRM

### FNQ NRM Ltd

FNQ NRM Ltd is the accredited regional body to coordinate NRM in the Wet Tropics region under the NHT program in partnership with Traditional Owners and all NRM stakeholders.

### Integrated Catchment Management Groups

The Wet Tropics region has various Landcare, Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) and conservation groups.

## RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Major research institutions with an interest in natural and cultural resource management in the region include the Rainforest CRC and the CRC Reef, the Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS), James Cook University (JCU), the University of Queensland (UQ), Earthwatch and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).





Left: During Culture Camps at Budjubulla Station children learn about Aboriginal uses of resources around them.



Above: Children enjoy time at the Culture Camp held during holidays at Badjubulla Station.



Above: (left to right) John Andy (Djiru), Victor Maund (Ma:Mu), Claude Beeron (Girrimay), Laurie Warmsley (Badjubulla Station) and Lyle Johnson (Indigenous Project Officer FNQ NRM Ltd) discuss land management issues at Badjubulla Station 2004.



## CHAPTER 3

# Caring for Country and Culture







# Caring for Country

Traditional Owners have always seen management of the land and sea and all of its resources as an integral part of their culture. This is often described in terms of caring for Country whereby a particular group has responsibilities for 'looking after' or 'managing' particular areas of land and sea. Caring for Country forms part of the relationship individuals have with each other and with the land and sea. It is not seen as a separate activity which must be 'carried out' (Rose 1995).

Caring for Country involves looking after places of significance, maintaining cultural practices, passing on knowledge and the law/lore, looking after and using natural resources. An integral part of caring for Country is therefore ensuring a presence on Country so that the proper relationship between people and Country can be maintained. These responsibilities are founded in Aboriginal law/lore and incorporate ceremonial and spiritual practices.

## ASPIRATIONS FOR CARING FOR COUNTRY

The diversity of Traditional Owner groups in the region means that there are a range of issues and priorities within each group that will differ based upon different needs, ideas and social aspirations. During workshops for the Aboriginal Plan it became evident that there are also many shared aspirations (See Table 4). These include; peoples' desire to maintain their cultural identity, connection to their Country, financial security, and to be actively involved in natural and cultural resource management.

**Table 4.** *Traditional Owners' aspirations for caring for Country and culture*

### Aspirations for caring for Country identified in workshops with Traditional Owners include:

- Our cultures to be strong in the future;
- To look after important places and sites on Country;
- To look after plants and animals on Country;
- Recognition of our customary rights and obligations for Country in policy, planning and management arrangements in the Wet Tropics;
- Government and the wider community to recognise our status as the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics;
- Our young people to have cultural pride, identity and employment opportunities;
- Well resourced Traditional Owner organisations for land and sea management business;
- Opportunities for businesses on Country;
- To improve the skills of our people through culturally appropriate training opportunities;
- To increase access and use of Country; and
- To have increased involvement in all levels of caring for Country.





## KEY THEMES

This chapter is organised under the seven key themes, many of which have sub-themes. For each theme and sub-theme, firstly the Traditional Owners' key values are described. Then, the current management arrangements are given. This is followed by a list of the issues that people identified in relation to the protection and management of natural and cultural values. Finally, key strategies and actions are presented (See Figure 3).

For each of the strategies, a list of the potential partners is given that identifies key government agencies that have responsibilities for implementing that corresponding strategy, as well other groups and organisations that can provide resources and support to implement that strategy. These lists are not exhaustive. Traditional Owners are not listed as a potential partner because they will be directly involved in the implementation of all strategies.

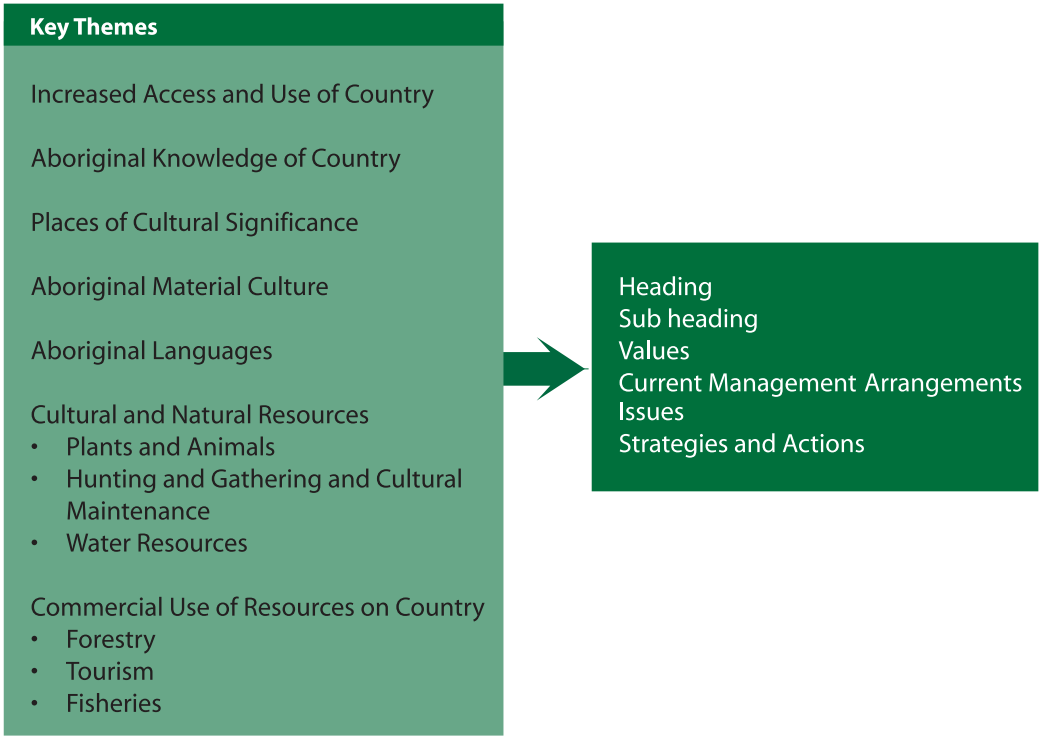


Figure 3. Structure of Chapter 3



Above: John Andy, Djiru elder, shows children a scar tree at Badjubulla Station 2004.





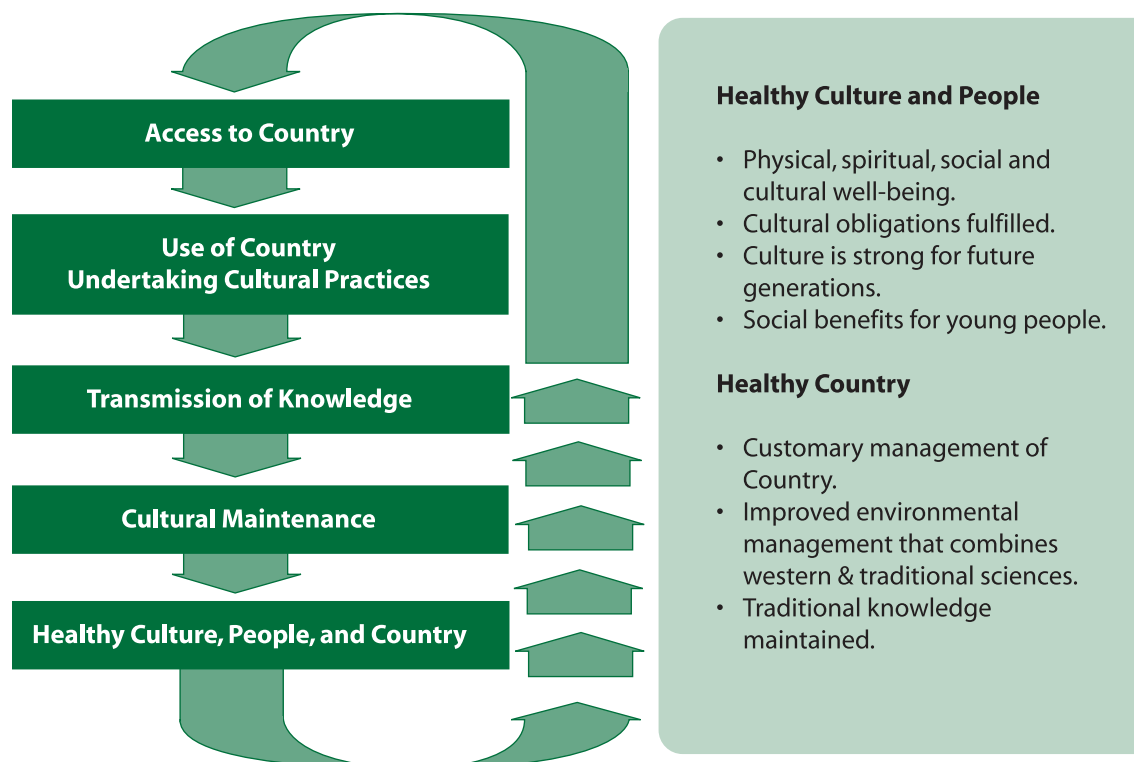
# Increased Access and Use of country

"We want to be able to go back to Country and look after it and take our elders and our children there. That's important so that we can fulfill our obligations and look after special places, keep our culture strong and manage that Country like our ancestors".

Regional Workshop - Cairns, March 2002

## OVERVIEW

Throughout the preparation of this plan, Traditional Owners talked about the importance of having a presence on their traditional lands and sea as part of looking after Country. In workshops, many Elders said that being on Country is very important for the well-being of Aboriginal people. Thus, a critical part of caring for Country and maintaining cultural landscapes is being able to access to Country. Access allows people to renew contact with places, undertake management of places of cultural significance and actively manage the natural environment. It is also important in teaching the younger generations about Country and thus being able to pass on traditional knowledge to younger generations. Figure 4 shows how these key issues relate to the maintenance of healthy, Aboriginal cultures and healthy Country. These issues need to be reflected in contemporary NRM processes.



**Figure 4.** The relationship between access to Country and healthy culture, people and Country

In workshops to develop the Aboriginal Plan, Koko Muluridji, Ma:Mu, Djiru and Girramay Traditional Owners talked about the importance of taking the younger generation onto Country and passing on knowledge. Some of the women from the Ma:Mu workshops were very concerned about the issues facing young Aboriginal people such as substance abuse, youth suicide and unemployment. They want to develop cultural camps to take young people onto Country to teach them about their culture and their Country and to ensure that they have a sense of cultural identity and pride. Some groups have already successfully coordinated these types of programs (such as those developed by Kuku Yalanji at Mossman Gorge, see Box 2).



## Box 2. Cultural Camps: Healthy Country, Healthy Culture

The cultural revitalisation program coordinated by Kuku Yalanji at Mossman Gorge through Bamaga Bubu Ngadimunku is a good example of a cultural revitalisation program. Over the last few years, the Elders have taken children on regular culture camps to the Daintree and Cape Tribulation. On the camps children are taught bush craft and about protecting the environment. Children are also taught stories of the ancestral beings, songs and dances, and they learn about kinship and customary law/lore.

The aim of the program is to strengthen the children's self-confidence, cultural identity and knowledge of land and sea management. Programs like this ensure the transfer of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

Source: Lennon *et al.* 2001:107

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

There are a variety of strategies being pursued by Traditional Owners to increase access and use of Country. One of the key strategies has been the lodging of native title claims under the *Native Title Act 1993*. Other opportunities are being pursued in conjunction with native title, including negotiated agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MoU), Cooperative Management Agreements (CMAs) and Management Agreements (MAs) for the WTWHA. For example, the MoU between WTMA, EPA and Ngadjon-Jii incorporates, amongst other provisions, access to places of significance by Ngadjon-Jii Traditional Owners such as burial sites and temporary living areas on the national park (See Box 3).

The regional arrangements for NRM should also support Traditional Owners to gain increased access to Country. This can be achieved through building relationships between landholders and Traditional Owner groups, as well as supporting Aboriginal organisations to undertake NRM projects on Country.

## ISSUES

### Recognition and Understanding of Aboriginal Values

There is a level of fear and uncertainty amongst pastoralists and the broader community about issues of Traditional Owner access, native title and its implications. In many respects this fear and uncertainty stems from a lack of understanding of the native title process and the importance of both access to and use of Country for Traditional Owners.



"People want to go back and live on Country and we elders want to make sure that they have some structure on our land, we want our people to be occupied working this land."

Jirrbal Traditional Owner

Above: Clump Mountain ranger and caretaker, Leonard Andy (Djiru), in December 2004.





### Box 3. Case Study - Ngadjon-Jii Memorandum of Understanding



Ngadjon-Jii elders, together with Geoff Meadows (EPA), Clive Cook (EPA) and Russell Watkinson (WTMA), celebrating the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding at Malanda in February 2003.

*(Photo: R. Wilkinson)*

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) relating to Ngadjon-Jii land that falls within the boundaries of Wooroonooran National Park (including Mt Bartle Frere), the Topaz Road National Park and the Malanda Falls Conservation Park was signed in February 2003 between the Wet Tropics Management Authority, the Environmental Protection Agency and Ngadjon-Jii people. Under the MoU a restricted access area within the Wooroonooran NP known as Top Camp (or Bulubu Burrguna as it is known in the Ngadjon-Jii language) has been created, requiring visitors to seek permission from Ngadjon-Jii to enter the area. The MoU also contains provisions for support for Ngadjon-Jii employment, training and business opportunities, pest management strategies, as well as provisions for consultation with Ngadjon-Jii people about permits within the Parks.

Ngadjon-Jii representative, Thomas Gertz, said his people were proud and pleased with the outcome of their negotiations with the conservation agencies. “The restricted access declaration will once again see our old people involved in the management of a very significant site within our traditional lands. We also look forward to once again looking after our Country in a meaningful way being involved in management and decision making.”

Dr Ross Pearson, Acting Executive Officer for the North Queensland Land Council at the time, which represented Ngadjon-Jii people in their negotiations with EPA and WTMA, congratulated all parties on reaching the MoU. “The fact that Traditional Owners and government agencies can sit down together and agree on a way to best manage this Country is reassuring and shows that the involvement of Traditional Owners leads to practical outcomes that benefit all”.

### Resources and Support

Being able to take young people back to their traditional Country is an essential part of learning about culture and looking after Country. These activities require a level of support and resources which are not currently or readily available.

### Government Policy and Legislation

Native title will only provide some Traditional Owners with legal rights to access their land and sea Country in some areas. Pursuing native title is a time consuming and complicated process with no guarantees of the outcomes that Traditional Owners are seeking. Further, the High Court has found that native title has been extinguished by valid acts that are completely inconsistent with the continued use and enjoyment of native title rights and interests. This means that native title no longer exists over freehold or any other tenure that provide for exclusive possession. It has further indicated that where native title has not been extinguished, if there is inconsistency between the interests of the tenure holder, such as a pastoral lease holder, and the native title the non-native title rights will prevail.

## Strategies and Actions for Increased Access and Use of Country

<b>STRATEGY 1.</b>  <b>Each Traditional Owner group to have agreements with relevant stakeholders regarding access to and use of Country.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Implement current MoUs, MAs, CMAs and ILUAs (such as Kuku Yalanji ILUA and Ngadjon-Jii MoU).</li> <li>1.2 Develop formalised access and use agreements for Traditional Owners (MoUs, ILUAs, CMAs, MAs etc) for Country with relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>1.3 Undertake a Country-based mapping project which clarifies boundaries for each Traditional Owner group (with appropriate cultural protocols).</li> <li>1.4 Support Traditional Owners to purchase land through initiatives (such as those provided by the Indigenous Land Corporation).</li> <li>1.5 Ensure that NTRBs are appropriately resourced to support Traditional Owners with native title claims and related issues.</li> <li>1.6 Ensure that native title rights and access issues are recognised in all government and community planning schemes (such as catchment management, national park and Local Government plans).</li> <li>1.7 Supporting Traditional Owners to negotiate and plan for living areas on Country with relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>1.8 Develop and implement an educational campaign for landholders and NRM stakeholders in conjunction with Traditional Owners about native title and access issues.</li> </ol>	<p>NTRBs, ILC, ICC, NNTT, ARC, GBRMPA, CAT, Girringun, WTMA, EPA, FNQ NRM Ltd, DATSIP, graziers and farmers, Local Government, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>





# Aboriginal Knowledge of Country

## OVERVIEW

"Our knowledge of Country and our culture is really important to us. We want to revitalise this knowledge, keep it strong and make sure it is passed on to young people."

Traditional Owner Workshop, Malanda, September 2003

"Our Cultural identity is so important to us. It is central to who we are. We have lost so much already. Many people are worried about the young ones because they do not know so much about our traditional way of life. Soon there won't be anyone left to tell them as our Elders are leaving us."

Ma:Mu Elder 2003

Traditional Owners of the region possess a diverse and complex knowledge about the Wet Tropics region. This knowledge has been the basis for the management of the environment for thousands of years. Indigenous knowledge and rights to knowledge is often referred to as intellectual and cultural property rights (ICPR).

Aboriginal knowledge is embedded in a social and cultural context. It is recorded and transmitted through oral tradition and is learned through observation and hands-on experience. Management and control of knowledge in Aboriginal cultures is based on codes of conduct which determine who has the right to speak for Country and pass knowledge on to others. Differences in gender, age and status affect and inform the kind of knowledge passed on and received. There are also various protocols that inform access and use of particular places. Certain types of information can be restricted to a small group of people. In particular, knowledge about law, ceremony and spiritual beliefs may be restricted to certain elders who are responsible for this information. Thus, knowledge is not freely given nor sought without due consideration of the cultural and social obligations and responsibilities associated with the transmission of knowledge.

Traditional Owners' ecological knowledge of the region can include (Smyth 2002:7):

- Knowledge of the historical distribution of species, breeding patterns, life-cycles and food requirements;
- Knowledge relating to the use of natural resources (including nutritional and medicinal qualities of resources);
- Knowledge of rights, responsibilities and practices relating to the ceremonial management of plants and animals;
- Knowledge of and names for a wide range of species and their seasonal patterns of growth;
- Knowledge of impacts on Country by European settlement and related land use practices;
- Knowledge of affiliations of particular groups of Aboriginal people with particular Country and kinship between people, Country and plant and animal species.

There is increasing international recognition of the need to combine scientific knowledge with Aboriginal knowledge to develop a better understanding of ecosystems. The preservation and revitalisation of Aboriginal knowledge is critical. Support and resourcing for projects that record and transmit knowledge in a culturally-appropriate manner by Traditional Owners is critical.

There needs to be greater respect and understanding from all NRM stakeholders regarding the value of Aboriginal knowledge. This must include appropriate protection of that knowledge to ensure that Aboriginal communities maintain ownership of their knowledge and consent to, and benefit from, any commercial application of that knowledge. It also means valuing, and when requested, remunerating Aboriginal people who are prepared to share their intellectual property in the same way as any other specialist body of knowledge is valued and its use rewarded.



Above: Girrimay Elder, Claude Beeron, showing children traditional bush foods.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

There is increasing international recognition of the need to combine scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge to develop a better understanding of ecosystems, and the importance of revitalizing and preserving Indigenous knowledge (Schnierer 2002). For example, this recognition can be found in: the International Convention for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (See Box 4); the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the World Intellectual Property Organisation.

At a national level, the National Strategy for Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity gives strong recognition to Aboriginal knowledge systems (See Box 4). Current policy and legislation in Australia that protects intellectual property includes the *Copyright Act 1968*, the *Designs Act 1906*, the *Patents Act 1990*, and the *Plant Breeders Act 1994*. The Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Heritage (DEH), in their Reconciliation Action Plan, recognises the importance of Aboriginal people collating and applying their knowledge systems to address contemporary environmental issues.

Funding through programs such as the NHT can provide opportunities to both document and protect Aboriginal knowledge. The NHT program has supported the development of Guidelines for Regional Bodies and Commonwealth Government agencies about the preservation and maintenance of Indigenous knowledge in NRM (See Commonwealth Government Indigenous NRM Guidelines in Key Contacts).

In the past, the general acceptance of the universality of scientific knowledge has resulted in a devaluing of other knowledge systems, including Indigenous knowledge systems, and hence their marginalisation.

Schnierer 2002





#### Box 4. International Convention for the Conservation of Biological Diversity and National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity

Article 8(j) of the International Convention for the Conservation of Biological Diversity states that each Contracting Party shall:

Subject to its national legislation, respect, preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of Indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and promote their wider application with the approval and involvement of the holders of such knowledge, innovations and practices and encourage the equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilisation of such knowledge, innovations and practices.”

Article 1.8.2 of the National Strategy for Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity states:

“Ensure that the use of traditional biological knowledge in the scientific, commercial and public domains proceeds only with the cooperation and control of the Traditional Owners of that knowledge and ensure that the use and collection of such knowledge results in social and economic benefits to the Traditional Owners. This will include:

- encouraging and supporting the development and use of collaborative agreements safeguarding the use of traditional knowledge of biological diversity, taking into account existing intellectual property rights;
- establishing a royalty payments system from commercial development of products resulting, at least in part, from the use of traditional knowledge.”

