



lungtalanana, Babel Island & Big Dog Island

HEALTHY COUNTRY PLAN 2015

This is our healthy
country plan.

It is what our community
wants to see happen on
our Islands to make sure
the land is healthy.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

WARNING:

Community members are warned that this document contains images of our people who have passed away.

Table of Contents	2
Word list	3
Our Places – Context Map	4
lungtalanana introduction	5
Babel Island introduction	11
Big Dog Island introduction	17
COMMUNITY VISION	22
Healthy Country Planning	23
Targets	25
Threats	46
Implementation	54



WORD LIST:

Throughout this plan, we have used palawa kani. Here is a list of the words we have used and their English meanings.

When we use palawa kani we do not use capitalised letters.

There are also some English words that have been defined too.

palawa kani words:

limuna	Sheoak (<i>Allocasuarina</i>)
luna	woman
lungtalanana	Clarke Island
lutruwitia	The Tasmanian mainland
Manalakina	palawa kani spelling of the name Manalargenna
rruni	Island
tayaritja	The Furneaux Islands
tunapri	Knowledge
yamina	Grass tree. Also known as yakka gum and black boy (<i>Xanthorrhoea</i> sp.)
yola	Mutton bird/Short tail shearwater (<i>Puffinus tenuirostris</i>)

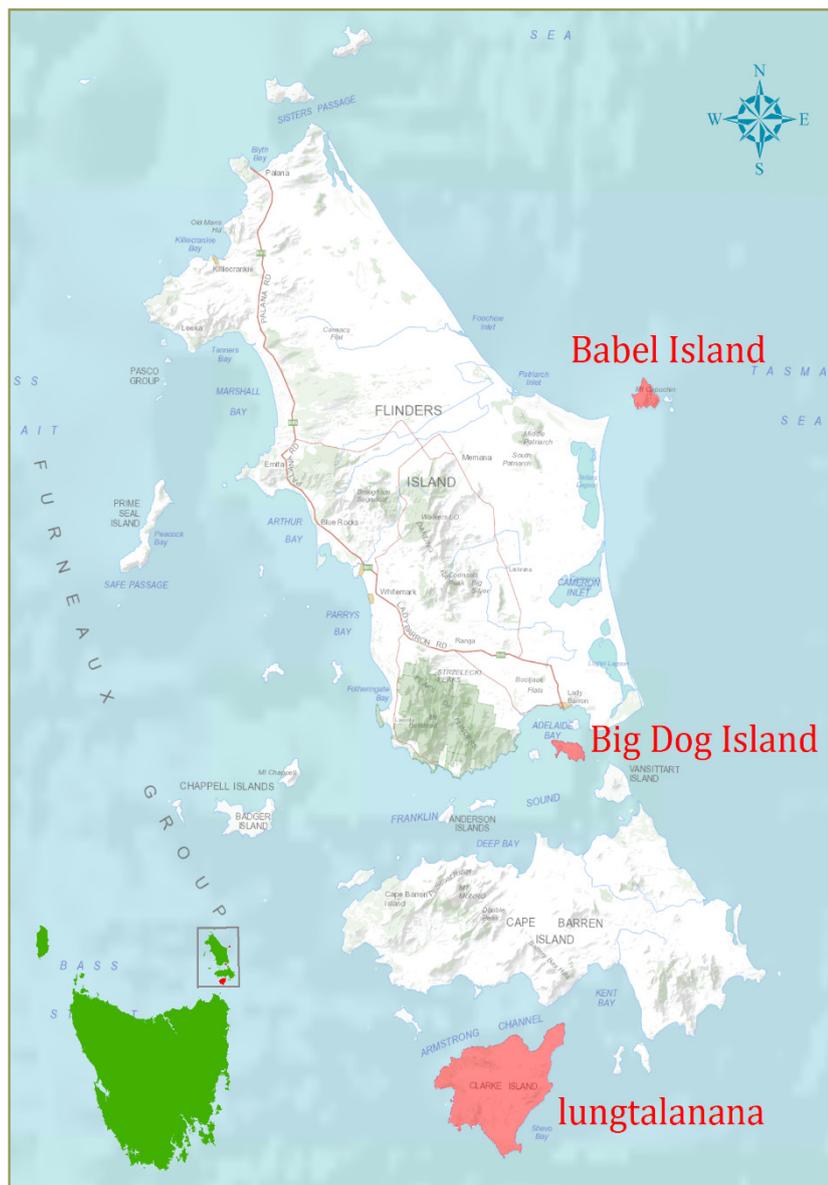
English words:

Pest plants	A pest plant is a native plant that is having a negative impact in the environment. This is opposed to a weed which is an introduced plant that has a negative impact on the environment
Inappropriate fire	Fire which occurs too often and is too hot



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OUR PLACES:



Data Sources: theLIST parcels Base imagery: Base image by TASMAR (www.tasmap.tas.gov.au) © State of Tasmania Map Created: 11/11/2014

Context Map



0 1.5 3 km Data Sources: theLIST transportsegments Base imagery: TASMAT (www.tasmap.tas.gov.au) © State of Tasmania Map Created: 11/11/2014

LUNGTALANANA:

Our community has a long connection to lungtalanana. Like the rest of tayaritja, Aboriginal people have used the land known as lungtalanana since lutruwitja was connected to the mainland.

lungtalanana is the third largest runi in tayaritja. It sits south of truwana and is 20km offshore from lutruwitja. lungtalanana is 8,230 hectares in size.

Lungtalanana



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In the early 1800s lungtalanana was recorded as being heavily timbered with gums and limuna. The limuna forest was said to grow in a belt around the outskirts of the island, close to the shore. These days the island is predominately regenerating pasture and coastal heath, with patches of native woodland.

lungtalanana has a prominent central plateau. The central plateau acts as a fresh water catchment, with the water flowing from the plateau into the sea.

There was a large fire on lungtalanana in 2014 which burned about 98% of the island. Slowly, the island is recovering and the vegetation is now sprouting green shoots.



Beach on lungtalanana

After the fire, lungtalanana was burned and bare. Despite the devastation, the fire had created perfect conditions for conducting a comprehensive heritage survey. Prior to the fire, only four ancient heritage sites had been identified on lungtalanana. The survey carried out after the fire identified at least 6 more ancient heritage sites.

It is estimated that lungtalanana was consistently occupied by Aborigines up until 6500 years ago. Aboriginal occupation was then interrupted by the end of an ice age which resulted in sea levels rising and lungtalanana becoming a rruni.

Aborigines did not occupy the rruni again until they were taken there by raytji sealers in 1810. During the 1800s our people mainly lived in small huts around the area now known as Spike Bay.

Many Aboriginal luna were taken to lungtalanana to live with raytji sealers and many families were raised there. In the early days lungtalanana had a small community of residents.

The name lungtalanana came from a luna named Tanalipunya. Tanalipunya had been taken to tayaritja by white sealers. Like all Aboriginal luna who were taken to tayaritja, Tanalipunya's skills were utilised to help the less capable sealers survive the harsh conditions. Before being taken to tayaritja, Tanalipunya had been married to Manalakina.

More recently, lungtalanana has been used as an alternative to incarceration for young Aboriginal offenders. Since the community gained control of the rruni in 1997 a small number of Aboriginal families have made the rruni their home while administering the youth justice program.

While the community gained control of lungtalanana in 1997 by signing a lease, it was not until May 2005 that the Tasmanian Government returned ownership to our community. Aboriginal Land Council of Tasmania (ALCT) now hold the title for lungtalanana on behalf of all Tasmanian Aborigines.



From top: Water flowing to the muka, and Billy Maher's drawing of the Dorothy Star



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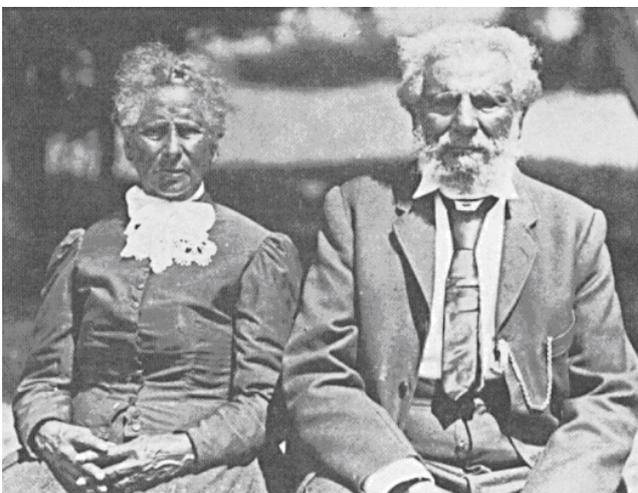
Devastation on lungtalanana
after the 2014 fires.