Such arrangements should take into account relevant work in international forums such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights; they should also take into account Australia's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

In the Wet Tropics in 1993, the 'Julayinbul Statement on Indigenous Intellectual Property Rights' was adopted by a Conference on Cultural and Intellectual Property. The Conference also issued a declaration reaffirming the self-determination and intellectual property rights of the Traditional Owners of the Wet Tropics Rainforest Area. This Declaration was primarily concerned with bioprospecting and the intellectual property rights of Indigenous peoples to traditional knowledge. The Wet Tropics Regional Agreement also recognises ICPR. It recommends that an interim protocol be developed to ensure appropriate and agreed use of Aboriginal peoples' knowledge relating to the management of the WTWHA.

Whilst there has been a limited amount of research conducted in the WTWHA that has focused on the documentation of Aboriginal cultural and ecological knowledge, there have been some very good examples. This includes the work conducted with Kuku Yalanji regarding fire (Hill 1998, Hill *et. al.* 2000, Hill *et. al.* 2004). There has also been some good research conducted through Program 7 of the Rainforest CRC on the environmental history of Ngadjon-Jii Country. Balkanu has also supported an Aboriginal knowledge project with the Wujal Wujal community (See Box 6). The Ngadjon-Jii Traditional Owners have developed a website which documents some aspects of their history, language and knowledge and use of plants (See Box 5). However, despite these efforts, there is a major gap in the documentation of knowledge and further support for research projects is critical.



### Box 5. Ngadjon-Jii Educational Website about Country and Culture

Ngadjon-Jii Elders have created a website which is a fantastic educational tool for people interesting in learning about Ngadjon-Jii people and culture. It has artwork by young Ngadjon-Jii artists and contains information about Ngadjon-Jii lands, history, language, cultural resources and Ngadjon-Jii people today.

Some of the photographs date from 1890 to the present day, providing a rare insight into the history of Ngadjon-Jii people. It is the intention of the Ngadjon-Jii elders to contribute to a greater understanding of their culture and to highlight some of the impacts of European settlement on their culture.

The website also contains information about plants and their uses and traditional artefacts. The website indicates the vast wealth of rainforest knowledge that Ngadjon-Jii people have.

Ngadjon-Jii people worked in collaboration with many individuals and groups to develop the website. The website can be located at [www.koori.usyd.edu.au/ngadjonji](http://www.koori.usyd.edu.au/ngadjonji)

Source: Wet Tropics Management Authority - Rainforest Aboriginal News Issue No. 6 July 2001

## ISSUES

The loss of Aboriginal knowledge has a number of serious implications which include the further erosion of the spiritual and social well being of Aboriginal people now and in the future. Furthermore, Aboriginal land and sea management knowledge and expertise will be lost to the wider community, including government agencies and industry.

### Bioprospecting and Biodiscovery

Traditional Owners are extremely concerned about pharmaceutical companies, scientists and government research institutions using their knowledge with little regard for the protection of their ICPR. This includes the lack of financial benefits that they receive from the use of their ICPR. Traditional Owners at the workshops talked about their concerns with the *Biodiscovery Act 2004* (Qld). The Act lacks appropriate triggers to ensure that bioprospecting companies consult with Traditional Owners, and does not have appropriate mechanisms that ensure the development of benefit-sharing arrangements for the use of Aboriginal ICPR.

### Government Policy and Legislation

Current policy and legislation for intellectual property focuses on individual authorship and ownership, and does not adequately recognise and protect Aboriginal ICPR due to these rights being based on group rights. Under Aboriginal customary law/lore, knowledge is collectively owned by the descendents of a particular group (Janke 1998).

### Recognition of Aboriginal Knowledge

The differences that exists between Aboriginal and scientific worldviews often leads to scientific knowledge and approaches to NRM being given greater priority than Aboriginal knowledge systems in planning, policy and management. This is despite the fact that Aboriginal knowledge systems have been applied and utilised in the region since time immemorial.





### Box 6. Case Study: Wujal Wujal Kuku Yalanji *Junjuy Junjuy* *Yalanji-nga* Indigenous Knowledge of Biodiversity Project

From May to July 2001, Kuku Yalanji Elders worked on this project with staff from Balkanu. During this time they set out to develop a process by which traditional plant and animal knowledge of the elders would be transferred and conserved. Part of this process included the production of a multimedia CD ROM that provides an example of how the aims of the project can be achieved. The CD ROM is now available to the community for their use.

Balkanu plans to further this project and in particular aims to target skills development in young Kuku Yalanji people. These skills will involve recording and analysing the classification, use and management of plants and animal species. Further funding is being sought to continue this project.

Source: Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation 2001



Victor Steffensen teaching Kuku Yalanji trainees, Tamara Pearson and Elizabeth Davis-Jenkins, about digital equipment for recording traditional knowledge of Country and culture.

## Strategies and Actions for Aboriginal Knowledge of Country

<b>STRATEGY 2.</b>  <b>Develop mechanisms for the protection of Aboriginal intellectual and cultural property.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> 2.1 Develop a legal framework and policies that recognise and protect Aboriginal ICPR. 2.2 Develop protocols and guidelines for the use and protection of Aboriginal ICPR in research, NRM activities, the tourism industry, and other uses. 2.3 Develop and implement culturally-appropriate benefit-sharing arrangements for the use of Traditional Owners ICPR in biodiscovery, research, tourism, and other uses. 2.4 Develop and implement an educational campaign on Aboriginal ICPR issues. 2.5 Develop an education strategy and plain English information kit for Aboriginal people on ICPR issues, including current legislation and policy. 2.6 Develop binding protocols and mechanisms for research institutions to ensure that Aboriginal ICPR issues are respected in research approval processes.	ARC, JCU, NR&M, WTMA, DEH, EPA, Balkanu, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, Giringun, AIATSIS, TQ, CSIRO, universities, other government and non-government stakeholders.
<b>STRATEGY 3.</b>  <b>Develop and implement programs and projects that document knowledge and facilitate the transmission of cultural knowledge and practices.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> 3.1 Record and document knowledge of Country via books, databases, CDs etc (with appropriate ICPR protection). 3.2 Develop educational materials (books, CDs, internet, etc) for both Aboriginal people and the broader community. 3.3 Develop and implement cultural programs, including camps, to bring Elders and young people together on Country to facilitate the transmission of knowledge and cultural practices.	ARC, Balkanu, Giringun, DOC, DET, DEWR, ICC, DPC, Rainforest CRC, DOC, CRC Reef, CSIRO, AIMS, ACTFR, AHC, DEST, DEH, AIATSIS, EPA, WTMA, other government and non-government stakeholders.





# Places of Cultural Significance

## OVERVIEW

“We want our values for our Country including the sacred sites and cultural places to be protected and managed by our mob, the right people for that place.”

Wujal Wujal Workshop October 2004

Places of cultural significance are both tangible and intangible features of the land, waterways and the sea that have special values for Traditional Owners. They are an important part of Aboriginal customary law/lore, traditions, history and current practices (Australian Heritage Commission 2002). These places often feature in Aboriginal creation stories and these stories link Traditional Owners to their Country. It is not just particular places that are important to Traditional Owners, but it is also the relationship between places that is important. For example, a coastal site may have been a traditional camping area en route to a meeting place elsewhere and the land in between the two places may have significance as a traditional pathway or walking track. Often the connection between story places is such that there is not one particular place that has an independent value. Each place has a meaningful association with other places, connected by storylines and oral traditions. Examples of some culturally significant places are provided in Table 5.

During the workshops, Traditional Owners talked about many places on their Country that were significant to them. Djabugay Traditional Owners talked about places such as the Bare Hill (*Bunda Dalbanji*) rock art site, and Girramay Traditional Owners discussed the importance of traditional walking tracks on their Country (See Box 7). Yirrganydji, Jirrbal and Nywaigi Traditional Owners talked about protecting important traditional camping areas along rivers and streams, as well as story places, burial sites and ceremonial areas on their Country. Along rivers and streams there were concerns about the impacts of both erosion and rehabilitation projects because of the high density of culturally significant places that occur in these areas. Traditional Owners stressed that it is important that they are consulted about activities that occur on their Country to make sure that all places of cultural significance are protected and conserved.

### Box 7. Case Study: Recording Aboriginal Walking Tracks on Girramay Country

In 1994 a project to relocate and record several Aboriginal walking tracks on Girramay traditional lands in the Cardwell and Kirrama Ranges was undertaken. There are networks of tracks that connect places of significance on Girramay lands and which also provide links to neighbouring groups' Country. Girramay elders remember routes that they walked as young men and women, and which their grandparents walked. The project employed Traditional Owners and was funded by the WTMA and ATSIC. Two of the major tracks used and maintained by Aboriginal people, the Juburriny Track and the Gayjal Track were relocated, as well as sections of other tracks.

“Aboriginal walking tracks tell us things about what people did together...they demonstrate links with other tribes. For instance suggesting that social connections through marriage, trade and shared ceremonies were maintained. While a midden may tell us what people ate, a walking track can show us where they went to get food” (Phil Pentecost, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation 1999).

Source: Wet Tropics Management Authority - Rainforest Aboriginal News No.3 March 1999



**Table 5.** Examples of types of culturally-significant places

<b>Occupation Places</b>	Hearths, fireplaces, stone artefacts, shell middens, artefact scatters, dwellings and campsites.
<b>Stone Quarries</b>	Locations where materials for making artefacts were gathered for use and trade.
<b>Carved and Scarred Trees</b>	Trees may show scars from the removal of bark to make various artefacts including canoes, shields, and containers. Carved trees mark locations of cultural significance.
<b>Art Sites</b>	These include drawings, engravings, stencils and paintings on rock faces that can have various functions.
<b>Burial Places</b>	Individual and collective.
<b>Ceremonial Grounds</b>	These places are important for Aboriginal people as meeting places or where ceremonies are performed. These can include Bora Grounds.
<b>Resource Areas</b>	These can include habitual areas of resource exploitation. Fish traps are important which can be linear arrangements, barriers of stone set across inlets and bays, or woven branches set across creeks or rivers.
<b>Historical Places</b>	Contact sites between Europeans and Aboriginal people, historic cemeteries, massacre sites, missions and burial sites.
<b>Walking Tracks</b>	Traditional pathways of Aboriginal people (including trade routes).
<b>Culturally Significant Places</b>	Dreaming tracks and story places.
<b>Waterways of Significance</b>	Rivers and streams created and occupied by Dreaming beings.



Above: Aboriginal guides from Mossman Gorge, Roy Gibson and Bill Bocrill, reinforcing the walking track after the wet season.





## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Current legislation for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage includes the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* (Cth), and the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) (See Box 8). NR&M is responsible for the administration of the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*. Under this legislation, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Bodies are established.

Local Governments in the region also have an important role to work in conjunction with Traditional Owners to ensure that their planning schemes (developed under the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*) protect Aboriginal values. The *Integrated Planning Act 1997* (Qld) requires valued features, including places of cultural heritage significance, to be incorporated into any planning scheme.

At a regional and local level, Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal organisations are also taking a proactive approach to protect and manage places of significance. For example, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation has developed an extensive cultural heritage database (with appropriate ICPR protocols). Girringun also employs a cultural heritage officer and has been successful in accessing funding for cultural heritage projects. For example, it has secured Envirofund support for the implementation of elements of the Warrami Cultural Heritage Area Management Plan. Girringun Aboriginal Corporation has also been involved in a Coastcare project to develop educational signage about the importance of cultural heritage, as well as developing leaflets about Aboriginal fish traps on Hinchinbrook and Goold Islands. Girringun was also involved in a project with Girramay Traditional Owners to relocate and record parts of the routes of several walking tracks on Girramay Country (See Box 7). Balkanu has also supported Kuku Yalanji people in protecting areas of natural and cultural significance at Buru (China Camp) in the Daintree.

An innovative approach to the protection of cultural landscapes in planning, policy and management arrangements has been the development of cultural landscape mapping programs and databases by Aboriginal people. For example, Traditional Owners in the Burdekin Dry Tropics NRM region are currently developing a landscape mapping project which also incorporates training and skills development in GIS and other capacity-building components for Traditional Owners.



Above: William Duffin (Djabugay) and Daryn Storch (EPA) at the Djabugay Fauna Survey.

(Photo: B. Hunter)



## Box 8. Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003 – Summary

The Cultural Heritage Coordination Unit of the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Energy administers the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) and the *Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld), which repeal the *Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and Queensland Estate) Act 1987* (previously administered by the Environmental Protection Agency). The Act describes Aboriginal cultural heritage in the following way:

“The cultural heritage of a people can be both tangible and intangible. The culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia is intrinsically related to their close connection to the land”.

Under the Act, there is legislative recognition that:

- Aboriginal people are the primary guardians, keepers and knowledge holders of their cultural heritage.
- Existing rights of ownership of cultural heritage by Aboriginal people and native title are not affected.
- There is Aboriginal ownership of; human remains, secret and sacred material currently held in state collections (such as the Queensland Museum) and cultural heritage removed from land.
- Residual ownership (custodianship) of any other cultural heritage resides in the state (e.g. to ensure protection of heritage on freehold land).

### Blanket Protection

The legislation recognises that a significant area does not necessarily have markings or other physical evidence indicating occupation or denoting its significance. It ensures protection of areas and objects of significance to Aboriginal people in accordance with their tradition or history. It also ensures protection of areas in Queensland where there is culturally, historically, or archaeologically significant evidence of occupation.

### Duty of Care

The duty of care provisions require those conducting activities in areas of significance to take all reasonable and practical measures to avoid harming cultural heritage. These are enforced by penalties for non-compliance and are outlined in gazetted guidelines which set out measures for meeting them.

### Management Plans

Cultural heritage management plans are required for certain high-level impact activities (e.g. where an environmental impact statement is required under legislation) and may be initiated voluntarily (e.g. to ensure that duty of care is met). They require a four-month notification and negotiation process to reach agreement on how they will ensure that harm to cultural heritage is avoided or minimised. They do not require that cultural heritage be registered as part of the planning process. They may be objected to via the Land and Resources Tribunal which makes a recommendation to the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines. The Minister's decision is subject to judicial review.

Source: Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines website





## ISSUES

There is a general lack of awareness and understanding of the scope and values of places of Aboriginal cultural significance by industry, government, community groups and the general public.

### Government Policy and Legislation

Various concerns about the *Queensland Cultural Heritage Act 2003* were raised during workshops. These concerns have been articulated in various submissions made to the government by NQLC and the Queensland Indigenous Working Group (QIWG) in the lead up to the declaration of the legislation. Issues and concerns about the legislation include the lack of recognition of Aboriginal ownership and control over cultural heritage and concerns about the Duty of Care Guidelines placing the onus on developers to do the right thing. There were also concerns about the cultural heritage database being managed by NR&M. This is because information in the database is often unreliable and has not been collected or approved by the Traditional Owners. The issue of culturally-sensitive information being stored and managed by a government agency was also a great concern.

### Information and Monitoring

Traditional Owners need to be supported to document the cultural values of Country and to be able to manage this information in a way that is appropriate for each group. To date, the lack of resources and support to ensure the documentation, management and monitoring of places of cultural significance in culturally-appropriate ways is a major impediment to the recognition and protection of cultural heritage values.

### Physical Threats

Many of the threatening processes to natural resources that are identified in the Wet Tropics Regional NRM Plan, such as vegetation clearing, waterway and wetland modification, altered fire regimes, tourism, weeds, feral animals and urban development, also threaten places of significance. For example, vegetation clearing can break the connections between places of cultural significance, thus isolating culturally-significant places from each other, while feral pigs can damage culturally-significant waterways. Workshop participants also raised concerns about the increasing pressures of tourism (marine and terrestrial) on culturally-significant places. Workshop participants said that tourists may visit and potentially damage sites without even being aware of it. For example, Banjin Traditional Owners are concerned about the impacts of tourist boat anchors at Hinchinbrook Island on fish traps, which are of extremely high cultural significance (Nurse-Bray 2003). The Mossman Gorge community are worried about high tourist numbers and the impact of tourists on culturally-significant places.

### Management Arrangements

Traditional Owners are concerned about their lack of involvement in the management of cultural heritage, both in the on-site management and in higher managerial roles. The lack of appropriate consultation with Traditional Owners about NRM projects and other activities which impact on places of cultural significance was raised in workshops with Yirrganydji, Girramay, and Yidinji peoples. They were also concerned about the lack of employment opportunities and funding for Traditional Owners to manage places of cultural significance.

### Use and Access

Inappropriate use of, and access to, places of cultural significance by non-Aboriginal people and lack of consultation about access to those places is a major issue. Koko Muluridji and Djabugay Traditional Owners talked about their concerns at being restricted from certain areas which contain places of significance because having access to these places is a fundamental part of managing them.

## Strategies and Actions for Places of Cultural significance

<b>STRATEGY 4.</b>  <b>Increase involvement of Aboriginal people in managing places of cultural significance.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b>  4.1 Assist Traditional Owners and landholders to negotiate voluntary access agreements in the region to protect and actively manage areas of cultural significance.  4.2 Develop and implement legally-binding agreements and cooperative management arrangements between Traditional Owners and relevant stakeholders for the management of culturally-significant places.  4.3 Resource the Cultural Heritage Body to effectively administer the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> in conjunction with NR&M.  4.4 Implement the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement Cultural Heritage Management and Mapping Protocol.  4.5 Support Aboriginal people to undertake appropriate training in cultural heritage management.	NNTT, NTRBs, ICC, WTMA, AHC, EPA, NR&M, EPA, QPWS, DATSIP, DET, Local Government, DLGPS&R, FNQ NRM Ltd, GBRMPA, DEH, ANTA, DEWR, graziers and farmers, ARC, TAFE, Girringun other government and non-government stakeholders.
<b>STRATEGY 5.</b>  <b>Ensure protection of Aboriginal cultural landscapes and culturally-significant places in policy, planning and management arrangements.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b>  5.1 Identify threatened places of significance and develop management plans for high priority areas (in accordance with Aboriginal ICPR).  5.2 Support Traditional Owners to develop culturally-appropriate educational signage relating to the preservation and protecting of places of cultural significance and cultural heritage.  5.3 Develop agreements between NTRBs, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and ARC regarding roles and responsibilities for NRM and cultural heritage.  5.4 Develop partnership agreements between NRM stakeholders and ARC and Girringun Aboriginal Corporation relating to the protection and management of cultural heritage in NRM activities.   <i>Strategy 5 continued on next page</i>	NTRBs, Girringun, ARC, NR&M, Local Government, industry, DPI&F, DEH, ICC, FNQ NRM Ltd, graziers and farmers, EPA, QPWS, AHC, other government and non-government stakeholders.



<p><i>Strategy 5 continued</i></p> <p>5.5 Develop and run an educational campaign for all NRM stakeholders regarding the <i>Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003</i> (Qld).</p> <p>5.6 Develop and undertake cross-cultural awareness programs for landholders and other NRM stakeholders regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage issues.</p> <p>5.7 Develop mechanisms to ensure that places of cultural significance and cultural landscape values are protected in government planning (such as Local Government).</p> <p>5.8 Ensure that all permitted activities take into particular account any native title rights, socio-cultural values, cultural heritage protection, intellectual property rights and any existing traditional custom issues.</p> <p>5.9 Support the involvement of Traditional Owners in the development of fire management planning and on-ground activities to ensure protection of places of significance.</p>	
<p><b>STRATEGY 6.</b></p> <p><b>Re-list the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>6.1 Undertake the research required to develop a submission to meet criteria for the WTWHA to be listed on both the National Heritage List and the World Heritage List as a Cultural Landscape as per the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement and the Cultural Heritage Management and Mapping Protocol of the Agreement.</p> <p>6.2 Develop a submission to meet criteria for the WTWHA to be re-nominated as a World Heritage Cultural Landscape.</p>	<p>ARC, Girringun, NR&amp;M, AHC, DEH, EPA, Rainforest CRC, AIATSIS, FNQ NRM Ltd, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>



# Aboriginal Material Culture

## OVERVIEW

The Wet Tropics contains a wealth of material culture, not only relating to tangible objects but also relating to the wealth of knowledge possessed by Traditional Owners regarding the creation of these objects. Examples of Aboriginal material culture in the region includes spears, shields, clubs, fish traps and baskets as well as the documentation of heritage, including books, research reports and recordings. Importantly, it also includes ancestral remains. Some implements are unique to the region such as the large shields and fighting swords, the bicornual-shaped baskets, slate grindstones with cut grooves and large edge-rounded axes (Horsfall 2002). Many of these implements are still used by people in the region.

The state museums of Queensland, New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, and the National Museum of Australia have significant collections of Aboriginal material culture from the Wet Tropics (Brayshaw 1990; Fourmile 1995). Their collections include ancestral remains, artifacts, ceremonial objects, photographs, genealogies and diaries (Fourmile 1995).

At workshops with Ma:Mu and Djiru Traditional Owners participants said that the repatriation of cultural material is important to cultural revival and that elders need to have access to objects and information in order to recall knowledge so that it can be passed on to the younger generations. Many women also talked about the importance of being able to teach the younger generations about how to make and use baskets and bags from grasses, palm leaf strips, bark fibre and lawyer cane.

"Many of our special artefacts were taken from our people without permission and are now stored in museums and other places. These artifacts are an important part of our heritage and we want to bring them back to Country and make sure our children can learn from them and look after them for their children."

Traditional Owner Workshop - Ingham, September 2004



Above: Girringun Aboriginal Corporation's museum and training centre in Cardwell which houses traditional artefacts.





## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* (Qld) is the major piece of legislation that deals with the protection of Aboriginal material culture (See Box 8). One of the principal barriers to the repatriation of material culture is the lack of appropriate storage facilities and trained staff to curate collections (Fourmile 1995). Within the Wet Tropics there are two Aboriginal 'Keeping Places' for cultural materials, one at Yarrabah, and another at Girringun Aboriginal Corporation in Cardwell. The Yarrabah Menmuny Museum was officially opened in 1996. The Keeping Place at Girringun offers a practical, hands-on environment within the Girringun Education, Training and Cultural Centre. The centre provides an accredited training program for Indigenous peoples, focusing on the preservation and management of their cultural heritage.

## ISSUES

### Management Arrangements

During workshops many Traditional Owners talked about their concerns that Queensland and National museums, libraries and universities have significant collections of Rainforest Aboriginal cultural property and resources. These include ceremonial objects, ancestral remains, artefacts, photographs and genealogies. Many people would like these materials to be returned to Country and cared for by the rightful custodians. The Queensland Museum, which manages a number of Rainforest Aboriginal artefacts, has an established program to repatriate human remains and sacred objects held by the museum.

### Aboriginal Keeping Places

The Aboriginal Keeping Places in the region are not for all of the Traditional Owner groups. Although agreements may be made with Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and the Yarrabah museum, other groups not represented by Girringun Aboriginal Corporation or at Yarrabah may wish to explore other options for the protection and management of material culture.

### Skills and Training

Many groups need to undertake training with regards to the care and management of artefacts in Keeping Places once repatriated.



Above: Maps, traditional baskets and an example of a *Mija* (traditional rainforest dwelling) at Girringun Museum in Cardwell.

## Strategies and Actions for Aboriginal Material Culture

<b>STRATEGY 7.</b>  <b>Repatriate and appropriately manage Aboriginal material culture.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>7.1 Support Traditional Owners to negotiate with landholders the return of material culture.</p> <p>7.2 Develop a comprehensive database of Wet Tropics Aboriginal artefacts (and their uses) held in museums and other institutions as an educational tool for future generations.</p> <p>7.3 Develop MoUs for cultural materials housed in institutions and museums (until repatriation is occurs).</p> <p>7.4 Establish Aboriginal cultural heritage management committees with Traditional Owner representation for museums to address issues relating to the identification, return, preservation, use and ownership of Aboriginal cultural material.</p> <p>7.5 Promote the representation of Aboriginal people on Museum Boards.</p> <p>7.6 Support and resource current Aboriginal Keeping Places and museums in the region.</p> <p>7.7 Support Traditional Owners to undertake training to be able to manage Aboriginal material culture.</p>	<p>NTRBs, Queensland Museum, Girringun, ARC, NR&amp;M, local government, industry, DEWR, DET, FNQ NRM Ltd, ANTA, graziers and farmers, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>





# Aboriginal Languages

## OVERVIEW

For Traditional Owners languages are inextricably linked to cultural and spiritual identity. Language is the primary tool used to express a connection to Country. These languages are embedded in the landscape, and knowledge of the environment is encoded in these languages (Lennon *et al.* 2001). Language is one of the most significant aspects of cultural and natural heritage. It is both part of culture and the most important means of expressing culture and communicating culture to others, as well as transmitting it to the next generation (Lennon *et al.* 2001). The continuity of Aboriginal languages in the region is of vital importance for the cultural survival of each Traditional Owner group. There are strong links between the loss of ecological knowledge and the loss of Aboriginal languages (See Box 9).

The names of Traditional Owner groups also refer to the languages and dialects spoken by the members of these groups. According to Dixon (1972, 1976) Ngadjon-Jii, Ma:Mu, Jirrbal, Djiru, Gulgay and Girramay people speak related dialects belonging to the larger 'Dyirbal' language group. While the languages of the Wet Tropics area have some similarities there are also a number of major regional differences. As Dixon (1976) points out, not only do the Aboriginal groups of this region speak at least five distinctive languages, but there are great differences between some languages, such as Yidinji and Ngadjon-Jii.

"We want to maintain and revive our languages so that our young people can understand and speak language and they can pass it on to their children."

Traditional Owner - Innisfail, September 2003

"We have names for plants and animals and for many places on our country in our language. Some of them like bana for water, bangarru for turtle, and bungaa for possum. Other mobs in the Wet Tropics got their own language."

Ngadjon-Jii Traditional Owner - 2003

### Box 9. The Loss of Ecological Knowledge and Aboriginal Languages

The loss of Aboriginal ecological knowledge and the viability of local languages is linked to environmental change. As people are removed from Country, habitat is reduced and species decline, some to the point of local extinction. Aboriginal knowledge and ways of speaking about the environment, fauna and flora, are adversely affected in a number of ways. As linguists and anthropologists have observed, Aboriginal languages like Aboriginal law/lore, are embedded in the landscape. Individuals are not only given the name of totemic species but are also named after a place, often associated with an ancestor. In this way, language, people, fauna, flora and the environment are interlinked to create a humanised landscape. As such, environmental change has the potential to transform the nature of this inter-connectedness, in some cases, bringing about the loss of knowledge and language.

The erosion of language viability in the Wet Tropics region is a serious concern for both Aboriginal people and linguists alike. In their 'Language Atlas of the Pacific Area', Wurm and Hattori (1981) identify a number of local dialects and regional languages as having serious sustainability issues, with some bordering on 'extinction'. While a number of Aboriginal groups in the region, for example, Djabugay and Yidinji people, have embarked upon a program of language revitalisation, other groups require support, assistance and skills to bring about similar changes (Pannell, S. 2004, *pers comm.*)

Another type of Aboriginal language also exists in the Wet Tropics, which is often referred to as Aboriginal English. This is the name given to the various kinds of English spoken by Aboriginal people throughout Australia. Aboriginal English in Australia ranges in a continuum from Creole through to 'regular English' with the adoption of various Aboriginal terms. Aboriginal English is a powerful vehicle for the expression of Aboriginal identity. Some terms and expressions in Aboriginal English that are identified in the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement are highlighted in Table 6.

**Table 6.** Some terms and expressions about NRM in Aboriginal English used in the Wet Tropics.

English Term	Aboriginal Term / Explanation
best practice	<i>right way</i>
biodiversity	<i>rich Country</i>
communication	<i>talk talk / yarn / Murri bush telegraph</i>
community	<i>the mob</i>
community relations	<i>Murri way</i>
Cultural Heritage	<i>our business</i>
degraded catchment / land	<i>sick water / sick Country</i>
guideline	<i>'which way' business</i>
law	<i>lore</i>
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	<i>goodwill paper</i>
Natural Resource Management	<i>caring for Country</i>
protection	<i>watching Country</i>
white person	<i>Migaloo</i>

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL) is the national body for community-based Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs in Australia. It promotes the maintenance, retrieval and revival of languages, through the support of community-based language programs. The Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) plays an important role in using new technologies to help revive, maintain and strengthen languages.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Initiatives Program (ATSILP) aims to promote the use and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. ATSILP funds the Regional Aboriginal Language Centres and Regional Aboriginal Language Management Committees (RALMC). Language Centres provide a base for the collection of information on local languages and support community based language projects, such as the recording of oral histories. Giringun Aboriginal Corporation is the sponsor body for the recurrent operation of the RALMC in the ATSIC Cairns and Townsville regions.

In the Wet Tropics, there are a number of other local initiatives. For example, Warrgamay Traditional Owners have been running language programs in Ingham (Wyles-Whelan, T. 2004, *pers comm.*) while other groups, including Gulngay, Girramay and Nywaigi also operate language programs. A Djabugay language and culture program has been operating for some years at Kuranda State School, Smithfield High School and Cairns West State School. Ngadjon-Jii have developed a website which has information on language (See Box 5).

*"A man names his son for the child's grandfather's place, a daughters is named for her father's father's sister, and so forth. A tract of landscape can thus be considered to be a geographical family tree."*

Girramay Traditional Owner 2003





The Gimuy Cultural Development Aboriginal Corporation has also developed a Language Resource Kit (See Box 10). There have been projects between Traditional Owners, the WTMA and the EPA to develop interpretative signage using Aboriginal language names such as the Kuku Yalanji signage in the Daintree and Djabugay and Djiru on cassowary signage. The QPWS has also done work with Ngadjon-Jii for Wooroonooran National Park, and Jirrbal and Ma:Mu for the Misty Mountains area.

### Box 10. Gimuy Yidinji - Revitalisation of Language Program

The Gimuy Cultural Development Aboriginal Corporation is an example of a Traditional Owner group that is working to maintain and revive their language. The Corporation developed a Language Resource Kit for Yidinji language that looks at both the coastal and Tableland dialects. It contains information such as vowels, consonants, tape recordings, sounds, simple sentences, activities and more. As part of the cultural revival of the Yidinji people, Elders have suggested that Cultural Camps be conducted where only Yidinji language will be spoken. A major aim of the elders is to set up a Language Centre where Yidinji language can be taught to Yidinji people. Funding for the program was received from ATSIC and the RALMC.

Seith Fourmile, Co-ordinator of the Gimuy Corporation, said, "Language, song and dance and stories all go together. Language speaks for Country and to speak for Country you speak it through dance and songs from stories".

Source: Wet Tropics Management Authority - Rainforest Aboriginal News Issue No.6 July 2001

## ISSUES

Of Australia's 250 or so Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, two-thirds have already been destroyed by colonisation. Australia has the world's worst record of language destruction. Of the languages that remain, less than 20 are strong - the others are all identified as endangered, with very few speakers (AIATSIS website). Of perhaps over 100 languages originally spoken in Queensland, only a handful are still spoken across generations today. Part of the reason for this situation is the implementation of successive government policies that prohibited and restricted Aboriginal people from using language. In the Wet Tropics region all Aboriginal languages are classified as endangered. There is great concern amongst Traditional Owners that those people who have important knowledge of languages are becoming elderly (RALMC. 2004, *pers comm*).

### Research

It is critical that the Aboriginal languages of the Wet Tropics are documented and passed on otherwise they will become extinct. There is limited documentation of a number of Aboriginal languages within the region. Some languages are very well documented, e.g. the Dyirbal group of languages. This documentation may not be readily accessible by Aboriginal people.

### Resources and Support

There is a lack of commitment by governments to resource and support the maintenance and revival of Aboriginal languages. There is also lack of awareness about the linkages between language maintenance and improved environmental management outcomes.

The huge biological diversity found in the north Queensland rainforest is reflected in the detailed vocabulary of the languages of the region, but these languages are at least as severely endangered as the biological species in the region.

Lennon *et al.* 2001

## Strategies and Actions for Aboriginal Languages

<b>STRATEGY 8.</b>  <b>Determine the current state of Aboriginal languages in the region.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> 8.1 Complete an assessment of languages in the region by the Regional Aboriginal Language Maintenance Committee. 8.2 Develop databases on Aboriginal languages (status, language resources, language speakers and teachers/workers). 8.3 Record oral histories from language speakers in the region. 8.4 Document Aboriginal languages in various forms (video, computer databases, story books, word lists, dictionaries, etc.). 8.5 Return existing records and copies of languages from public and private collections, libraries and archives to Traditional Owners where appropriate.	RALMC, AIATSIS, Rainforest CRC, ARC, research institutions, Girringun, ICC, FATSIL, other government and non-government stakeholders.
<b>STRATEGY 9.</b>  <b>Develop and implement Aboriginal language programs.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> 9.1 Investigate methods of extension, such as radio programs on Aboriginal language (Indigenous and mainstream radio programs). 9.2 Develop Aboriginal language education kits for schools and Aboriginal communities in the region. 9.3 Develop and run Aboriginal language programs in primary and high schools, universities, TAFE, and Aboriginal communities for all age groups.	RALMC, universities, Rainforest CRC, AHC, TAFE, primary and high schools, FATSIL, Girringun, ARC, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.
<b>STRATEGY 10.</b>  <b>Increase awareness of Aboriginal languages.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> 10.1 Develop and implement community awareness and educational programs about Aboriginal languages (and the appropriate use of languages). 10.2 Promote the recognition of Aboriginal revival in policy and legislation. 10.3 Develop culturally-appropriate signage on Country as determined by Traditional Owners.	RALMC, Rainforest CRC, Girringun, FATSIL, ARC, EPA, WTMA, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.





# Plants and Animals

## OVERVIEW

"We want to be key players in conserving plants and animal of cultural significance for future generations. The plants and animals are really important for us culturally and spiritually."

Traditional Owner Workshop-Kuranda, September 2003

The plants and animals of the region are of great importance to Aboriginal culture and customs (See Table 7). The Wet Tropics region is recognised for its huge diversity of plants and animals. The region possesses 26% of all Australia's vascular plant diversity and 41% of all Queensland's vascular plants in slightly over 1% of the area of Queensland (Weston and Goosem 2004). In addition, the region has a huge diversity of animals many of which are unique to the rainforests. The region also has a huge diversity of bird species and the most invertebrate species of any comparable region in Australia (Weston and Goosem 2004). The most significant feature of the coastal zone is the Great Barrier Reef. The Reef is home to an estimated 1500 species of fish, more than 300 species of hard reef-building corals, 4,000 mollusc species and four hundred species of sponge. Accordingly, the Wet Tropics region is considered to be a biodiversity hotspot of global importance (FNQ NRM Ltd and Rainforest CRC 2004).

**Table 7.** Some Aboriginal values for plants and animals.

Socio-Economic	Cultural	Spiritual	Intellectual and Cultural Property	Health
Traditional Trade Subsistence use Commercial opportunities Employment Benefits from use of ICPR Community well-being Social well-being through using resources, accessing Country and practising culture.	Customary law/lore Ceremony Arts and crafts Artistic design and representation Transmission of cultural knowledge	Creation stories Totems Law/lore Management responsibility Dreaming tracks	Knowledge of: Medicinal qualities Use of toxic plants Bush tucker Customary management techniques Distribution & seasonality of plants Life cycle of animals Hunting and gathering techniques Technologies/knowledge for gathering, processing and utilising natural resources	Traditional Food Medicine Healthy culture Well-being



Many animals, such as cassowaries, have great cultural significance and there are many customs, stories, songs and dances associated with them. Cassowary images are found in rock art in the Wet Tropics and many of the trees which cassowaries 'plant' are foods which Aboriginal people enjoy eating (WTMA 2004). The fact that cassowaries are now endangered is also a major concern to Aboriginal people. Many Aboriginal groups in the region have a relationship of mutual obligation or a totemic relationship with certain animals or plants. This fact was highlighted by Traditional Owners in workshops for the development of this Plan. For example, the personal totem for Ngadjon-Jii elder, Ernie Raymont, is *mapi* or the Lumholtz tree kangaroo. Some people are named after and are known by the language name for their personal totem. For totems, there are a number of social prescriptions and requirements which can include a spiritual responsibility to respect and conserve the totem. It may also include a prohibition against consumption of the species in question.

There is a very strong interest from Traditional Owners in becoming actively involved in research, monitoring and management of plants and animals. Bar-Barrum Traditional Owners, whose Country is in the north-west of the Wet Tropics NRM region, discussed emu reintroduction programs, whilst Djiru Traditional Owners talked about cassowary research and management projects. Other coastal groups such as Gunggandji and Banjin, talked about becoming involved in turtle and dugong research and management.

### Box 11. Case study: Partnerships for Management of Flora and Fauna - Mona Mona Community Natural Resource Management

The Djabugay Ranger Agency is the Cultural Land Management Agency of the Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation (DTAC). DTAC received a devolved grant from the NRM Board (Wet Tropics) to implement the recommendations of the Mona Mona Environmental Protection Plan. This involved setting up wildlife corridors, building strategic fencing areas, and the rehabilitation of degraded areas to limit threatening processes caused by feral animals and weeds.

Activities undertaken included: conducting a flora and fauna survey of key habitats in Mona Mona; and implementing the Fauna Protection Plan, including identification of habitat corridors and strategic fencing areas.

The partner organisations were the Wet Tropics Management Authority and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development, there was also on ground support from the Environmental Protection Agency. The project provided an opportunity for people to get back to Country and to learn about the biology of fauna and how to conduct fauna surveys from a western scientific perspective. Information gained was to go back to the community.

"The project was about getting information back to the community. The money was used to get us on to Country. We were able to pay four guys to be part of the team...we got to know the differences between melomys and other rats...we are learning more about the species, its biology" (Barry Hunter Jnr in Hill and Nursey-Bray 2002).



Above: Djabugay people setting traps as part of the fauna survey. (Photo: B.Hunter)

Source: Hill and Nursey-Bray 2002





Feral animals, such as pigs, can have substantial impacts on places of cultural significance and resources used by Aboriginal people. For example, Girramay Traditional Owners are concerned about the damage that pigs can have on significant places associated with creeks and streams. To date, there has been little work done to determine the nature and extent of these impacts (Hill, R. 2004, *pers comm*). Whilst many Traditional Owners highlighted their concerns about feral pigs some Traditional Owners said that feral pigs are an important food source. Thus, there are a range of values that Traditional Owners may have for feral animals which need to be considered in any feral animal management program in the region. For example, management techniques, such as the use of poisonous baits for pigs, are a major concern for Aboriginal people who hunt pigs for food.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Indigenous Engagement Unit (IEU) within the EPA, the Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit (IPLU) within GBRMPA, and the Aboriginal Resource Management Program (ARM) within WTMA play an important role in supporting Traditional Owners to become involved in managing plants and animals.

The TAFE Caring for Country Program runs both a certificate and a diploma-level course. Aboriginal rangers acquire unique skills as they are trained to use both traditional knowledge and contemporary management practices to preserve cultural and natural values. A joint Indigenous training initiative was undertaken by the Centre for Tropical Restoration and QPWS (with funding from Program 7 of the Rainforest CRC). This initiative supported Aboriginal participants to learn about plant and animal survey techniques.

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation has played a key role in establishing the Cardwell Indigenous Ranger Unit (CIRU) in conjunction with EPA. The CIRU is responsible for the management of protected areas, both marine and terrestrial, in the Cardwell area. They have produced a video about this program which is available through Girringun Aboriginal Corporation. The Djabugay Ranger Agency was involved in a joint project with community and government agencies which focused on flora and fauna surveys (See Box 11).

Many Aboriginal people in the region have a relationship of mutual obligation or totemic relationships with certain animals or places. "If it's your totem you are not supposed to eat that totem".

Ernie Raymont, Ngadjon-Jii Elder 2003



Above: Many rainforest plants are important to Traditional Owners as bush tucker or for medicinal purposes.



## ISSUES

### Policy Planning and Management

One of the major concerns expressed by Traditional Owners in the majority of workshops was that they are not adequately involved in the research, planning and management of plants and animals. Many groups such as Girramay, Gulngay and Jirrbal stressed that better partnerships need to be developed with government and community groups involved with the management of threatened species, weeds and feral animals. Elders are concerned that there are very few employment opportunities involving the management of plant and animals for those Traditional Owners who have undertaken training, such as the Caring for Country TAFE course.

### Physical Threats

Concerns about threatening processes such as vegetation clearing, terrestrial habitat fragmentation and the impacts of agricultural practices (chemicals) on bush tucker plants and fish species that are important food sources in the region were raised in most workshops. Concerns about habitat loss and decline through urban development, clearing of habitat and global warming were also raised.

### Feral Animals

Pigs, cane toads, introduced fish species, rabbits and cats were identified by Traditional Owners as having a negative impact on plants and animals of cultural significance. Ngadjon-Jii Traditional Owners talked about the impact of introduced fish species, such as tilapia, on native fish species. To date, there has been little work to determine the nature and extent of the impact of feral animals on Aboriginal values.

### Weeds

Weed species identified as having an impact on native species were similar to weeds identified in the Wet Tropics NRM Plan and other Plans. Many people talked about the impact of weeds on aquatic species and stream health and their impacts on bush tucker species. Aboriginal people can have different values for determining the significance of weeds than non-Aboriginal people. For example, Bellyache Bush (*Jatropha gossypifolia*) was identified as a particular concern for Bar-Barrum people because of its toxicity and impact on waterways where Aboriginal children swim.



Above: Eddie Anderson from Mossman Gorge maintaining walking tracks for Kuku-Yalanji Dreamtime Tours.