Top Left:
Heritage sites uncovered after the
2014 fires

Below:
The Thomas family on lungtalanana

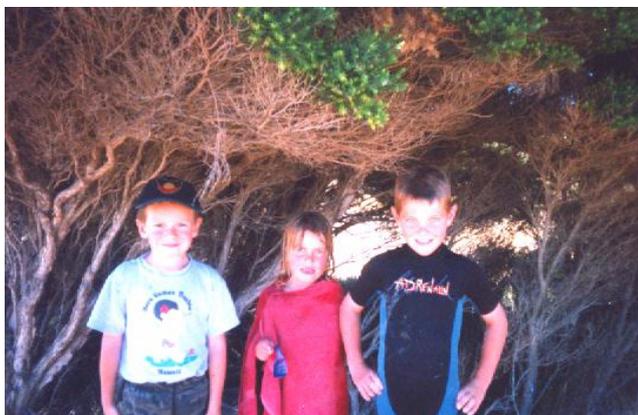
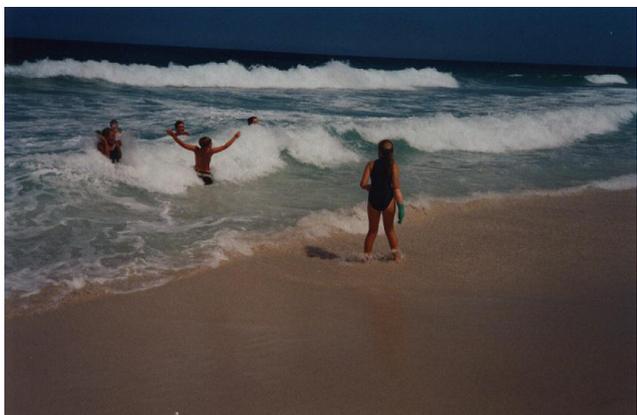




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Top and below:
Families and luwutina enjoying country and
muka on lungtalanana

Underneath: The old homestead – lungtalanana





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BABEL ISLAND

Babel Island is an important rruni for our community. As Aboriginal people we have had a connection to this place since time began. Way back when lutruwitia was joined to the mainland, our people were using the land now known as Babel Island. In modern times, our people have birded Babel Island for over 130 years.



Historical photos of community travelling to and from Babel Island for the birding season.



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Babel Island is located half way up the east coast of Flinders Island. A sand spit reaches from Sellars Point on Flinders Island out across the muka, towards Babel Island. Babel Island is 441 hectares in size.

Babel Island



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Babel Island has the biggest mutton bird rookery in the world. Babel Island has historically offered a place for community to make a living for themselves and their families through birding.



Left to right:
Sand spit off Babel and South East Beach.



Left to right: Rookery on Babel Island. and Yola off the coast of Babel Island



Back in the old days, all the birds taken from Babel would need to be salted because there was no refrigeration available to keep the birds fresh. The salted birds would then be shipped to lutruwitja, and other parts of Australia, to be sold for eating. Oil from the birds would also be sold, as would the feathers and the down.



Left to right: Rough conditions heading to Babel Island, Historical image of community setting sail to Babel Island.

Babel Island has the biggest mutton bird rookery in the world. Babel Island has historically offered a place for community to make a living for themselves and their families through birding.

In the 1920s birding started to become profitable for Aborigines. During this time, there were more sheds on Babel than on any other rruni in tayaritja. The majority of these sheds were owned and operated by Aborigines. This is quite a notable achievement for our people. At the time, throughout the rest of Australia, there were very few Aborigines who could say that they owned and operated their own businesses and were able to provide employment for their community.



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Historical images of life on Babel Island during the birding season.



In its heyday, Babel Island was a busy and vibrant little rruni during birding season. It had 26 sheds operating, as well as a nurse, a police officer, a food store and a health inspector.

In more recent times, the number of operational sheds on Babel Island has dwindled to just one.

After a long struggle for land rights, the Tasmanian Government finally returned Babel Island to the community in 1995. The title for the land is held on behalf of the Aboriginal community by ALCT.

Top: Birders on Babel island – more recently and in the 1970s

Bottom: The title for Babel Island is finally returned - 1995.