## Strategies and Actions for Plants and Animals

Document traditional knowledge of plants and animals (in a culturally-appropriate way).	Potential Partners
<b>Actions</b> <p>11.1 Resource and support Traditional Owners to coordinate the documentation of Aboriginal knowledge of plants and animals, including past and present distribution, cultural significance, customary management, use and threats (with appropriate recognition of ICPR).</p> <p>11.2 Undertake research to establish the cultural significance and extent of the impact of introduced plants and animals on cultural values.</p> <p>11.3 Determine the status and threats to culturally-significant plants and animals.</p>	<p>Girringun, CSIRO, ACTFR, AIMS, Balkanu, ARC, WTMA, JCU, EPA, Rainforest CRC, DEH, DPI&amp;F, FNQ NRM Ltd, NR&amp;M, QPWS, GBRMPA, CRC Reef, universities, private sector, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<b>STRATEGY 12.</b> <p><b>Increase the level of involvement of Aboriginal people in the management of weeds and feral animals.</b></p>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> <p>12.1 Assist implementation of the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils Regional Pest Management Strategy by establishing links and active exchanges with Traditional Owner groups regarding pest management issues.</p> <p>12.2 Involve Traditional Owners in the implementation of Local Government pest management plans.</p> <p>12.3 Ensure that feral pig baiting programs are designed in consultation with Traditional Owners to consider the impact on human use of pigs.</p> <p>12.4 Promote Traditional Owner groups and organisations as key delivery organisations for the management of pest plants and animals.</p> <p>12.5 Incorporate Traditional Owners' values and priorities in pest management plans and catchment plans.</p> <p>12.6 Promote the use of culturally-significant native species in revegetation projects.</p>	<p>Girringun, ARC, NR&amp;M, DPI&amp;F, QPWS, FNQROC, Local Government, Balkanu, DSD&amp;I, ICM groups, FNQ NRM Ltd, CRC Reef, Rainforest CRC, community groups, WTMA, ANTA, CSIRO, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>

<p><b>STRATEGY 13.</b></p> <p>Increase the level of involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of research, policy, planning and management arrangements for plants and animals.</p>	<p>Potential Partners</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>13.1 Develop an education campaign to increase the awareness of NRM stakeholders about Aboriginal knowledge and values for plants and animals.</p> <p>13.2 Promote Traditional Owner groups and organisations as key delivery organisations for research and all aspects of the management of culturally-significant species.</p> <p>13.3 Ensure Traditional Owner representation on boards, committees and advisory groups for rare and threatened species.</p> <p>13.4 Ensure the meaningful involvement of Traditional Owners in the development and implementation of recovery plans under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (Cth).</p> <p>13.5 Implement the 'Rainforest Aboriginal Involvement in Research' component of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement to ensure that research commissioned by NR&amp;M, WTMA, EPA, and DEH in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area conforms with the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies.</p> <p>13.6 Promote the use and adoption of the AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies by all researchers and organisations that undertake research in the region.</p>	<p>ARC, NR&amp;M, DPI&amp;F, QPWS, EPA, DEH, Local Government, FNQ NRM Ltd, TAFE, DEWR, DET, ANTA, FNQROC, ICM groups, Balkanu, community groups, WTMA, CSIRO, AIMS, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, other research institutions.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 14.</b></p> <p>Increase employment opportunities for Traditional Owners in the management of plants and animals.</p>	<p>Potential Partners</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>14.1 Employ Traditional Owners in the research and management of plants and animals as consultants. Employment arrangements could be full-time, part-time, casual or through contracts.</p> <p>14.2 Encourage government agencies to budget for appropriate Traditional Owner involvement in the management of plants and animals.</p> <p>14.3 Develop and implement flexible and accredited training programs for Traditional Owners on cultural and natural resource management.</p>	<p>FNQ NRM Ltd, ARC, EPA, QPWS, GBRMPA, DEWR, DET, WTMA, TAFE, NR&amp;M, ANTA, DPI&amp;F other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>





# Hunting, Gathering and Cultural Maintenance

## OVERVIEW



"We want our rights to hunt and use resources on Country to be supported by government and people living here. That's an important part of our culture. This needs to be recognised in policy and management. We need to be involved in managing those animals that we hunt to make sure they are doing OK."

Traditional Owner Workshop - Jumbun, September 2003

"We can't just go and get tucker and use trees for spears and boomerangs. We need to get permission now to get materials and it's our land. Migaloo law and use of our Country means that our land has been restricted from us."

Koko Muluridji Elder 2003

Hunting, gathering and fishing practices, and the use of resources for other purposes, are an important part of caring for Country. Natural resources are used for many purposes, such as food, medicine, and creating implements. These cultural practices are crucial in maintaining links to Country, maintaining and re-affirming cultural identity, as well as being central to the well-being of Traditional Owners.

The wider community's perception of Traditional Owner resource use in the region is focused on the hunting of specific icon species such as turtles and dugongs. Dugong and turtle have deep cultural significance for many coastal Traditional Owner groups. Dugong and turtle meat are circulated between kin and others held to be close, reaffirming social relationships. Traditional Owners at workshops raised many concerns about the survival of dugong and turtle and a number of groups identified that they are not hunting these species currently because of concerns about sustainability. Traditional Owners want to be actively involved in research and management of these species.

There are also many other plants and animals that are culturally-significant for Traditional Owners. Each Traditional Owner group has customary laws/lores and protocols regarding hunting animals and using plants to ensure that resources are conserved and maintained. These customary laws/lores continue to provide the basis for the management of resources today. Cultural practices in relation to customary management of sea Country include (Smyth 1997):

- Conducting ceremonies (songs, dances, story telling and other rituals) with the purpose of nurturing the well being of particular places, species and habitats;
- Control of entry into estates by outsiders - restricting resource use to clan members and others by agreement;
- Seasonal exploitation of resources (See Box 12);
- Restriction on the harvesting of particular species based on age, gender, reproductive conditions, health and the fat content of individual animals;
- Restrictions on resource use and distribution by clan members and others based on age, gender, initiation status, marital status and other factors;
- Restrictions on the use of particular animals and plants of totemic significance to individual clans; and
- Each clan usually identifies closely with at least one natural element (usually animal or plant), the use of which is often highly restricted or prohibited.



## Box 12. Aboriginal Knowledge of Seasons and Resource Availability

Knowledge of seasonal variation is of vital importance in understanding when resources are available. Seasonal indicators inform people when different plants are fruiting and when certain animals are ready to eat. Rainforest Aboriginal cultures typically identify five seasons. The following is a summary of the five seasons identified by Kuku Yalanji at Wujal Wujal (Anderson 1984):

<i>Kambar</i>	“proper wet time”, heavy rainfall period (late December - March),
<i>Kabakabada</i>	“winter rain time”, occasional late rain (April - May),
<i>Buluriji</i>	“cold time”, drier weather, colder nights (June - September),
<i>Wungariji</i>	“hot time”, height of dry season (October - early November), and
<i>Jarramali</i>	“storm time”, thunderstorms and build-up of wet (late November - mid December).

Aboriginal people in the region have linked the unseasonable behavior of a number of native species to climate change and are concerned about the loss of plants and animals as a result of an unexpected increase in temperature in the Wet Tropics (Pannell, S. 2004, *pers comm*).

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

There are many international and national conventions, including strategies and inquiry reports, that recognise Aboriginal peoples' rights and responsibilities to use resources. For example, the National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia's Biological Diversity recognises the importance of hunting and gathering for Aboriginal people. Under s.211 of the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), native title holders can exercise their rights to hunt and fish for personal, domestic or non-commercial needs without obtaining a permit or license. The 1999 High Court case of *Yanner v Eaton* (201 CLR 351), also upheld the validity of s.211, confirming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' native title rights to hunt, gather and collect plants and animals without fear of prosecution under State conservation acts. It also extended these rights to include hunting and fishing by modern adaptive methods in accordance with traditional law/lore and customs. The *Yanner* decision certainly casts new light on the way governments and environmental management agencies deal with the conservation of protected species. For Aboriginal people, the *Yanner* decision has brought about long-overdue recognition of their traditional laws/lores and customs and provided some legal certainty regarding the exercise of these.

Any contemporary approaches to management of Aboriginal hunting and gathering need to be community driven and based on traditional laws/lores and customs. A good example of a project in the Wet Tropics is the Kuku Yalanji community-based management of hunting of turtle and dugong (See Box 13). Another initiative underway in the region, which is being coordinated by the Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit (IPLU) at GBRMPA, is the development of Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (TUMRAs). These are effectively MoUs with Traditional Owners in the region. Currently a TUMRA is being developed between Djiru, Girramay, Banjin, Warrgamay, Nywaigi and GBRMPA.

“An example of the loss of biodiversity and of a significant cultural resource for Aboriginal people is the disappearance of *Burngu*, a moth larvae that is an important and valued food from the traditional Country of Kuku-Yalanji, apparently from the introduction of cane toads.”

Hill, R. 2004, *pers comm*





### Box 13. Case study: Hunting Turtle and Dugong - Community-Based Management of Resources, Kuku Yalanji Marine Resource Committee

Traditional Owners are very concerned about declining numbers of turtle and dugong. Traditional Owners assert that their hunting regimes are not the only factors impacting upon the numbers of these species. Traditional Owners take exception to being targeted as the sole group impacting on these species and perceive these attacks on their hunting regimes as another means of cultural destruction.

During the 1990s the decrease in turtle and dugong numbers in the Great Barrier Reef became a major concern to environmental groups and governments. To manage turtle and dugong, governments decided that Indigenous peoples' use of the marine park and inshore waters and resources should be restricted and monitored. Forcing a permit system on Traditional Owners' activities caused tensions between hunters and government. Because of these concerns, the Kuku Yalanji of Mossman established a Marine Resource Committee for the management of traditional hunting permits issued by QPWS and GBRMPA.

Community-based management can prove to be effective because it provides the means for community monitoring at a grassroots level and invests control in the hands of the Traditional Owners via a management mechanism which is community driven. Not only do Traditional Owners regulate who, if and where people can hunt, their role has also had a major influence on illegal hunting and the education of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

Source: Hunter and Williams 1997, 1998

## ISSUES

### Understanding of Aboriginal Values

At workshops, some people expressed frustration at the lack of recognition by the general public of their customary rights to hunt and use resources. They argued that the impact of urban development, commercial fishing and vegetation clearing are far greater than the impact of hunting. Aboriginal hunting is a contentious issue and is often perceived as having a major impact on species when there is little scientific basis for this perception (Caughley and Sinclair 1994; Altman and Allen 1992). In reality, understanding the ecological dimensions of subsistence wildlife use in Australia is very limited and knowledge of whether or not subsistence use is adversely affecting wildlife populations is inconclusive in most cases (Davies 1999).

Many non-Aboriginal people do not understand the role that hunting has in cultural maintenance, caring for Country and social well-being. There is also a lack of recognition of the legal rights that Traditional Owners have to hunt and use resources and controversy about what constitutes traditional hunting. The Australian Law Reform Commission found that a determination on whether an activity is traditional should focus on the purpose of the activity rather than on the method, so that the incorporation of new materials and hunting methods would not prevent an activity from being classed as traditional.

### Physical Impacts

Traditional Owners raised concerns about the impact of commercial and recreational fishing (including by-catch) on fish stocks and about the flow of agricultural chemicals into waterways and the impact of chemicals on freshwater marine species. The impact of boats strikes and netting on dugongs is also a concern.

"Over the years fish been harder to find, bush tucker hard to find, chemicals running off ... killing."

Traditional Owner Regional Workshop - Cairns 2002.



### Conflicting and Inappropriate Government Policy

Under the *Native Title Act 1993* (Cth), Traditional Owners do not need a permit to use resources if they are exercising their native title rights. However, this is not properly recognised by government agencies and the general public.

### Unregulated Hunting

Traditional Owners are worried about illegal use of flora and fauna species on their Country by non-Aboriginal people. They are also concerned about other Indigenous people using resources without permission. These unrestricted and unregulated practices can create negative public perceptions of hunting and reflect on Traditional Owners.



## Strategies and Actions for Hunting, Gathering and Cultural Maintenance

<p><b>STRATEGY 15.</b></p> <p>Increase the awareness of NRM stakeholders and the broader community about Aboriginal resource use.</p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>15.1 Develop and run awareness-raising campaigns for all NRM stakeholders to educate them about Traditional Owners' rights and aspirations to use resources on Country and the cultural significance of these activities.</p>	<p>DPI&amp;F, ARC, Giringun, WTMA, DEH, EPA, ICC, GBRMPA, QPWS, NNTT, FNQ NRM Ltd, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 16.</b></p> <p>Traditional Owners values and priorities for using resources are identified and protected.</p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>16.1 Assess the current use and future requirements of Traditional Owners and incorporate these requirements into fishery and resource management plans.</p> <p>16.2 Ensure representation of Traditional Owners on relevant boards and committees (that make decisions which may impact on Traditional Owners use of resources).</p> <p>16.3 Support Traditional Owners to develop plans for the use and management of culturally-significant species.</p> <p>16.4 Develop cooperative agreements for the management and use of marine resources with State and Commonwealth agencies (including TUMRAs).</p> <p>16.5 Support and resource Traditional Owners to develop appropriate management models for the use of resources, which recognise customary laws/lores for sustainable levels of harvest.</p> <p>16.6 Recognise and protect Traditional Owners values and priorities for resource use in all policy, planning and management arrangements.</p>	<p>DPI&amp;F, ARC, industry, Traditional Owners, Giringun, NTRBs, GBRMPA, EPA, QPWS, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>

# Water Resources

## OVERVIEW

Healthy waterways have always been a valued resource for Traditional Owners in the region because their lifestyle and religious customs and beliefs are closely associated with waterways. Many streams, creeks and rivers have great spiritual significance, are important parts of creation stories, and frequently form focal points of Country. For example, major rivers in the region, such as the Barron River, are believed to have been created by a mythological snake, while standing waters, like the Crater Lakes on the Atherton Tablelands, are said to be occupied by totemic snakes.

There are also many important places such as traditional camping and living areas along rivers in the region. Knowledge of the locality and seasonality of rivers, creeks and lagoons has always been important to know where to hunt and what food plants are available. Clean and healthy waterways are essential for the healthy fish populations and the health of Traditional Owners.

"There are really important places along rivers and creeks for us, and clean healthy water is important to our mob for all fish. We have lots of stories about rivers and creeks on our Country. All this needs to be recognised and respected."

Traditional Owner Workshop - Mossman Gorge, October 2004

### Box 14. Djiru Concerns about the Declining Health of Rivers



Above: (front left clockwise) Lily Hart, Jean Fenton (Indigenous Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd), Rae Kelly, Dawn Hart, Leonard Andy, Allan Buller Jnr, Beryl Buller and Rona Hart at the Innisfail Catchment Centre discussing Djiru concerns about water quality, September 2003. (Photo: L.Larsen)

Traditional Owners at the Djiru workshop talked about their concerns about the impact of chemicals from agricultural practices on the fish stocks in areas where people have fished for thousands of years. People were worried about the impact on their health from eating fish that have been affected by chemicals. One elder at the workshop talked about seeing ulcers on prawns in traditional fishing areas.



## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Water quantity is regulated by the *Water Act 2000* through Water Resource Plans. To date, only the Barron River Water Resource Plan has been finalised for the region. There was significant recognition of Traditional Owner values and issues in this planning process. It is envisaged that a regional Water Resource Plan for the Wet Tropics region will be developed. It is important that there is Traditional Owner input into this Plan.

It is important that Traditional Owners are involved with the implementation of the Reef Water Quality Protection Plan and the Catchment to Reef Program, which is a joint initiative between the Rainforest CRC and CRC Reef.

## ISSUES

### Water Pollution

There was a lot of discussion in workshops regarding concerns about the pollution of streams and creeks and the impact this has on the population of fish that are important food resources for many Traditional Owners. Discussions focussed on the impact of agricultural chemicals on human health and stream health and the impact (and potential impact) of mining activities on waterways (See Box 14). Increased sediment in waterways as a result of vegetation clearing and farming practices was also raised as a concern.

### Changes in Flow Regimes

There is an increasing demand for water resources to meet agricultural, urban and industrial needs in the region. Traditional Owners identified various issues of concern about these increasing pressures including the impact of irrigation, dams, culverts and weirs on the breeding cycle of culturally-significant fish and plant species; the loss of traditional Country that occurs through dam construction; the impact of changes in flow regimes which are necessary for the detoxification of certain rainforest foods; and the impact of lower flow rates on riparian plant species of cultural significance.

### Policy and Legislation

The difference between Traditional Owners' values for water and non-Indigenous values for water results in a lack of recognition of Traditional Owners' rights and interests regarding water in government policy. Traditional Owners' rights and interests in waters must be seen and understood from within their cultural perspectives and in terms of their traditional law/lore and customs.

### Lack of Awareness

Many Aboriginal people are unaware of current policy, legislation and the management agencies responsible for the regulation and management of water quality issues.



Above: Throughout the Wet Tropics streams and rivers are culturally significant to Traditional Owners, such as the Babinda Boulders.



## Strategies and Actions for Water Resources

<b>STRATEGY 17.</b>  <b>Increase recognition and protection of Traditional Owners' values for waterways.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> 17.1 Document Traditional Owners' values for waterways in culturally-appropriate ways. 17.2 Ensure culturally-appropriate representation of Traditional Owners on government, community and industry boards and committees regarding water quality and quantity management issues. 17.3 Incorporate Traditional Owners' values and priorities for water resources in Water Resource Plans and Water Quality Improvement Plans. 17.4 Develop and run a cultural-awareness raising program with relevant stakeholders regarding Traditional Owners' values, interests and rights in water.	ARC, Girringun, NR&M, DPI&F, local government, GBRMPA, EPA, ACTFR, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, other government and non-government stakeholders.
<b>STRATEGY 18.</b>  <b>Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in research, planning and management of waterways.</b>	<b>Potential Partners</b>
<b>Actions</b> 18.1 Support and resource Traditional Owners to undertake water quality monitoring. 18.2 Develop and implement training programs for Traditional Owners on water quality monitoring. 18.3 Involve Traditional Owners in all levels of planning and implementation of water quality and quantity projects.	ARC, Girringun, local government, GBRMPA, EPA, Rainforest CRC, ACTFR, CRC Reef, NR&M, DPI&F other government and non-government stakeholders.



# Commercial Use of Resources on Country Forestry

## OVERVIEW

"We want successful Aboriginal businesses on Country like bush tucker...that provides economic, social and cultural benefits to our mob."

Traditional Owner Workshop - Kowrowa, September 2003

Forestry was once one of the largest industries in the Wet Tropics region. Its economic value in 1986 was around \$26 million. However, since the listing of almost one million hectares of the region as part of the WTWHA in 1988, tourism and recreation have emerged as the new economic focus of the region. Commercial forestry within the WTWHA is prohibited and the Queensland Government is currently in the process of converting all of the 480,889 hectares of Queensland state forests and timber reserves in the WTWHA to National Parks. Forestry activities within the Wet Tropics NRM Region currently fall into four main categories: farm forestry on cleared land; harvesting of native forests on private land; harvesting native forests on Crown lands and large-scale plantations (state and private) (FNQ NRM Ltd and Rainforest CRC 2004).

There is great interest in the development of the bush tucker industry in the region. There are many ways in which Aboriginal people could be involved in the bush foods industry. These include being the producers of the raw products used in food products and the development of nurseries which could provide materials to farmers who wish to diversify their farming systems. Bush tucker projects have the potential to protect and maintain species that are of Aboriginal cultural significance. These projects would support the continued use of these resources for future generations and provide economic, social and cultural benefits for Aboriginal people. A good example of a current project is the Ma:Mu Bush Tucker Garden at Innisfail (See Box 15).

There is also interest by Traditional Owners in developing arts and crafts businesses in the region. Aboriginal arts and crafts in Australia are estimated to be worth near to \$200 million per year and this is increasing rapidly, with around half of sales occurring through the tourism market (ATSIC 1997). Currently, many products sold through tourist outlets in the region are not made by Aboriginal people and are not from the region. Workshops identified the development of initiatives to create and market cultural artefacts as an area of potential business. There was discussion on artefacts made from timber, such as boomerangs, spears and didgeridoos and non-timber forest resources, baskets, jewellery and other artefacts.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Aboriginal people have had limited participation in the forestry industry in the region to date (BDO Consulting 2004). In 2002-2003, a contract was entered into for the development of a National Indigenous Forestry Strategy. In October 2003, the Queensland Department of State Development and Innovation (DSD&I) coordinated a workshop in the Wet Tropics region to investigate opportunities for Aboriginal people in agroforestry. At the workshop, Aboriginal people stated that they wanted to have increased participation in forestry initiatives in the region through projects such as bushfoods and boutique foods, medicines, biodiscovery, oils, honey – wild harvest, hardwood timber, nurseries and seed collection. Existing organisations, such as Private Forestry North Queensland, the North Queensland Timber Cooperative, Australian Forest Growers and the recently formed Network for Sustainable and Diversified Agriculture, assist in the integration, planning and management of private forestry activities.

## Box 15. Case Study: Ma:Mu Bush Tucker Garden

A joint project between Ma:Mu Aboriginal Corporation, James Cook University, the Rainforest CRC, Tropical North Queensland TAFE, Coles Indigenous Australian Foods and the WTMA on the development of the Ma:Mu Bush Tucker garden. The project aims to develop many species of traditional bush foods in the area including Davidson Plum, Johnstone River Apple, Red Bottlenut, Lemon Aspen, Lilly Pilly, Quandongs, Figs and Tamarinds.

Outcomes include:

- Continued use of resources;
- Improved economic outcomes through employment and business development opportunities;
- Cultural revitalisation and education;
- Skills development in conservation;
- Improved NRM outcomes through the propagation of plant species for revegetation projects; and
- Maintenance of ICPR of Aboriginal people.

“We are preserving our culture through a process of educating the children and the wider community on bush tucker. Ma:Mu people and the wider community can visit the gardens with Elders and reflect on culture and life. All trees are used for day-to-day living whether it be bush tucker, making spears, boomerangs, canoes and weaving basket materials” (James Epong in Wet Tropics Management Authority 2002).

Source: Wet Tropics Management Authority - Rainforest Aboriginal News No.8 December 2002



Diploma students, Francis Joyce and William Niehsner, check the progress of bush tucker seedlings in Innisfail, December 2003.

(Photo: Brian Cassey, Courier Mail)

## ISSUES

### Capacity Issues

There is limited awareness amongst Traditional Owners of the commercial opportunities provided by agroforestry and the potential of sustainable enterprises that can be developed from these. Traditional Owners need access to funding, assistance with administration, technical support and culturally-appropriate training to underpin industry development initiatives.

### Legislation and Policy

Although there are substantial native title interests in the WTWHA, the level of land ownership for many Traditional Owners is currently minimal. Therefore, many Aboriginal people are seeking to investigate opportunities for commercial ventures on those parts of their Country within protected areas. Under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* there are restrictions on the commercial use of resources in protected areas. The current transfer of forestry lands to national parks under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992* will further restrict the use of plants for commercial purposes. A recent example of these restrictions involves Ma:Mu Traditional Owners and TAFE, who applied for a permit to collect seed for bush tucker species on Ma:Mu Country to be propagated and developed into cultivars. The permit application was rejected by the EPA despite the fact that the Ma:Mu Bush Tucker Project has had a number of positive environmental outcomes, such as the promotion of tree planting with native species on cleared lands, the maintenance of culturally-significant bush tucker species, as well as the fact that Ma:Mu are the Traditional Owners for the area that they wanted to collect seed from.



## Strategies and Actions for Forestry

<p><b>STRATEGY 19.</b></p> <p><b>Increase the capacity of Traditional Owners to develop and implement successful forestry initiatives.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>19.1 Develop and implement awareness-raising programs for Traditional Owners about forestry opportunities (including product identification, value adding opportunities and support networks).</p> <p>19.2 Develop business plans to attract funding to establish forestry initiatives.</p> <p>19.3 Develop and implement culturally-appropriate, flexible and accredited training programs for Traditional Owners on all aspects of developing and implementing forestry initiatives.</p> <p>19.4 Assist in the development of new legal frameworks regarding the right to collect traditionally-used natural resources from protected areas and government lands to support the development of commercial enterprises.</p> <p>19.5 Resource and support Traditional Owners to purchase land and develop agreements to utilise land for the purposes of establishing viable commercial forestry enterprises.</p> <p>19.6 Support specialist Aboriginal business opportunities and value-adding industries such as artefact production, art production and sign-making as forestry activities.</p> <p>19.7 Negotiate rights to collect traditionally-used natural resources from national parks and within the WTWHA to support the development of commercial enterprises.</p> <p>19.8 Support negotiations and research required to change policy and legislation regarding Aboriginal ICPR where needed.</p> <p>19.9 Employ Aboriginal people at all levels in government and non-government forestry initiatives.</p>	<p>IBA, DAFF, ICC, DEWR, FAB, DSD&amp;I, industry, ARC, ANTA, Balkanu, Rainforest CRC, JCU, DET, Giringun, TAFE, JCU, private sector, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 20.</b></p> <p><b>Protect Traditional Owners' knowledge of traditionally-used plants including technologies and access to these resources.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>20.1 Develop and implement workshops and other forums to support Traditional Owners to develop ICPR protocols and guidelines.</p> <p>20.2 Undertake research to develop frameworks to protect ICPR of traditionally used plants in legislation, policy and management arrangements in a culturally-appropriate way as determined by Traditional Owners.</p>	<p>DSD&amp;I, industry, ARC, Balkanu, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, AIATSIS, JCU, Giringun, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>



# Tourism

## OVERVIEW

Tourism is one of Queensland's key economic drivers and the relative importance of the industry will continue to grow in the future. Tourism activity contributes \$6.3 billion to the Queensland economy and accounts for 6.4% of Queensland's Gross State Product (Tourism Queensland 2004). Within the Wet Tropics each year nearly two million domestic visitors and one million international visitors come to the region. Tourism is by far the major source of revenue and total visitor expenditure levels \$2 billion annually (Office of Economic and Statistical Research 2002). Based on 1996 figures, commercial tourism and recreational fishing and boating in the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area are estimated to generate nearly \$770 million per year (Driml 1999). Tourism in the WTWHA is estimated to generate nearly \$750 million per year (Driml 1997).

Whilst tourism and recreation are providing significant economic benefits to the region, few benefits flow to the Traditional Owners, despite the fact that Traditional Owners' Country and their culture are important for the tourism industry. Aboriginal involvement in the mainstream tourism industry is very limited and there are few Aboriginal tourism enterprises in the region. Furthermore, tourism is placing an increasing pressure on Aboriginal cultural values of the region (McDonald and Weston 2004).

Traditional Owners of the region have identified tourism as an economic development opportunity, as a vehicle for cultural education and maintenance, and as a means to gain recognition of their culture (Ignic 2001). Economic opportunities in the tourism industry identified by Traditional Owners in workshops include:

- Employment;
- Training and skills development for young people in the tourism and hospitality industries;
- Stand-alone Traditional Owner cultural tourism enterprises;
- Cultural tourism services attached to mainstream and other enterprise; and
- Joint ventures between Traditional Owners and mainstream tourism enterprises.

In workshops many Traditional Owners, such as Ngadjon-Jii, Djiru and Djabugay peoples, stressed the importance of Traditional Owners actually owning and operating tourism ventures in the region. Tourism is also seen as a means to achieve cultural and social aspirations such as facilitating Traditional Owners getting back to Country and maintaining contact with Country. It is also seen as well as a vehicle for increasing cultural awareness of the wider Australian community and overseas visitors about Aboriginal culture.



"Bama want to be fully involved in tourism to make sure our culture is presented with integrity and respect... and that benefits from tourism are shared with our people. We want to develop partnerships with other operators. We need to develop our own businesses and have ownership and control, businesses like tour guiding, art and crafts, our young people getting jobs... and educating Migaloos about our culture."

Traditional Owner Workshop - Cairns, May 2004



Above: One of Far North Queensland's first established Aboriginal tourism ventures, Kuku-Yalanji Dreamtime Tours, offers unique rainforest experiences through the eyes of Traditional Owners.



## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Aboriginal Tourism Australia (ATA) provides leadership and a focus for the development of Aboriginal tourism consistent with Aboriginal economic, cultural and environmental values. It was established in 1995 following a recommendation of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Industry Strategy and national meetings of Indigenous operators. The Respecting Our Culture tourism development initiative was launched in Cairns in 2003. It was developed and designed by ATA and encourages the tourism industry to operate in ways that respect and reinforce Aboriginal heritage and the living cultures of Aboriginal people. In 2003, the new Indigenous Tourism Business Ready Program was announced. The new program, developed by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (DITR), aims to provide financial assistance to Indigenous tourism projects and development. Tourism Queensland has developed an Indigenous Tourism Strategy in 2004 which includes a number of strategies to increase the level of involvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the tourism industry.

Aboriginal tourism within the Wet Tropics includes:

- Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours and visitor centre at Mossman Gorge (See Box 16);
- Native Guide Safari Tours (Kuku Yalanji);
- Djabugay Country Tours;
- Yindili Tours (Kuku Yalanji);
- Aboriginal guided walks at Malanda Falls with Ngadjon-Jii people;
- Waroo Indigenous Scenic Tours;
- Menmuny Museum at Yarrabah and Girringun Museum in Cardwell;
- Aboriginal cultural tours run by Djiru Traditional Owners at Mission Beach through the Clump Mountain Wilderness Camp.

There are also Aboriginal interpretative displays and centres in the region including the Nganyaji interpretative centre at Ravenshoe, located next to the Ravenshoe Koomboloomba Wet Tropics information centre which has information about Jirrbal Traditional Owners. The Hull River Aboriginal Interpretative Centre and memorial at South Mission Beach features information about Djiru people and culture.

Examples of joint ventures in the Wet Tropics include; Tjapukai Aboriginal Park which is a partnership with Djabugay, Yirrganydji and other shareholders, the Daintree Eco Lodge which has developed an Aboriginal Tour Guiding venture with Kuku Yalanji Traditional Owners and Baddagun Indigenous Performances at Paronella Park (near Innisfail). These types of initiatives should be promoted and other mainstream tour operators need to investigate opportunities to develop joint ventures with Traditional Owners.

### Box 16. Case Study - Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours

The Mossman Gorge community has had more than fifteen years of experience in tourism. The Mossman Gorge community is located at the entrance to Mossman Gorge, which is part of the Daintree National Park.

The Mossman Gorge Community, through its community corporation Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunka Inc (BBN), operates four business enterprises. These include a visitor centre and the Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours, the manufacturing of artefacts and the Kuku Yalanji Dance Troupe. Interpretative tours are run from the visitor centre about Kuku Yalanji history and culture. Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tourism has won a Queensland Tourism Award.





## ISSUES

### Capacity Issues

The Rainforest CRC supported a project which investigated the potential for Aboriginal tourism in the Wet Tropics. This study identified a number of critical factors for tourism development in the Wet Tropics. These include; the need for support for enterprise start up, a sound business case and business plan for enterprises, and the need for ongoing financial management services to enterprises (Ignic 2001).

There is a lack of knowledge about industry and opportunities amongst many Traditional Owner groups. There needs to be greater networking between Traditional Owners, the tourism industry and government tourism agencies, such as Tourism Queensland (TQ) and Tourism Tropical North Queensland (TTNQ).

### Impacts of Tourism of Aboriginal Values

Tourism is also increasingly placing pressure on Traditional Owners' values of the region, such as cultural sites and places of significance. Mossman Gorge (within the Daintree National Park) is the second most highly visited site in the WTWHA with between 450,000 and 640,000 people visiting the site annually. The only access to the site is through the community and there are currently no restrictions on public access to the site. Although the Mossman Gorge community is greatly impacted upon by this high visitation, they receive little social and economic benefit (Bentrupperbäumer and Reser 2000).

### Inappropriate Use of Knowledge

During workshops Traditional Owners raised concerns about the culturally-inappropriate interpretation of their Country by tourist operators and stressed that Traditional Owners are the ones that should talk about their culture to tourists.



Above: Djabugay Country Tours run tours in Kuranda and throughout Djabugay Country. (Photo: M. Curtain)

## Strategies and Actions for Tourism

STRATEGY 21.	
Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in the Tourism Industry	Potential Partners
<b>Actions</b> <p>21.1 Establish a regional Aboriginal tourism network to support Traditional Owners in the region.</p> <p>21.2 Promote appropriate representation of Traditional Owners on industry, government and community-based tourism boards and committees.</p> <p>21.3 Develop and implement flexible and culturally-appropriate training and apprenticeship initiatives for Traditional Owners regarding the development and management of successful tourism enterprises.</p> <p>21.4 Develop and implement an education campaign for Traditional Owners about opportunities in the tourism industry.</p> <p>21.5 Encourage private sector organisations to provide scholarships and apprenticeships for Traditional Owners to develop tourism skills.</p> <p>21.6 Encourage industry support networks to provide for the distribution of information in print and other media which will assist Traditional Owners to learn about the tourist industry.</p> <p>21.7 Encourage existing tourist operators to employ Traditional Owners to provide environmental and cultural interpretation.</p> <p>21.8 Investigate mechanisms to develop an Aboriginal cultural accreditation and endorsement system for mainstream tour operators.</p>	<p>ARC, TQ, Girringun, IBA, DSD&amp;I, ATA, ANTA, industry, DEWR, DITR, DET, TTNQ, TAFE, STCRC other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
STRATEGY 22.	
Resource and support the development of Traditional Owner tourism businesses.	Potential Partners
<b>Actions</b> <p>22.1 Develop Traditional Owners tourism business plans and marketing strategies.</p> <p>22.2 Develop an Aboriginal Regional Tourism Strategy for the Wet Tropics.</p> <p>22.3 Develop cultural heritage walks and interpretative materials (signage and brochures).</p> <p>22.4 Develop Traditional Owner cultural centres.</p> <p>22.5 Investigate the potential for cultural dance troupes as economic enterprises and provide resources and support for the development of dance troupes.</p> <p>22.6 Support negotiations to develop a guaranteed quota of tourism permits for Traditional Owners in the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.</p>	<p>ARC, STCRC, Girringun, IBA, DSD&amp;I, ATA, industry, TQ, IBA, DITR, TTNQ, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, GBRMPA, WTMA, EPA, private sector, TAFE, DEWR, DET, DATSIP, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>

<p><b>STRATEGY 23.</b></p> <p><b>Ensure that the intellectual and cultural property rights of Traditional Owners are recognised by the tourism industry.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>23.1 Develop cultural interpretative material and displays within government and community tourist information centres.</p> <p>23.2 Develop cultural protocols that must be adhered to as part of the conditions of current permits and the allocation of new tourism permits for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area and the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area.</p> <p>23.3 Develop film and photography guidelines for the tourism industry to ensure that appropriate imagery is used in all publicity material in the tourism industry.</p> <p>23.4 Fully resource and support Traditional Owners to develop protocols for tour operators on the appropriate use of Aboriginal cultural information in their marketing campaigns and tourism products.</p> <p>23.5 Support and resource Traditional Owners to develop a regional Aboriginal authenticity label directed at both tourists and the tourism industry.</p> <p>23.6 Fully resource and support the development and implementation of on-going cultural training workshops for tour operators (marine and terrestrial) to promote cultural sensitivity and appropriate behavioural protocols.</p>	<p>ATA, ARC, STCRC, Giringun, IBA, DSD&amp;I, industry, WTMA, EPA, TQ, GBRMPA, TTNO, TAFE, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>





# Fisheries and Aquaculture

## OVERVIEW

Cairns supports the largest fishing fleet in Australia with over 800 hundred vessels fishing in regional waters for seafood including prawns, barramundi, reef fish, crabs, lobster and mackerel. The commercial fishing industry is the region's third largest, employing about 1,600 people and injecting approximately \$200 million each year into the regional economy. It is not known how much recreational fishing contributes to the regional economy, although it is thought to be worth at least \$122 million to the GBRWHA (Weston and Goosem 2004). The participation of Traditional Owners in the commercial fishing industry in the Wet Tropics region is minimal and Traditional Owners receive negligible benefits from the commercial use of resources in their sea Country.

Many Traditional Owners expressed a keen interest in being involved in the development of policy, planning and management of commercial fishing and in establishing commercial fishing and aquaculture enterprises. This can facilitate economic development and employment opportunities.

## CURRENT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Concerns raised by Traditional Owners have been brought to the attention of fisheries managers and policy-makers in several State Government and Commonwealth Government reviews. These processes, particularly at the Commonwealth level, resulted in a series of recommendations for strategic changes. These recommendations included:

- The recognition of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Indigenous fishing sector;
- Support for training initiatives;
- Cross-cultural training and education for fisheries managers and policy-makers;
- The development of mechanisms to incorporate customary marine tenure into contemporary fisheries management;
- The prioritisation of subsistence use of resources over commercial and recreation interests;
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander membership on appropriate fisheries management boards and advisory committees; and
- The development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fisheries Strategies.

Within Queensland, Aboriginal people can apply for community fishing licenses from DPI&F. To date this has delivered negligible outcomes on the ground. There is however, a commitment from DPI&F to further develop these licenses to ensure that appropriate technical support, resources, training provisions and planning are factored into this process. There is also a commitment from DPI&F to develop a Queensland Indigenous Fishing Strategy. The North Queensland Indigenous Aquaculture Working Group (NQWIAG) (Bowen to Gulf) formed following an Indigenous Aquaculture Conference held in Cairns and on Thursday Island in 2002. The aim of the working group is to develop Indigenous-owned sustainable aquaculture enterprises and provide training and employment outcomes. The establishment of this group and a North Queensland Indigenous Fishing Working Group has been a positive step towards the

"We want to explore opportunities for aquaculture and other fisheries because that can bring employment and business opportunities...good for young people... training and opportunities for the future. But we need to make sure that we look after those fish... not take too many...look after Country so that there are fish for our kids and for their kids as well."

Traditional Owner Workshop - Cairns, February 2004



Above: (left to right) Vince Courteney, Jason Bond and Cedric Rock monitoring sea grass in Cairns. (Photo: DPI&F)



recognition of commercial fishing and aquaculture interests. To date, these groups have focused on Cape York, but their area of focus is being expanded to include the Wet Tropics region.

A scoping study, commissioned by NQIAWG, was completed in 2003 to investigate aquaculture opportunities for Indigenous people and communities in North Queensland and the Torres Strait. Recommendations of the study were presented to the North Queensland Aquaculture Workshop at Cairns in 2004. Based on these recommendations, an Indigenous Extension Officer has since been appointed by DPI&F to support Indigenous people seeking to undertake aquaculture in North Queensland. The Indigenous-owned Mura Bama Aquaculture Corporation is proposed to provide a business focus for development of aquaculture projects. The scoping study also identified aquaculture projects most likely to succeed including the Yarrabah barramundi farming proposal which has interested the community for several years.

### Box 17. Case Study: Trinity Inlet Information Sharing Workshop, with Traditional Owners, Researchers, CRC Reef and DPI&F Northern Fisheries

In March 2004 a workshop was held in Cairns which was organised by CRC Reef, and DPI&F Northern Fisheries. The aim of the workshop was to bring together Traditional Owners from the Cairns area with researchers from CRC Reef and DPI&F Northern Fisheries to exchange information on Trinity Inlet and to find ways to work together more closely in the future.

Aboriginal organisations in attendance included the Yirrganydji Aboriginal Corporation, Gunggandji Aboriginal Corporation, Giangurra Aboriginal Corporation, Gimuy Cultural Development Corporation and the North Queensland Land Council.

Scientists gave a number of presentations to the Traditional Owners on their research in the Trinity Inlet on topics such as seagrass, mud crab, shark and introduced marine pest monitoring projects. There were talks about potential aquaculture opportunities. The workshop provided opportunities for Traditional Owners and scientists to come together and discuss issues concerning the management of Trinity Inlet.

Source: Bryony Barnett, CRC Reef

## ISSUES

### Physical Impacts

Traditional Owners are concerned about the impact of recreational fishing activities on fish stocks and habitats. For example, the Yarrabah community is particularly concerned about inshore trawling along the coast south of Yarrabah. The concern relates to its adverse impact on traditional fishery resources but also reflects concerns by Traditional Owners about their lack of involvement in decision-making about resource use in their sea Country and lack of benefits from economic utilisation of resources in their sea Country.

### Capacity Issues

There are often high entry costs, which can deter under resourced Aboriginal organisations from pursuing commercial fishing opportunities, as well as a lack of resources to establish initiatives. Often there is also a lack of knowledge and training and technical skills to establish and manage initiatives, as well as difficulties in being able to access fishing licenses and quotas.

### Legislation and Policy

In Australia, legislation and policy regarding fisheries focus on the customary fishing rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and does not adequately recognise Indigenous commercial rights and interests. Countries such as New Zealand, Canada and the United States are far more progressive in recognising Indigenous commercial fishing rights and interests (Tsamenyi and Mfodwo 2000). Whilst the recognition of customary fishing rights addresses rights of cultural self-determination and the preservation of a distinctive identity, commercial fishing rights are an important part of the right to economic self-determination.

## Strategies and Actions for Fisheries and Aquaculture

<p><b>STRATEGY 24.</b></p> <p><b>Increase the involvement of Traditional Owners in all levels of the commercial fishing industry and aquaculture enterprises.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>24.1 Encourage the North Queensland Indigenous Aquaculture Working Group and Fisheries Group to expand to incorporate the Wet Tropics region.</p> <p>24.2 Resource and support Aboriginal organisations and groups to develop cooperative arrangements with industry and government agencies regarding the management of commercial fisheries (such as stock assessment, fish enhancement and habitat management) and aquaculture.</p> <p>24.3 Facilitate the involvement of Traditional Owners in the development of fishery management plans.</p> <p>24.4 Support Traditional Owners to visit successfully operating aquaculture and commercial fishing projects to enhance their knowledge and understanding of these industries.</p> <p>24.5 Support and promote the employment of Aboriginal staff in the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries.</p> <p>24.6 Undertake research to document the aspirations of Traditional Owners for fisheries and incorporate these into fisheries management plans.</p>	<p>DAFF, ARC, DSD&amp;I, CRC Reef, DPI&amp;F, IBA, industry, ANTA, Girringun, ICC, DATSIP, IBA, DET, NQIAWG, DEWR other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 25.</b></p> <p><b>Develop Aboriginal fisheries and aquaculture enterprises.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>25.1 Undertake a review of aquaculture and commercial fishing opportunities for Traditional Owners including a framework for economic development. Implement an educational campaign to inform Traditional Owners about these opportunities and the skills required to sustain these businesses.</p> <p>25.2 Support Traditional Owners to develop business plans and to locate funding to establish aquaculture and commercial fishing enterprises.</p> <p>25.3 Support the requirement for an allocated quota of commercial and culturally-appropriate fishing licences for Traditional Owners.</p> <p>25.4 Develop and implement flexible, culturally-appropriate and accredited training for Traditional Owners interested in working in aquaculture and the commercial fishing industry.</p>	<p>CRC Reef, DPI&amp;F, ARC, DATSIP, ICC, NQIAWG, ANTA, DSD&amp;I, Girringun, DET, DEWR, DAFF, IBA, industry, private sector, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>



## CHAPTER 4

# Making the Aboriginal Plan Work





# Introduction

This chapter has been divided into five key sections which are outlined below.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

This section gives a broad overview of the roles and responsibilities of the State Government, Commonwealth Government, local government, Traditional Owner organisations and support agencies, regional and community NRM groups, industry, private sector, landholders, research and educational organisations in implementing the strategies and actions identified in Chapter 3.