BIG DOG ISLAND

Big Dog Island is an important rruni for our community. As Aboriginal people we have had a connection to this place for thousands and thousands of years. Way back when lutruwitja was joined to the mainland, our people were using the land now known as Big Dog Island. Over the last 200 years, our community has used the rruni for birding.

In fact, it is estimated that Big Dog Island has one of the longest continuous birding operations anywhere in the world.



Big Dog Island is off the south coast of Flinders Island in Adelaide Bay. As the crow flies, Big Dog is only 3kms away from the township of Lady Barron.

Coast of Big Dog Island



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0 0.5 1 km Tracks 10m Contours Data Sources: theLIST transportsegments, contours Base imagery: Orthorectified photo taken 29 Nov 1999 Map Created: 11/11/2014

Sitemap

There are ancient heritage sites on the runi that consist of both isolated artefacts and artefact scatters. These areas are interwoven with our community's more contemporary heritage connected to birding, particularly the birding sheds.



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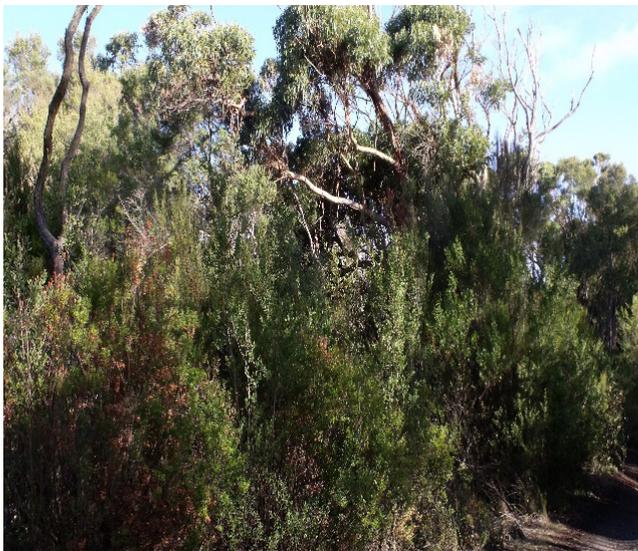
In 1828, Big Dog Island was described as being 'well wooded with good grass being found in many places interspersed with thickets (of scrub)'. These days, the island only has remnant scrub. For the most part, the scrub was reduced through inappropriate fire and over clearing, for both grazing and to make use of the timber for firewood and boat building. The small patches of scrub that remain on the island are of a high conservation significance. This is because there are few examples of this kind of scrub remaining throughout outer tayaritja.



Historical images of community birding on Big Dog Island.



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Over fifty per cent of Big Dog is tussock grassland, and all of this grassland is mutton bird rookery. The rookery, for the most part, is in fair condition, despite currently being covered with fireweed.

The fireweed colonised the rookery after inappropriate fire ravaged the rruni in 2013 and much of it is expected to die out in the next few years. This is not the first time this has occurred. In 1984, the then managers of Big Dog Island, set about a campaign to stop people undertaking rookery burns because of the impact of fireweed. Despite this, a major rookery burn was undertaken in 1986 (with the exception of lease 5). This resulted in the island being in much the same state as it is now.



Patches of remnant scrub



Healthy rookery on Big Dog Island

Big Dog Island was originally used for grazing sheep and cattle, as well as mutton birding. Having livestock on the island had a negative impact on the rookery. The hooved feet of these animals destroyed burrows and made a mess of the rookery. Despite this, cattle remained on the island until the late 1950s and sheep were not completely removed from the island until it was handed back to the community. Since livestock have been removed the rookery is much healthier.

In the past, there were also problems with feral cats on the island. However an eradication program carried out in the early 1990s seems to have been fairly successful and feral cats are no longer being reported as a major issue.

After a long struggle for our land rights to be recognised, the Tasmanian Government finally returned Big Dog Island to the community in 1995. The title for the rruni is held by ALCT on behalf of the Aboriginal community.



The title for Big Dog Island is finally returned - 1995



“The islands are really important, I think it’s really important that people are able to come and see them, to stay on them and to live on them. It’s an important part of our culture. For the young ones it can be a good place to get away from all the stresses of the city and have a break”

—RM

COMMUNITY VISION:

Aboriginal people are self-determining in the management of their islands.

The community’s connection to the islands is strengthened.

Cultural resources are understood and used sustainably.

The land and its ecosystems are healthy.