## **Overarching Strategies**

This section provides information about a number of key areas that need to be addressed as a priority to ensure the effective implementation of many of the strategies and actions identified in Chapter 3. These key areas include:

### 1. Principles and Protocols

Principles and protocols need to be developed (and adhered to) to ensure equitable partnerships with Traditional Owners and other stakeholders for natural and cultural resource management. These partnerships are critical to ensure the effective implementation of the strategies and actions in this plan.

### 2. Research and Planning Priorities

This section identifies research and planning priorities which include the development of Country-based management plans for the Country of each Traditional Owner group, as well as the development of a cultural landscape mapping project.

### 3. Addressing Capacity Issues

This section highlights various key areas that need to be addressed to ensure that Traditional Owners have the resources, support and training required to implement the strategies and actions in Chapter 3. It also outlines the need for cultural awareness programs for other stakeholders.

## **Coordination and Facilitation**

This section highlights the roles of key players in the coordination and facilitation of the plan's implementation. It identifies the specific roles of the; Aboriginal Plan Implementation Officer, Traditional Owner Organisations, FNQ NRM Ltd Indigenous Board Director, Traditional Owner Advisory Committee (TOAC), Indigenous Project Officer for FNQ NRM Ltd, Indigenous Land Management Facilitator, Indigenous State Network Coordinator and Indigenous units in government agencies.

## **Funding and Resources**

This section highlights the next steps that need to be taken to secure funding and resources for the strategies and actions identified in the plan.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This section identifies what needs to be done to ensure effective monitoring of the plan.





# Roles and Responsibilities

The Aboriginal Plan provides a framework for cooperative projects between Traditional Owners and government agencies, community groups, industry, the private sector, landholders and other stakeholders that address environmental, social, cultural and economic issues (See Figure 5).

Effective implementation of the plan requires the establishment of high level partnerships and the development of Shared Responsibility Agreements with State Government and Commonwealth Government departments to ensure action occurs. Both State Government and Commonwealth Government commitment to the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan will contribute to fulfilling their commitments to policies such as 'Meeting Challenges Making Choices', the 'Ten Year Partnership Program' and the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) commitment to advancing reconciliation.

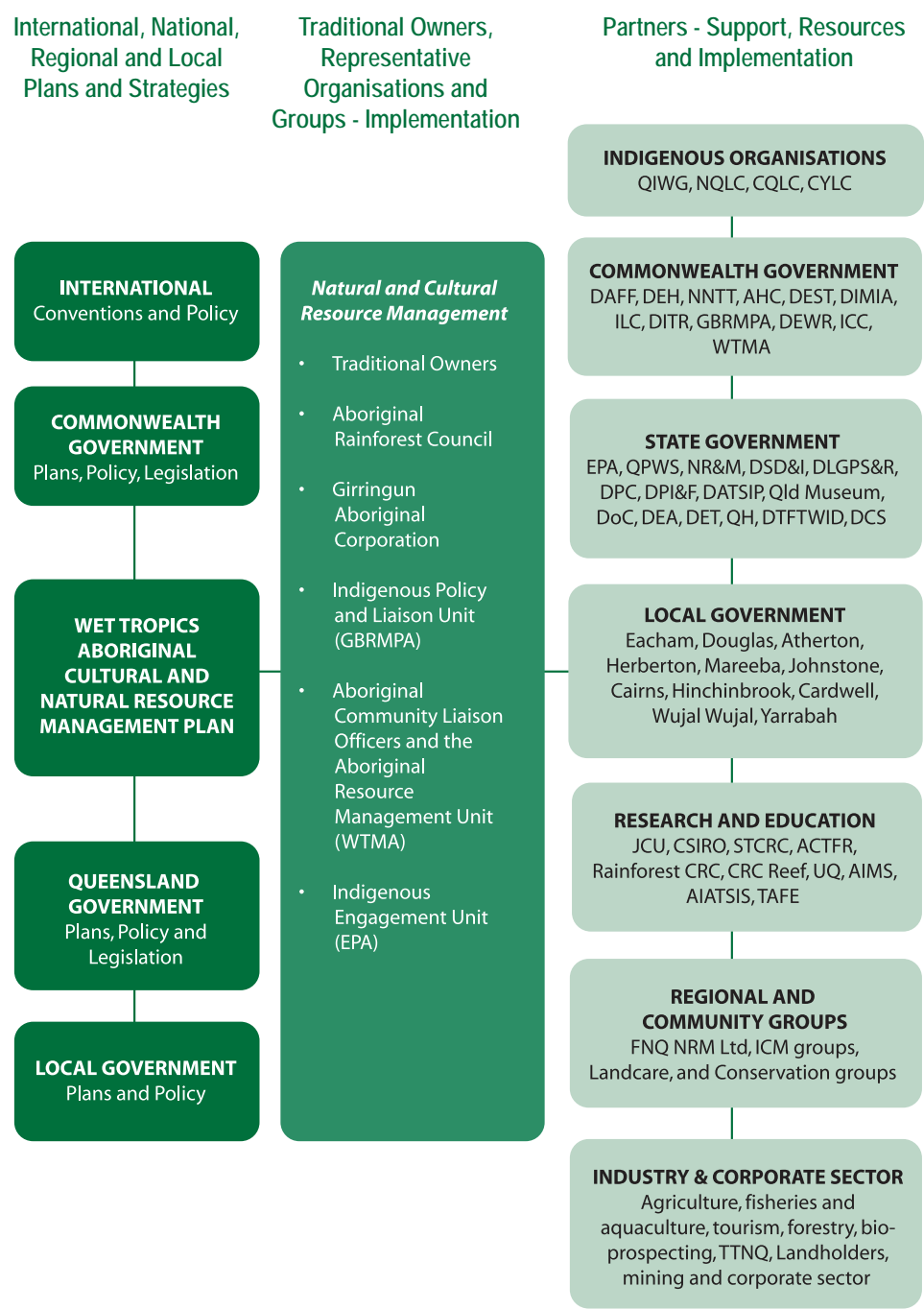


Figure 5. Groups and organisations that are encouraged to resource and support the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan.





## COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

The Commonwealth Government needs to play a substantial role in providing resources for the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan. Table 8 indicates the many departments and organisations that have responsibilities for the delivery of the plan.

The Indigenous Coordination Centre (ICC) is encouraged to support the coordination of negotiations regarding funding and resources for the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan with both Queensland and Commonwealth Government departments.

**Table 8.** *The role of Commonwealth Government departments in the Aboriginal Plan implementation*

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT	ALIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITH PLAN STRATEGIES
<b>Department of the Environment and Heritage</b>  Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Wet Tropics Management Authority Indigenous Land Management Facilitator Australia Heritage Council National Oceans Office Indigenous Policy and Coordination Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement</li> <li>• Incorporation of Aboriginal interests and priorities in NRM policy planning and management</li> <li>• Education, training and employment</li> <li>• Natural and cultural heritage management</li> <li>• Aboriginal governance structures for caring for Country</li> <li>• Traditional Use Marine Resource Agreements</li> <li>• Indigenous protected areas</li> <li>• Sea rights and fisheries</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Forestry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Education, training and employment</li> <li>• Incorporation of Aboriginal interests in NRM policy, planning and management</li> </ul>
<b>Attorney-General's Department</b>  National Native Title Tribunal Australian Law Reform Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Native title and ILUAs</li> <li>• Policy and legislation</li> <li>• Cultural awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Education, Science and Training</b>  Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, training, employment, research and policy</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual property policy</li> <li>• Arts development and policy</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Employment and Workplace Relations</b>  Community Development and Employment Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment, education and training</li> </ul>



COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT	ALIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITH PLAN STRATEGIES
Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism development</li> <li>• Policy</li> </ul>
Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs  Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination Indigenous Coordination Centers Indigenous Land Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy coordination</li> <li>• Education and training</li> <li>• Land acquisition</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Natural and cultural heritage</li> </ul>



## QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT

Queensland Government agencies have a significant role to play in both funding and supporting the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan. The responsibilities of various departments are outlined in Table 9.

**Table 9.** The role of Queensland State Government departments in the Aboriginal Plan implementation

STATE GOVERNMENT	ALIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITH PLAN STRATEGIES
Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing Ten Year Partnerships</li> <li>• Economic development and governance</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• Youth programs</li> <li>• Community development</li> </ul>
Department of Primary Industries & Fisheries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aquaculture and commercial fisheries development</li> <li>• Development of and involvement in commercial forestry initiatives</li> <li>• Employment and training</li> <li>• Involvement of Aboriginal peoples priorities in research</li> <li>• Incorporation of Aboriginal interests in fisheries and forestry policy, planning and management</li> </ul>
Environmental Protection Agency Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Indigenous Engagement Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement</li> <li>• Support and development of cooperative management of protected areas</li> <li>• Employment and training</li> <li>• Involvement of Aboriginal peoples' priorities in research</li> <li>• Incorporation of Aboriginal interests in environmental policy, planning and management</li> </ul>
Department of Natural Resources Mines  Cultural Heritage Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing Wet Tropics Regional Agreement</li> <li>• Cultural heritage protection</li> <li>• Employment, training and education</li> <li>• Incorporation of Aboriginal interests in NRM policy, planning and management arrangements</li> <li>• Involvement in native title and ILUAs</li> </ul>
Department of Premier and Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community and economic development and policy</li> </ul>





STATE GOVERNMENT	ALIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITH PLAN STRATEGIES
Department of Local Government, Planning Sport and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting Yarrabah and Wujal Wujal Councils</li> <li>• Cultural heritage protection</li> <li>• Aboriginal issues in Local Government planning schemes</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Programs for women</li> </ul>
Department of Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth programs (crime prevention etc.)</li> </ul>
Department of Education and the Arts  Queensland Museum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts development</li> <li>• Education and training, employment</li> <li>• Cross cultural awareness</li> <li>• Repatriation of cultural materials</li> <li>• Storage and management of material culture</li> </ul>
Department of Employment and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous employment and training support program</li> <li>• Apprenticeships/traineeships, employment</li> </ul>
Department of State Development and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Training education and employment</li> </ul>
Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development  Tourism Queensland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism development</li> <li>• Training, education and employment</li> <li>• Cultural tourism</li> </ul>



Above: In December 2004, Ma:Mu elders and Aboriginal Rainforest Council representatives met with Johnstone Shire Council staff in Innisfail to discuss Ma:Mu aspirations for looking after country in the Johnstone Shire.





## TRADITIONAL OWNER ORGANISATIONS AND SUPPORT AGENCIES

The ARC, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and local Traditional Owner organisations should play a key role in all aspects of the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan (See Coordination and Facilitation). Other organisations that are primarily concerned with Aboriginal issues (both government and non-government) also have responsibilities for various aspects of the plan's implementation. For example, the Cape York Land Council, North Queensland Land Council, Central Queensland Land Council and the Queensland Indigenous Working Group have responsibilities for strategies in this plan relating to native title rights and interests, policy and legislation, community development, education, training and employment.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is important that Local Government organisations support the implementation of the plan. There are many strategies and actions in the plan relating to Local Government that have been identified in this plan as priorities by Traditional Owners. These include those relating to:

- The incorporation of Aboriginal interests in Local Government planning schemes;
- Protection of cultural heritage and native title in Local Government planning schemes and works programs;
- Developing principles and protocols for working with Traditional Owners;
- Involvement of Aboriginal people in planning and implementation of pest management strategies; and Increased employment of Aboriginal people.

## REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY NRM GROUPS

### Wet Tropics Regional NRM Body - FNQ NRM Ltd

FNQ NRM Ltd has an important role to play in the implementation of the plan because this plan is one of the supporting documents to the Wet Tropics NRM Plan. As such key elements of this plan have been integrated into the Wet Tropics NRM Plan and the FNQ NRM Ltd Regional Investment Strategy (RIS). Traditional Owners want to ensure that they are meaningfully involved with projects funded through the RIS and supported by FNQ NRM Ltd (where appropriate). The protection of places of cultural significance and material culture in all NRM activities supported by FNQ NRM Ltd is also a priority.

### Community NRM Groups

Community NRM groups including conservation groups, Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) groups, Coastcare and Landcare groups, River Improvement Trusts and Bushcare groups are encouraged to develop equitable partnerships with Traditional Owners in all aspects of their operations. There is now a much stronger emphasis on these groups being able to demonstrate a commitment to work in conjunction with Traditional Owners to be eligible for funding via FNQ NRM Ltd and the extension of NHT. Strategies and actions identified in this plan that community NRM groups can support relate to the:

- Involvement of Traditional Owners in planning and implementation of ground conservation works;
- Incorporation of Traditional Owners' interests in catchment management plans and their implementation; and
- Protection of cultural values in on-ground programs.



## INDUSTRY AND PRIVATE SECTOR

The development of cooperative projects and partnerships with both industry groups and the private sector are necessary to implement many of the strategies and actions in the Aboriginal Plan that relate to the development of commercial enterprises and initiatives, employment, education and training, and in providing technical support and advice to Traditional Owners.

## LANDHOLDERS

Graziers and farmers are encouraged to develop cooperative agreements with Traditional Owners regarding access to their traditional Country and to ensure that they protect and repatriate Aboriginal material culture that is located on their properties.

## RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Research and educational organisations such as the Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, Sustainable Tourism CRC, CSIRO, TAFE and JCU can support Traditional Owners to implement many of the strategies and actions in the plan. In particular, the involvement of Traditional Owners in research projects, supporting and resourcing Traditional Owner research initiatives and in ensuring the protection of intellectual and cultural property in all research. These organisations are also encouraged to resource and support training and employment initiatives for Traditional Owners as identified in the plan.

### Box 18. Welcome to Country - for Meetings and Events

Having a 'welcome to Country' at meetings and workshops can also be a positive way to acknowledge the Traditional Owners and to develop relationships for the future. It provides an opportunity for Traditional Owners to give their endorsement for the event to take place on their land. It recognises the Traditional Owners and original custodians of the Country. It must be done by a representative of the Traditional Owners of the location at which the event is taking place. If it is not possible to arrange a traditional welcome by a local representative, a simple acknowledgment of Traditional Owners by other speakers is appropriate. The Native Title Representative Bodies, the ARC, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and the Indigenous Project Officer through FNQ NRM Ltd can assist with this.



Above: Bill Bocrill from Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours at Mossman Gorge talks to some Japanese tourists about Kuku Yalanji rainforest culture on a guided walk.





# Overarching Strategies

## PRINCIPLES AND PROTOCOLS

In order to progress the strategies and actions identified in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 some key principles need to be supported by all stakeholders. The 'Guiding Principles for Traditional Owner Involvement in Cultural and Natural Resource Management' which were developed by Traditional Owners for this plan are identified in Chapter 1. All stakeholders are encouraged to acknowledge and practice these principles when working with Traditional Owners to implement the plan. These principles are the foundation on which to build more specific guidelines and protocols.

A number of protocols and guidelines have been developed to guide effective implementation of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement. These protocols are the operational procedures that describe how Traditional Owners will be involved in the management of the WTWHA. They include:

- Consultation;
- Operational management;
- Policy development and strategic planning;
- Park planning;
- Permitting;
- Cultural heritage management and mapping;
- Environmental impact assessment; and
- Monitoring and reporting.

These protocols can be used as a guiding framework by other stakeholders (that are not part of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement) to develop their own protocols and policies. This should be done in conjunction with Traditional Owners, who need to endorse any protocols and guidelines developed. However, protocols and guidelines such as those developed for the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement do not necessarily identify specific cultural protocols for each Traditional Owner group at local level. Some Traditional Owner groups have already developed their own cultural protocols for how they want to be consulted and involved in projects on their traditional Country. Thus, when negotiating with Traditional Owners about cultural and natural resource management issues it is important to identify what protocols have been developed and to work within their framework.

For many non-Indigenous people and agencies, effective engagement with Traditional Owners will mean stepping into very foreign territory, confronting the results of past mistakes and viewing issues from a very different perspective.

Smyth 2004



Above: Sheryl Burchill, an Indigenous Ranger with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service discusses her role with guides from Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Tours at Mossman Gorge.





## RESEARCH AND PLANNING PRIORITIES

### Country-based Management Plans

Neither the Aboriginal Plan nor the Wet Tropics NRM Plan identify specific actions or priorities for particular Traditional Owner groups, each of whom face very different issues based on differences in culture, settlement history, tenure, environmental impacts, and capacity. There is the need for each Traditional Owner group to develop their own Country-based management plan to enable them to implement strategies and actions identified in this plan within their local areas (Country) for which they have traditional responsibility. As such, Country-based plans are essential building blocks to the implementation of many of the strategies and actions in the Aboriginal Plan. They can be developed by each Traditional Owner group independently of, or in collaboration with, landholders and management agencies who have contemporary interests in the same Country.

The process of developing Country-based management plans will also assist in the delivery of other strategies and actions in the plan such as: improving relationships between Traditional Owners and NRM agencies; enhancing access to Country by Traditional Owners; protecting and managing places of cultural significance; cultural maintenance; transmission of knowledge and the development of monitoring and evaluation regimes.

It is envisaged that the funding allocation for each Country-based management plan will be in the range of \$5,000 to \$15,000. The amounts will vary depending on several factors including: the size of the planning area; number of people within the Traditional Owner group; diversity of tenures; number and diversity of other stakeholders and the existing capacity of Traditional Owners to develop and implement a Country-based plan. Appropriate models and methods for developing these plans in the Wet Tropics needs to be determined (Smyth, D. 2004, *pers comm*).

### Cultural Landscape Mapping

The primary objective of this project is to develop an independent participatory Traditional Owner cultural landscape mapping system designed with modern GIS information systems that is controlled and maintained by Traditional Owners. The development of a comprehensive cultural landscape mapping system in the Wet Tropics NRM region is not only important to each Traditional Owner group in ensuring cultural maintenance but is critical to ensure the preservation and protection of places of significance in both all activities that have the potential to impact on Aboriginal values. Cultural landscape mapping will also greatly assist in the progression of the re-listing of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area for its Aboriginal cultural values, which is a key recommendation of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement.

It is important that Traditional Owners have ownership and control of information in the GIS system, and that agreements and protocols for the protection of intellectual and cultural property are developed to facilitate this to occur. The protocols to undertake this project have been negotiated in the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement.



Above: Dale Murray (Ngadjon-Jii) making a *mija* (traditional rainforest dwelling) at Malanda, 2002. (Photo: R. Wilkinson)



## ADDRESSING CAPACITY BUILDING ISSUES

### Cultural Awareness Programs

One of the major barriers to effective partnerships for caring for Country between Traditional Owners and the broader community is the lack of awareness and understanding of Traditional Owners' values and priorities. Increasing the cultural awareness of all stakeholders is essential to create an equitable environment where due consideration is given to Traditional Owners' issues and priorities. Therefore, a critical part of ensuring the effective implementation of the Aboriginal Plan will be to support and encourage all stakeholders to undertake Indigenous cultural awareness training. Also, a demonstration of Aboriginal cultural awareness should be built into the selection criteria and job descriptions of staff within government and non-government organisations.

### Employment and Training

The increased employment of Traditional Owners is a key aspiration for Traditional Owners, and all stakeholders are encouraged to actively support strategies and actions relating to training and employment of Aboriginal people. Targeted action is needed to promote Aboriginal employment and to advocate for the employment of Aboriginal people in higher management positions in government agencies. Many government agencies have developed employment policies regarding the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There are also a number of Commonwealth Government and Queensland Government training and employment initiatives identified below for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These include the Commonwealth Indigenous Employment Policy (IEP) (See Table 10) and the Queensland Government's 'Breaking the Unemployment Cycle'. The awareness of these programs needs to be raised and Traditional Owners need to be supported to access and utilise these services and programs.

*Table 10. Some Commonwealth Government education, training and employment programs*

PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION
Structured Training and Employment Projects	Flexible financial assistance for projects that offer structured training leading to lasting employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers.
Corporate Leaders for Indigenous Employment Project	Partnership between individual companies and the Commonwealth Government to encourage private sector companies to develop a strategic approach to generating more private sector jobs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Wage Assistance	Helps Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander job seekers find long-term employment either through the Australian Job Network, Indigenous Employment Centres or their own efforts using a wage subsidy.
National Indigenous Cadetship Project	Improves the professional employment prospects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by linking students and employers in an arrangement that involves full-time study and work placements. Eligible study includes full time diploma, advanced diploma and undergraduate degree courses.
Community Development Employment Placement Incentive	Provides a financial incentive to CDEP organisations for each participant who is placed in open employment and off CDEP payments.
Indigenous Community Volunteers	Links skilled volunteers with communities that have asked for expert assistance in areas such as business, financial management and the trades.



The Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP) funded through the Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) and coordinated through the Indigenous Coordination Centres (ICC) is similar to the 'work for the dole' (unemployment benefits) program in that these schemes also benefit local communities. CDEP has provided opportunities for Traditional Owners to become involved with NRM activities in the region. Opportunities for joint projects with Traditional Owners utilising the CDEP program should be investigated by all NRM stakeholders. However, in the long-term employment opportunities for Traditional Owners must move beyond CDEP to a focus on permanent jobs.

At a regional level the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement contains provisions relating to the employment of Aboriginal people by NR&M, EPA and WTMA in the WTWHA. The Wet Tropics NRM Plan also contains targets relating to the employment of Aboriginal people within government and non-government agencies.

## Economic Development

Government programs and initiatives which support economic development need to be promoted at a local level and Traditional Owners need appropriate resources and support to be able to access these programs and benefit from them. The potential of government programs (such as those described below) to fund and support the strategies and actions in the Aboriginal Plan needs to be pursued as a priority.

However, government departments should not be viewed as the sole avenue to pursue the commercial enterprises identified in the Aboriginal Plan. An investigation into partnerships with industry and the private sector to deliver strategies and actions in the plan is also critical.

### Commonwealth Government Programs

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) administers the Business Development Program through Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) (a Commonwealth Statutory Authority). First Australians Business (FAB) is another national program which assists young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop a business through the provision of knowledge, expertise and support from corporate Australia. Other programs are identified in Table 11.

*Table 11. Some Commonwealth Government programs for economic development*

PROGRAMS	DESCRIPTION
Indigenous Small Business Fund	It provides support for the development and expansion of Indigenous business enterprises.
Indigenous Capital Assistance Scheme	This aims to promote economic independence for Indigenous people by encouraging investment in Indigenous businesses by the private financial sector.

### Queensland Government Programs

In 2000, the Queensland Indigenous Economic Development Strategy (QIEDS) was initiated. It encompasses the Ten Year Partnerships economic development programs of the Queensland Government. The DSD&I also has a number of initiatives that can support economic initiatives identified in the Aboriginal Plan.





# Coordination and Facilitation

## ABORIGINAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER

There is a critical need to employ a full-time Implementation Officer to work at a strategic level to coordinate the implementation of the plan. The Implementation Officer will need to work in conjunction with the Indigenous Project Officers, the Investment Strategy Coordinator (See Funding and Resources) the ARC, all levels of government and other stakeholders.

## INDIGENOUS PROJECT OFFICERS

The employment of a number of Indigenous Project Officers to support Traditional Owners and other stakeholders to implement the strategies and actions in this plan is crucial. These positions could be based with the ARC and/or Girringun Aboriginal Corporation.

## TRADITIONAL OWNER ORGANISATIONS

The long-term resourcing and support for Traditional Owner organisations such as the Aboriginal Rainforest Council and Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, as well as Traditional Owner groups at a local level, is critical to ensure the effective coordination and implementation of the Aboriginal Plan. These organisations play a crucial role in supporting Traditional Owners to access funding, supporting them in project development and administration, and in facilitating effective liaison between Traditional Owners and government and non-government organisations. They also play an important role in supporting the development of Aboriginal commercial enterprises, such as tourism, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture which are identified in Chapter 3. There is also the potential for these organisations to develop and manage other commercial initiatives, such as professional consulting services, to both Aboriginal people and the broader community in areas like cultural heritage surveys and education and training.

One of the key findings to emerge from the workshops was that many of these organisations are under-resourced and under-funded. This limits their effectiveness. It is imperative that they are adequately resourced and that they are not reliant on short-term funding. Long-term support includes providing resources for operational requirements, infrastructure and appropriate staffing and training needs. It also includes ensuring that these organisations have resources to enable them to employ staff to support Traditional Owners to develop funding applications and project proposals, as well as assisting with reporting requirements. Staffing requirements include; Aboriginal rangers, Aboriginal cultural heritage project officers, administration and technical support staff. Resources and infrastructure for these organisations is essential and includes; office space, training and meeting areas, office equipment, vehicles, tools and other resources needed for undertaking cultural and natural resource management projects.

Supporting and resourcing Traditional Owner organisations that address land and sea management issues is consistent with State and Commonwealth policies, such as the 'Meeting Challenges Making Choices' and the 'Ten Year Partnerships Program' (Strategy 2.1 and 2.2).



Above: Samantha Leo and Josh Wilkinson at Girringun Museum, 2004.



## The Aboriginal Rainforest Council

The ARC has a very important role in ensuring the effective coordination and implementation of the Aboriginal Plan. Secure funding and resources for the ARC is critical to ensure that they can fulfil their responsibilities and obligations as outlined in the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement, the Wet Tropics NRM Plan and the Aboriginal Plan. Thus, a major priority is to ensure secure and long-term funding for the ARC.

The WTMA, DEH, NR&M, EPA and QPWS who are the parties to the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement are encouraged to provide long-term support and resources for the ARC. Additional funding sources also need to be investigated through a variety of avenues, including the Indigenous Coordination Centres, DATSIP and the corporate sector.

## Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, as a sub-regional Traditional Owner organisation with responsibilities for natural and cultural resource management, has an important role in supporting Traditional Owner groups in the southern part of the Wet Tropics region to implement many of the strategies and actions in the Aboriginal Plan. They have many years of experience in supporting Traditional Owners in land and sea management issues and have developed good partnerships with many NRM stakeholders. With appropriate funding and resources they are well positioned to successfully implement many of the strategies and actions in the plan.

## Local Traditional Owner Organisations

The implementation of this plan at a local Country-based level is critical. Although organisations, such as the ARC and Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, play a very important role on a regional and sub-regional level, it is at the local level where decisions about Country are made and where projects will take place. At this level some groups have developed organisations specifically for caring for Country such as the Djabugay Ranger Agency. Many other Traditional Owner groups want to establish land and sea management centres and should be resourced and supported to pursue these aspirations.



Above: Hilton Noble (Wet Tropics Management Authority Community Liaison Officer and ARC delegate) with Russell Butler Jr (Traditional Owner Advisory Committee and ARC Chairperson) discussing the Aboriginal Plan, December 2004.





## LINKS TO FNQ NRM LTD

### Traditional Owner Advisory Committee

A Traditional Owner Advisory Committee (TOAC) for the FNQ NRM Ltd Board was established in 2004. It comprises of nine persons from the ARC, a Bar-Barrum representative, the Indigenous Board Director for FNQ NRM Ltd, and the Indigenous support person to FNQ NRM Ltd Indigenous Board Director. An MoU between the TOAC and FNQ NRM Ltd that outlines the roles and functions of the TOAC is scheduled to be finalised by mid 2005. Priorities for the TOAC include:

- Supporting the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan;
- Determination of the on-ground priorities for the Traditional Owners projects within the RIS in consultation with ARC, Giringun Aboriginal Corporation and Traditional Owners;
- The development of policies and protocols for FNQ NRM Ltd to ensure the recognition of Traditional Owners issues and priorities in the implementation of the Wet Tropics NRM Plan;
- Ensuring that culturally-appropriate mechanisms are in place for reviewing project applications and monitoring and reviewing existing projects;
- Evaluating the outcomes of the Traditional Owner components of the Wet Tropics NRM Plan and the operation of FNQ NRM Ltd in terms of how they engage with Traditional Owners and address Traditional Owner issues in their planning and day to day operation; and
- Ensuring project applications address cultural considerations in the project design, implementation, monitoring and review.

### Indigenous Board Director for FNQ NRM Ltd

There is one Indigenous Board Director position on the FNQ NRM Ltd Board. The FNQ NRM Ltd Board is a skills-based board comprising of eight Directors who were selected by an independent panel for Director's positions in the areas of Local Government, catchment, industry, conservation, Indigenous, World Heritage, Upper Herbert and coastal issues. During the development of this plan Traditional Owners were very concerned that only one Indigenous Board Director was appointed to the FNQ NRM Ltd Board because one person cannot speak for the 17 Traditional Owner groups in the Wet Tropics NRM region (See Box 19). In mid 2004, the Board of FNQ NRM Ltd agreed to an Indigenous support person for the Indigenous Board Director being present at Board meetings. Although this is a step in the right direction it is priority for Traditional Owners that FNQ NRM Ltd appoint a second Indigenous Board Director.

The appointment of two Indigenous Board Directors on regional NRM Boards is consistent with the Commonwealth Government's 'Guidelines for Regional Bodies - Working with Indigenous Knowledge in Natural Resource Management'.

The Indigenous Board Director for FNQ NRM Ltd must play an important role in the implementation of both the Aboriginal Plan and the Wet Tropics NRM Plan by working with the Indigenous NRM networks and other stakeholders to attract support and resources outside of NHT funding.





## Box 19. Successful Involvement of Aboriginal People on Advisory Committees and Boards

There are various issues that need to be recognised in relation to the representation of Aboriginal people on boards and advisory committees. One of the major issues is that Aboriginal law/lore does not allow one person to speak for another person's Country, yet there is often only one Indigenous position on the relevant board or committee (such as the FNQ NRM Ltd Board). This creates real difficulties for individual Aboriginal people on boards and committees in representing a diversity of Aboriginal viewpoints. Also, the structure and method of board operations are sometimes considered inappropriate by Aboriginal people, or are alienating to them. Gender concerns can also be a major issue for a single Indigenous representative on a board or committee because there may be certain areas they are unable to speak about because of their gender. In situations when there is a single Indigenous representative there is often an imbalance of power on boards and committees, and there are substantive barriers to the effective participation of the Aboriginal delegate including:

- A lack of resources;
- A lack of understanding about Aboriginal decision-making protocols for Country by other board and committee members;
- The use of scientific and technical language and information which can be alienating to Indigenous people;
- A lack of respect for Indigenous traditional knowledge; and
- A lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples' values and rights.

At least two Traditional Owner representatives on boards and committees can help to alleviate these problems. Cross-cultural training for committee and board members and training for the Indigenous representatives on the committee or board in relation to technical issues and jargon are also necessary. Resources need to be made available for culturally-appropriate decision-making processes to work. Resources are needed to establish an Indigenous advisory group to the Indigenous representative where appropriate, to allow meetings with Traditional Owners to be held, and for travel between communities and visits to Country.

### FNQ NRM Ltd - Indigenous Project Officer

FNQ NRM Ltd has committed to one Indigenous Project Officer position in the Regional Investment Strategy. However, Traditional Owners feel very strongly that there needs to be at least two Indigenous Project Officers employed through FNQ NRM Ltd because of the wide-ranging roles that an Indigenous Project Officer is required to undertake. This includes:

- Supporting 17 Traditional Owner groups throughout the Wet Tropics NRM region;
- Supporting FNQ NRM Ltd staff members to increase their awareness of Aboriginal issues and to liaise with Traditional Owners;
- Communication of FNQ NRM Ltd and NRM information to Traditional Owners;
- Coordination of transport for Traditional Owners to attend meetings and workshops;
- Supporting Traditional Owners in developing project ideas and writing funding applications;
- Facilitating the development of partnerships between Traditional Owners and NRM stakeholders;
- Liaising and networking with other Aboriginal organisations;
- Supporting Traditional Owners to plan for and manage all aspects of projects;



- Providing input and advice for FNQ NRM Ltd policy relating to Traditional Owner issues; and
- Coordination and support for the TOAC.

Funding for the additional Indigenous Project Officer position in FNQ NRM Ltd needs to be investigated as a priority.

## INDIGENOUS NRM NETWORKS

### Indigenous Land Management Facilitator

The ILMF needs to work with the Aboriginal Plan Implementation Officer, the TOAC, the FNQ NRM Ltd Indigenous Project Officer, the Indigenous Board Director for FNQ NRM Ltd and the Indigenous State Network Coordinator and other NRM stakeholders in attracting funding, resources and support for the Aboriginal Plan.

### Indigenous Units in Government Agencies

The Aboriginal Resource Management Program (WTMA), the Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit (GBRMPA), and the Indigenous Engagement Unit (EPA) have responsibilities to support Traditional Owners in implementing many strategies and actions in this plan.

### Indigenous State Network Coordinator

The Queensland Indigenous State Network Coordinator can support the implementation of this plan by negotiating with government agencies to help secure funding for Aboriginal projects identified in this plan and in developing statewide policies and protocols for Traditional Owner participation in NRM for adoption by Regional NRM Bodies.



Above: (left to right) Kevin Singleton (Traditional Owner Advisory Group) and Lyle Johnson (Project Officer, FNQ NRM Ltd) at an Advisory Committee meeting at the Rainforest CRC, December 2005.



# Funding and Resources

## An Investment Strategy for the Aboriginal Plan

Being able to secure funding and resources for the strategies and actions identified in the Aboriginal Plan is absolutely critical to its success. Given the resources and investments that will be required to implement these, it is necessary to engage all levels of government, industry and the private sector to promote the plan, secure resources, and to integrate the plan into existing policies, programs and services, such as the 'Ten Year Partnerships', and the 'Meeting Challenges Making Choices' initiatives.

The development of a comprehensive investment strategy to attract the funding and resources required to implement the plan is a high priority. It is envisaged that the investment strategy will take up to one year to develop. It will be developed by an Investment Strategy Coordinator (ISC) who will need to work in conjunction with the Aboriginal Plan Implementation Officer, TOAC the ARC, Girringun Aboriginal Corporation and other stakeholders. As part of developing the investment strategy the ISC will need to coordinate an official forum of senior level staff from all government agencies and other potential investors including private corporations. This forum will provide an opportunity for these stakeholders to discuss the resources and support they can provide to support the implementation of the plan. The forum will need to meet periodically to review the delivery of the strategies and actions that they have committed funds towards in the investment strategy.

## Natural Heritage Trust Funding

Regional NHT funding for some of the strategies and actions in the plan has been secured through the Regional Investment Strategy for the Wet Tropics NRM Plan. Other NHT funding sources at a national, state and local level such as Envirofunds, and the Regional and National Competative Component need to be actively pursued.

## Other Funding Sources

There are a wide range of government and private funding sources that need to be identified and pursued in the investment strategy such as the Coastal Catchments Initiative, the Landcare Program, the Great Barrier Reef Wetlands Program, and the NHT Bilateral Wetlands program as well as other programs which focus on business development social issues.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

It is important to be able to monitor progress towards achieving the strategies and actions in this plan. To achieve this a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation strategy needs to be developed for the plan. The strategy should build on the work undertaken by Smyth (2002) on Aboriginal cultural indicators for the Wet Tropics. Key objectives of the monitoring and evaluation strategy should include:

- Establishing procedures to monitor and report on progress towards achievement of the strategies and actions in the Aboriginal Plan; and
- Developing culturally-appropriate monitoring indicators and evaluation criteria at both a regional and Country-based level.

There are three key components to the monitoring and evaluation strategy.

**Monitoring the Plan:** There needs to be an assessment of progress towards achieving the strategies identified in this plan and the Wet Tropics NRM Plan.

**Monitoring Projects:** Monitoring projects that have been undertaken through this plan. This is critical to determine how successful projects are to identify the reasons behind unsuccessful projects.

**Monitoring Change:** Identify economic, social and cultural changes for Aboriginal people from plan implementation.

## Reviewing the Aboriginal Plan

The Aboriginal Plan is not a static document. It is an evolving plan and will need to be periodically reviewed every two years and updated to reflect the priorities and aspirations of Traditional Owners.



## Strategies and Actions for Making The Aboriginal Plan Work

<p><b>STRATEGY 26.</b></p> <p>Ensure all Traditional Owner groups have strong and effective governance structures for land and sea management.</p>	<p>Potential Partners</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>26.1 Support and resource the ARC (including operational costs and staffing requirements) as the regional Traditional Owner organisation for natural and cultural heritage issues.</p> <p>26.2 Continued resourcing and support for staffing and operational costs for Giringun Aboriginal Corporation.</p> <p>26.3 Support and resource local Traditional Owner governance structures including land and sea management organisations (such as the Djabugay Ranger Agency).</p>	<p>ARC, DATSIP, ICC, Giringun, EPA, NR&amp;M, DEH, DPC, FNQ NRM Ltd, local government, industry, private sector, NTRBs, DET, DEWR, DPI&amp;F, DSD&amp;I, GBRMPA, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 27.</b></p> <p>Achieve 10% staffing of Aboriginal people in NRM and cultural heritage management.</p>	<p>Potential Partners</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>27.1 Employ and Aboriginal Plan Implementation Officer to coordinate the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan.</p> <p>27.2 Employ three Aboriginal Plan Project Officers to implement the Aboriginal Plan.</p> <p>27.3 Employ two full-time Indigenous Project Officers with FNQ NRM Ltd.</p> <p>27.4 Continue resourcing of the three Community Liaison Officers (for the WTWHA).</p> <p>27.5 Promote the employment of Aboriginal people (as consultants, advisors, full-time employees, part-time employees etc.) in natural and cultural resource management.</p> <p>27.6 Implement the provisions of the Wet Tropics Regional Agreement in relation to employment and training of Aboriginal people.</p> <p>27.7 Investigate opportunities for increased involvement in caring for Country projects through the CDEP program in collaboration with other NRM stakeholders.</p>	<p>Giringun, ARC, EPA, NR&amp;M, QPWS, FNQ NRM Ltd, DPI&amp;F, local government, ICM groups, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>

<p><b>STRATEGY 28.</b></p> <p>Develop and implement Country-based and community management plans for land and sea Country for Traditional Owner groups.</p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>28.1 Develop a framework for Country-based planning models and methodologies (in consultation with Traditional Owners).</p> <p>28.2 Undertake Country-based planning for each Traditional Owner group in the region.</p>	<p>ARC, Giringun, NTRBs, CAT, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, FNQ NRM Ltd, EPA, GBRMPA, NR&amp;M, DATSIP, ICC, DPI&amp;F, local government, private sector, CSIRO, DEH, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 29.</b></p> <p>Develop a cultural landscape mapping program to document the range of Aboriginal values at a local and regional scale.</p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>29.1 Develop a regional, cultural landscape mapping framework and project outline allowing for each Traditional Owner group.</p> <p>29.2 Identify infrastructure, skills and training required to develop, implement and manage cultural landscape mapping databases and information.</p> <p>29.3 Develop and implement information sessions and training packages on the development and management of cultural landscape databases.</p> <p>29.4 Develop intellectual and cultural property protocols for collection, use, access and storage of information at local, sub-regional and regional levels.</p> <p>29.5 Develop agreements and MoUs with relevant government agencies and NRM stakeholders regarding the use of the cultural landscape database.</p>	<p>Giringun, ARC, DEH, WTMA, CAT, NTRBs, Rainforest CRC, CRC Reef, ICC, DATSIP, CSIRO, EPA, AHC, NR&amp;M, FNQ NRM Ltd, AIATSIS, TAFE, DET, DEWR, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>

<p><b>STRATEGY 30.</b></p> <p>Develop and implement cultural education programs and educational materials for NRM stakeholders about Traditional Owners' values, concerns and issues for caring for Country.</p>	<p>Potential Partners</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>30.1 Develop a cross-cultural training program/package (as an economic enterprise).</p> <p>30.2 Develop and distribute a user-friendly guide for all NRM stakeholders regarding engagement protocols and the protection of cultural values in NRM activities.</p>	<p>ARC, Girringun, TAFE, EPA, AHC, AIATSIS, NR&amp;M, ICC, DATSIP, NNTT, NTRBs, FNQ NRM Ltd, private sector, local government, other government and non-government stakeholders</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 31.</b></p> <p>Develop and implement culturally-appropriate mechanisms to ensure that Traditional Owners' values and interests are incorporated into policy, planning and management.</p>	<p>Potential Partners</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>31.1 Ensure culturally-appropriate representation of Traditional Owners in all NRM decision-making structures, and on advisory committees and boards, at a regional and local level.</p> <p>31.2 Develop culturally-appropriate mechanisms for the issuing, monitoring and assessment of permits for scientific, tourism and commercial purposes.</p> <p>31.3 Promote and support the uptake of the protocols and guidelines in the Wet Tropics Regional Agreements by stakeholders currently not party to the agreement such as FNQ NRM Ltd, Local Government and community NRM organisations.</p>	<p>Girringun, ARC, DEH, WTMA, Rainforest CRC, CSIRO, EPA, AIATSIS, AHC, NR&amp;M, industry, FNQ NRM Ltd, AIATSIS, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>



<p><b>STRATEGY 32.</b></p> <p><b>Develop and implement culturally-appropriate training packages for Aboriginal people in cultural and natural resource management.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>32.1 Identify relevant gaps in Traditional Owners' skills and knowledge of natural and cultural resource management to inform training programs and packages.</p> <p>32.2 Support Aboriginal rangers (both community rangers and within government agencies) to undertake accredited training in law enforcement for protecting and managing land and sea Country.</p>	<p>ARC, DET, DEWR, Giringun, TAFE, EPA, NR&amp;M, FNQ NRM Ltd, Rainforest CRC, DSD&amp;I, CRC Reef, ANTA, local government, ICM groups, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 33.</b></p> <p><b>Attract funding and resources for the implementation of the Aboriginal Plan</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>33.1 Employ an Aboriginal Plan Investment Strategy Coordinator to develop a stand-alone investment strategy for the Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan.</p>	<p>ARC, Giringun, FNQ ICC, DATSIP, other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>STRATEGY 34.</b></p> <p><b>Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation strategy for the Wet Tropics Aboriginal Cultural and Natural Resource Management Plan.</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Partners</b></p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p> <p>34.1 Establish procedures to monitor and report on progress towards achievement of the goals and objectives of the Aboriginal Plan.</p> <p>34.2 Develop culturally-appropriate monitoring indicators and evaluation criteria with each Traditional Owner group and monitor and evaluate trends in effective management of Country based upon these indicators.</p> <p>34.3 Conduct an annual review of the Aboriginal Plan and Wet Tropics NRM Plan</p> <p>34.4 Review annually the outcomes of the NHT extension and FNQ NRM Ltd Board operations for Traditional Owners.</p> <p>34.5 Review the Aboriginal Plan every two years to ensure it reflects the priorities and aspirations of Traditional Owners.</p>	<p>ARC, Giringun, Rainforest CRC, FNQ NRM Ltd, private sector, EPA, QPWS, NR&amp;M, JCU, GBRMPA other government and non-government stakeholders.</p>

# KEY CONTACTS





# Aboriginal Organisations and Support Services

## Wet Tropics Aboriginal Organisations

**Aboriginal Rainforest Council Inc (ARC)**  
277 Hartley Street  
Portsmith QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4035-5213, Fax: (07) 4035-5293  
Email: ARCINC1@bigpond.com

**Girringun Aboriginal Corporation**  
235 Victoria Street  
PO Box 303  
Cardwell QLD 4849  
Phone: (07) 4066-8300, (07) 4066-8311  
Fax: (07) 4066-8353  
Email: girrin1@znet.net.au

**Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation**  
32 Florence Street  
PO Box 7573  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4051-9089, Fax: (07) 4051-9088  
Email: admin@balkanu.com.au  
Web: www.balkanu.com.au

**Local Traditional Owner Organisations**  
For details of these organisations contact the Native Title Representative Bodies, the ARC and Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

## Native Title Representative Bodies

**Cape York Land Council**  
PO Box 2496  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4053-9222, Fax: (07) 4051-0097  
Email: reception@cylc.org.au  
Web: www.cylc.org.au

**North Queensland Land Council**  
PO Box 679N  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4031-4779 Fax: (07) 4031-7414

**Central Queensland Land Council**  
PO Box 108  
Mackay QLD 4740  
Phone: (07) 4951-1899, Fax: (07) 4951-3629

## Aboriginal Councils

**Yarrabah Council**  
C/O PO Yarrabah QLD 4871  
Phone: (07) 4056-9120, Fax: (07) 4056-9167  
Web: cwpp.slq.qld.gov.au/yarrabah/index.htm

**Wujal Wujal Council**  
C/O Post Office  
Wujal Wujal QLD 4871  
Phone: (07) 4060-8155, Fax: (07) 4060-8250  
Email: wujalcouncil@deadlymob.org

## National Native Title Tribunal (NNTT)

**Cairns Office**  
GPO Box 9973  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4048-1500, 1800 640 501, Fax: (07) 4051-3660  
Web: www.nntt.gov.au

## Indigenous Land Corporation

**Eastern Division Office - Brisbane**  
PO Box 15217  
City East, Brisbane 4002  
Phone: (07) 3854-4600, 1800 818490, Fax: (07) 3854-4666





Indigenous NRM Networks	
<p><b>Indigenous Project Officer - FNQ NRM Ltd</b>            PO Box 1756            Innisfail QLD 4860            Phone: (07) 4061-6477, Fax: (07) 4061-4677            Email: <a href="mailto:info@fnqnrm.com.au">info@fnqnrm.com.au</a>            Web: <a href="http://www.fnqnrm.com.au">www.fnqnrm.com.au</a></p> <p><b>Commonwealth Indigenous Land Management Facilitator (Central Region)</b>            C/O Burdekin Dry Tropics Board            Level 2 St James Place            155-157 Denham Street            Townsville QLD 4810            Phone: (07) 4721-3544, Fax: (07) 4721-5050            Web: <a href="http://www.burdekindrytropics.org.au">www.burdekindrytropics.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Commonwealth Indigenous Land Management Facilitator (Northern Region)</b>            C/O Balkanu Cape York Development Corporation            PO Box 7573            Cairns QLD 4870            Phone: (07) 4051-9089, Fax (07) 4051-9088            Email: <a href="mailto:admin@balkanu.com.au">admin@balkanu.com.au</a>            Web: <a href="http://www.balkanu.com.au">www.balkanu.com.au</a></p> <p><b>National Indigenous NRM Leader</b>            Australian Government Natural Resource Management Team            GPO Box 787            Canberra ACT 2601            Phone: (02) 6274-1018, Fax: (02) 6274-2061</p>
Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage	
<p><b>Indigenous Protected Areas Program</b>            Indigenous Heritage Management Section            Department of Environment and Heritage            GPO Box 787            Canberra ACT 2601            Phone: (02) 6274-2185, Fax: (02) 6274-2092            Web: <a href="http://www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/">www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/ipa/</a></p>	
National Indigenous Council	
<p><b>National Indigenous Council</b>            Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination            Secretariat and Policy Coordination Branch            PO Box 17            Woden ACT 2606            Web: <a href="http://www.oipc.gov.au/NIC">www.oipc.gov.au/NIC</a></p>	
Other Organisations and Services	
<p><b>Indigenous Community Volunteers</b>            PO Box 1585            Fortitude Valley QLD 4006            Phone: 1800 819 542, Fax: (07) 3257-3454            Email: <a href="mailto:info@volindigenous.org.au">info@volindigenous.org.au</a>            Web: <a href="http://www.volindigenous.org.au">www.volindigenous.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Centre for Appropriate Technology (CAT)</b>            PO Box 6182            Cairns QLD 4870            Phone: (07) 4031-0505, Fax: (07) 4031-0431            Web: <a href="http://www.iCAT.org.au">www.iCAT.org.au</a></p>



# Tourism Organisations

## Aboriginal Tourism Organisations

### Aboriginal Tourism Australia

PO Box 18315  
Collins Street East  
Melbourne VIC 8003  
Phone: (03) 9654 3811, Fax: (03) 9654 3822  
Email: [ata@aboriginaltourism.com.au](mailto:ata@aboriginaltourism.com.au)  
Web: [www.ataust.org.au/](http://www.ataust.org.au/)

### Baddagun Indigenous Performances

Paronella Park  
PO Box 88  
Mena Creek QLD 4871  
Phone: (07) 4065-3225, Fax: (07) 4065-3022  
Web: [www.paronellapark.com.au](http://www.paronellapark.com.au)

### Djabugay Country Tours

Djabugay Tribal Aboriginal Corporation  
PO Box 495  
Kuranda QLD 4881

### Kuku Yalanji Dreamtime Walks

Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunku Inc  
PO Box 171  
Mossman QLD 4871  
Phone: (07) 4098-2595, Fax: (07) 4098-2607  
Email: [tours.yalanji@yalanji.com.au](mailto:tours.yalanji@yalanji.com.au)  
Web: [www.yalanji.com.au/](http://www.yalanji.com.au/)

### Menmuny Museum

PO Box Yarrabah QLD 4871  
Phone: (07) 4056-9154

### Native Guide Safari Tours

58 Pringle Street  
Mossman QLD 4873  
Phone: (07) 4098-2206, Fax: (07) 4098-1008  
Web: [www.nativeguidesafaritours.com.au](http://www.nativeguidesafaritours.com.au)

### Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park

PO Box 816  
Smithfield QLD 4878  
Phone: (07) 4042-9900, Fax: (07) 4042-9990  
Email: [info@tjapukai.com.au](mailto:info@tjapukai.com.au)  
Web: [www.tjapukai.com.au/contact.html](http://www.tjapukai.com.au/contact.html)

### Tourism Tropical North Queensland

PO Box 865  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4031-7676  
Email: [ttnq@ttnq.org.au](mailto:ttnq@ttnq.org.au)

### Waroo Indigenous Scenic Tours

PO Box 2495  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone/Fax: (07) 4031-6099  
Email: [info@waroo.com.au](mailto:info@waroo.com.au)  
Web: [www.indignet.com.au/yarrabah/museum](http://www.indignet.com.au/yarrabah/museum)



# Commonwealth Government

## Employment, Training and Business Development

### Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA)

**Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination**  
PO Box 17  
Woden ACT 2606  
Phone: (02) 6121-4000, Fax: (02) 6281-0772  
Web: [www.oipc.gov.au](http://www.oipc.gov.au)

**Townsville Indigenous Coordination Centre**  
PO Box 2018  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: (07) 4722-3888, Fax: (07) 4772-4436

**Cairns Indigenous Coordination Centre**  
2/111 Grafton Street  
PO Box 1599  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Tel: (07) 4048-8600, 1800 079 098  
Fax: (07) 4048-8633

### Commonwealth Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR)

**Cairns Regional Office**  
P.O Box 4623, Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4048-7150, Fax: (07) 4048-7164  
Web: [www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)

**Townsville Regional Office**  
PO Box 1088  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: (07) 4760-2611, Fax (07) 4760-2602  
Web: [www.dewr.gov.au](http://www.dewr.gov.au)

**For information on:**  
Indigenous Employment  
Indigenous Small Business Fund  
Indigenous Wage Assistance Program  
National Indigenous Cadetship Project  
Structure Training and Employment Projects

### Commonwealth Department of Science, Education and Training (DEST)

**Cairns District Office**  
PO Box 2379  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone (07) 4048-7100, Fax: (07) 4048-7100  
Web: [www.dest.gov.au](http://www.dest.gov.au)

### Community Development and Employment Program (CDEP)

**Cairns Regional Community Development and Employment Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation**  
PO Box 951N  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4057-7646, Fax: (07) 4057-7660

### Indigenous Business Australia (IBA)

**Indigenous Business Australia**  
PO Box 38  
Woden ACT 2606  
Phone: (02) 6285-3031, Fax: (02) 6285-2348  
Web: [www.iba.gov.au](http://www.iba.gov.au)





## Natural and Cultural Resource Management

### Natural Heritage Trust Networks

**Natural Heritage Trust Communications Team**  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone: 1800 065823  
Email: [nht@deh.gov.au](mailto:nht@deh.gov.au)  
Web: [www.nht.gov.au](http://www.nht.gov.au)

**Australian Government Envirofund**  
Natural Heritage Trust  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone: 1800 303863, Fax: (02) 6272-3626  
Email: [envirofund@daff.gov.au](mailto:envirofund@daff.gov.au)

**Regional NRM Facilitator**  
Burdekin and Wet Tropics  
NHT National Natural Resource Management  
Facilitator Network  
C/O Burdekin Dry Tropics  
Level 2 St James Place  
155-157 Denham Street  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: (07) 4724-3382, Fax: (07) 4724-3577

### Wet Tropics Management Authority (WTMA)

**Aboriginal Resource Management Program (ARM)**  
PO Box 2050  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4052-0585, Fax: (07) 4031-1364  
Email: [wtma.reception@epa.qld.gov.au](mailto:wtma.reception@epa.qld.gov.au)  
Web: [www.wettropics.gov.au](http://www.wettropics.gov.au)

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

**Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit**  
PO Box 1379  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: (07) 4750-0700, Fax: (07) 4772-6093  
Web: [www.gbrmpa.gov.au](http://www.gbrmpa.gov.au)

### Australian Heritage Council

**Australian Heritage Council**  
GPO Box 787  
Canberra ACT 2601  
Phone: (02) 6274-1111, Fax: (02) 6274-2095  
Email: [ahc@deh.gov.au](mailto:ahc@deh.gov.au)  
Web: [www.ahc.gov.au](http://www.ahc.gov.au)



### Commonwealth Government Indigenous NRM Guidelines

1. Ways to improve community engagement- Working with Indigenous knowledge in natural resource management  
Web: [www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/publications/pubs/community.pdf](http://www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/publications/pubs/community.pdf)
2. Guidelines for regional bodies - Working with Indigenous knowledge in natural resource management  
Web: [www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/publications/guidelines.html](http://www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/publications/guidelines.html)
3. Recommendations for Commonwealth agencies - Working with Indigenous knowledge in natural resource management  
Web: [www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/publications/pubs/recommendations.pdf](http://www.deh.gov.au/indigenous/publications/pubs/recommendations.pdf)

## Queensland Government

### Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (DATSIP)

#### Far North Queensland Regional Office - Cairns

PO Box 5365  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: 4039-8177, Fax: 4031-1114  
Web: [www.indigenous.qld.gov.au](http://www.indigenous.qld.gov.au)

#### North Queensland Regional Office - Townsville

PO Box 5620  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: (07) 4799-7470, Fax: (07) 4799-7549  
Web: [www.indigenous.qld.gov.au](http://www.indigenous.qld.gov.au)

### Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines (NR&M)

#### Cultural Heritage Coordination Unit - Cairns

Department of Natural Resources and Mines  
PO Box 937  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4039-8276, Fax: (07) 4039-8447  
Web: [www.nrme.qld.gov.au/cultural\\_heritage](http://www.nrme.qld.gov.au/cultural_heritage)

### Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Forestry (DPI&F)

#### Cairns Office

Po Box 652  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone (07) 4044-1600, Fax: (07) 4035-5474  
Web: [www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au)

#### Townsville Office

PO Box 1085  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: (07) 4722-2688, Fax: (07) 4778-2970  
Web: [www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au)



### Queensland Environmental Protection Authority (EPA)

**Indigenous Engagement Unit - Cairns**  
Environmental Protection Agency  
PO Box 2066  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4046-6600, Fax: (07) 4046 6606  
Web: [www.epa.qld.gov.au/](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/)

**Indigenous Engagement Unit - Townsville**  
PO Box 5597  
Townsville QLD 4810  
Phone: 4796-7789, Fax: (07) 4796-7705  
Web: [www.epa.qld.gov.au/](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/)

### Queensland Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation (DLGPS&R)

**Brisbane Office**  
PO Box 15301  
City East QLD 4002  
Phone: (07) 3234-1870, Fax: (07) 3247-4172  
Email: [enquiries@dlgp.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@dlgp.qld.gov.au)  
Web: [www.dlgpsr.qld.gov.au/](http://www.dlgpsr.qld.gov.au/)

### Queensland Department of State Development and Innovation (DSD&I)

**Cairns Office**  
PO Box 2358  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: (07) 4048-1111, Fax (07) 4048-1122

**Townsville Office**  
PO Box 1732  
Townsville QLD 4872  
Phone: (07) 4799-7068, Fax: (07) 4799-7069

**Indigenous Business Development**  
PO Box 168  
Brisbane QLD 4022  
Phone: (07) 3224-6099, Fax (07) 3003-1106

### Queensland Department of Employment and Training (DET)

**Cairns Regional Office**  
PO Box 2465  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Fax: (07) 4048-1494  
Web: [www.det.qld.gov.au](http://www.det.qld.gov.au)

**Townsville Regional Office**  
Locked Mail Bag 15  
Aitkenvale QLD 4814  
Phone: (07) 4760-7919, Fax: (07) 4760-7970  
Web: [www.det.qld.gov.au](http://www.det.qld.gov.au)

**Training Services – 1300 369 935**  
**Employment Initiatives – 1300 369 925**

**Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE**  
Private Mail Bag 1  
Cairns QLD 4870  
Phone: 1300 656 959, Fax: (07) 4639-2682  
Email: [TNQIT.Info@det.qld.gov.au](mailto:TNQIT.Info@det.qld.gov.au)  
Web: [www.tnqit.tafe.net/](http://www.tnqit.tafe.net/)

Campuses: Cairns, Johnstone (Innisfail and Tully), Tablelands (Atherton, Mareeba, and Mossman)





## Queensland Department of Education and the Arts (DEA)

### Queensland Museum

PO Box 3300

South Brisbane QLD 4101

Phone: (07) 3840-7555, (07) 3840-7635, Fax: (07) 3846-1918

Web: [www.qmuseum.qld.gov.au](http://www.qmuseum.qld.gov.au)

## Research Organisations

### Environmental Research

#### Rainforest CRC

James Cook University – Cairns Campus

PO Box 6811

Cairns QLD 4870

Phone: (07) 4042-1246, Fax: (07) 4042-1247

Web: [www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au](http://www.rainforest-crc.jcu.edu.au)

#### CSIRO Tropical Forest Research Centre

PO Box 780

Atherton QLD 4883

Phone: (07) 4091-8800

Web: [www.csiro.gov.au](http://www.csiro.gov.au)

#### CRC Reef

PO Box 772

Townsville QLD 4810

Phone: (07) 4729-8400, Fax: (07) 4729-8499

Email: [info@crcreef.com](mailto:info@crcreef.com)

Web: [www.reef.crc.org.au](http://www.reef.crc.org.au)

#### Australian Institute of Marine Science

PMB 3 Townsville MC

Townsville QLD 4810,

Phone (07) 4753-4444, Fax: (07) 4772-5852

Web: [www.aims.gov.au](http://www.aims.gov.au)

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Issues

#### Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

GPO Box 553

Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: (02) 6246-1111; Fax: (02) 6249-7310

Web: [www.aiatsis.gov.au](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au)

#### Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies (AIATSIS)

Web: [www.aiatsis.gov.au/corp/docs/EthicsGuideA4.pdf](http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/corp/docs/EthicsGuideA4.pdf)

#### Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages (FATSIL)

295 King Street

Melbourne VIC 3000

Phone: (03) 9602-4700, Fax: (03)

9602-4770

Email: [admin@fatsil.org](mailto:admin@fatsil.org)

Web: [www.fatsil.org/about.htm](http://www.fatsil.org/about.htm)

#### Regional Aboriginal Languages Committee

C/O Girringun Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 303

Cardwell QLD 4849

Phone: (07) 4066-8300



# Non-Government Organisations

## FNQ NRM Ltd

### FNQ NRM Ltd

PO Box 1756

Innisfail QLD 4860

Phone: (07) 4061-6477, Fax: (07) 4061-4677

Web: [www.fnqnrm.com.au](http://www.fnqnrm.com.au)

Email: [info@fnqnrm.com.au](mailto:info@fnqnrm.com.au)

Contact FNQ NRM Ltd for Integrated Catchment Management and community NRM groups such as:

Barron River Integrated Catchment Management Association

Herbert River Catchment Group Inc

Mulgrave Landcare and Catchment Group

Johnstone River Catchment Management Association

Cardwell Shire Catchment Management Association

# Abbreviations Used in This Plan

AIMS	Australian Institute of Marine Science
AIATSIS	Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACTFR	Australian Centre for Tropical Freshwater Research
AHC	Australian Heritage Council
ANT	Aboriginal Negotiating Team (for the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area Regional Agreement)
ANTA	Australian National Training Authority
ATA	Aboriginal Tourism Australia
ARC	Aboriginal Rainforest Council
ARM	Aboriginal Resource Management Program (within the Wet Tropics Management Authority)
ATSIS	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
CAT	Centre for Appropriate Technology
CDEP	Community Development Employment Program (Commonwealth)
CIRU	Cardwell Indigenous Ranger Unit
CLO	Community Liaison Officer (employed through Wet Tropics Management Authority)
CMA	Cooperative Management Agreement (Wet Tropics Management Authority)
CRC	Cooperative Research Centre
CSIRO	Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (Commonwealth)
COLC	Central Queensland Land Council
CYLC	Cape York Land Council
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (Commonwealth)
DATSIP	Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (Queensland)
DITR	Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (Commonwealth)
DOC	Department of Communities (Queensland)
DCS	Department of Corrective Services (Queensland)
DEA	Department of Education and the Arts (Queensland)
DEH	Department of Environment and Heritage (Commonwealth)
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training (Commonwealth)
DET	Department of Employment and Training (Queensland)



# Abbreviations Used in This Plan

DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Commonwealth)
DIMIA	Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (Commonwealth)
DITR	Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (Commonwealth)
DLGPS&R	Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation (Queensland)
DOGIT	Deed of Grant in Trust
DPC	Department of the Premier and Cabinet (Queensland)
DPI&F	Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (Queensland)
DSD&I	Department of State Development and Innovation (Queensland)
DTFTWID	Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development (Queensland)
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency (Queensland)
FAB	First Australian Business
FATSIL	Federation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages
FNQ 2010	Far North Regional Plan 2010
FNQROC	Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority
GBRWHA	Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area
GIS	Geographic Information System
IBA	Indigenous Business Australia
ICC	Indigenous Coordination Centre
ICM	Integrated Catchment Management
ICPR	Intellectual and Cultural Property Rights
IEU	Indigenous Engagement Unit (within the Environmental Protection Agency)
ILC	Indigenous Land Corporation
ILMF	Indigenous Land Management Facilitator
ILUA	Indigenous Land Use Agreement
INF	Interim Negotiating Forum
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
IPLU	Indigenous Policy and Liaison Unit (within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority)
ITSG	Indigenous Technical Support Group (for Aboriginal Plan)

# Abbreviations Used in This Plan

IUCN	World Conservation Union
IWG	Indigenous Working Group (for Aboriginal Plan)
JCU	James Cook University
LGA	Local Government Authority
MA	Management Agreement (Wet Tropics Management Authority)
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHT	Natural Heritage Trust
NNTT	National Native Title Tribunal
NQLC	North Queensland Land Council
NQIAWG	North Queensland Indigenous Aquaculture Working Group
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NR&M	Department of Natural Resources and Mines (Queensland)
NTRB	Native Title Representative Body
QH	Queensland Health
QIWG	Queensland Indigenous Working Group
QPWS	Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
RALMC	Regional Aboriginal Language Maintenance Committee
SPI	Statement of Planning Intent
STCRC	Sustainable Tourism CRC
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
TOAC	Traditional Owner Advisory Committee
TQ	Tourism Queensland
TTNQ	Tourism Tropical North Queensland
TUMRA	Traditional Use of Marine Resources Agreements (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority)
UQ	University of Queensland
WTAPPT	Wet Tropics Aboriginal Plan Project Team
WTMA	Wet Tropics Management Authority
WTWHA	Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

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