Rookeries are safe and mutton birding continues for generations to come.



WHAT IS HEALTHY COUNTRY PLANNING?

Healthy country planning is a method used by Aboriginal communities around Australia to identify how they want to manage their land. It is part of a planning process used around the world called open standards. Open standards is a method of planning used in land management for the practice of conservation.

Healthy country planning aims to balance environmental values with community values and cultural *tunapri*.

Unlike a traditional land management plan, a healthy country plan looks at what is important to the Aboriginal community and places a higher value on those things, rather than only valuing things considered important by scientists and conservationists.

Our healthy country plan started with a community effort. We had a meeting on Flinders Island in June 2014 and a lot of people shared their *tunapri*, thoughts and feelings on how they thought each of the islands should be managed.

Healthy country planning works by identifying targets and threats, and setting goals to either protect our targets or to eliminate our threats.

This plan is only part of the healthy country planning process. It is important that we have continued community input throughout the healthy country planning cycle.



The Healthy Country Cycle



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HOW ARE HEALTHY COUNTRY PLANS USED?

A healthy country plan aims to identify the community's objectives for the management of our lands and resources.

Our healthy country plan will sit above our current land management plans in order to give them direction. It will also inform us what our priorities should be when undertaking land management work on Aboriginal lands.

Our healthy country plan gives our community a say in how our lands should be looked after now and into the future.

TARGETS

WHAT IS A TARGET?

A target is a feature of the landscape that the community wish to focus their energy and resources in protecting. A target can be either tangible or intangible. Tangible targets are things in the landscape that you can see and touch. Examples of tangible targets on the islands are rookeries and historical buildings. An intangible target is something in the landscape that cannot be seen or touched. An example of an intangible target is the community's tunapri about certain places.

HOW WE IDENTIFIED OUR TARGETS?

We spoke to people at community camps, community meetings and individually to help us identify the features in the landscape that the community consider the most important. We also held a community meeting on Flinders Island in August 2014.

In this meeting, we made lists of things that the community said are important to the islands.

We then grouped those things together under headings like 'community use' and 'tunapri'. From our list we were able to set priorities on what we should focus on our efforts on.

This is how we identified our targets.

TARGET 1 ECOSYSTEMS OF SIGNIFICANCE

FAIR HEALTH



Top: Tussock grass rookery
Below: yamina forest

Why are ecosystems of significance a target?

Ecosystems of significance are environments that were identified by the community as being important.

While some of the ecosystems are identified because they are rare or threatened, others are identified simply because they were considered important features in the landscape.

Although there are only a few threatened species on the islands, there are ecosystems that are rare, such as the remnant scrub on Babel Island and Big Dog.

The yamina (*Xanthorrhoea*) forest on lungtalanana was identified, not because it is endangered or rare, but because it is viewed as an integral part of the lungtalanana landscape.

The tussock grass (*Poa Poiformis*) rookeries on Babel Island and Big Dog were identified as important because they are essential in sustaining a healthy yula population.

Black Boy Forests:

The yamina forest on lungtalanana is important to the community. yamina are also commonly known as black boys.

They are called this because the plant has a thick black trunk.

The plant is very slow growing and trunks only start appearing after many, many years of growth – because of this, we know that the yamina forest on lungtalanana is very old.



yamina have long, narrow leaves which are crowded at the tops of the trunks. These leaves can be used for weaving.

The main yamina forest is located on the northern part of lungtalanana, just behind Kangaroo Bay.

There is considerable concern in the community about the health of the yamina since the 2014 fires which burnt 98% of the rruni. However, it should be noted that yamina respond well to fire and they are currently in very good health.

The real threat to the yamina forest, is the spread of a plant disease called *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is a fungal disease that rots the roots of plants. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is spread through contaminated dirt from machinery and vehicles, as well as on clothing and boots.

Tussock grass rookeries:

There are tussock grass rookeries both on Big Dog Island and Babel Island. These are extremely important ecosystems, as without healthy rookeries, yula cannot thrive.

Tussock grass rookeries are also significant because they are representative of the original landscape of the islands prior to colonisation and the introduction of European farming practices.

Importantly, tussock grass rookeries are easy to bird and are sturdy enough to withstand annual birding. This is because the tussocks hold the sandy rookeries together and provide natural protection against erosion and sand blows.

Weeds, pest plants, and inappropriate fire are particular threats to tussock grass rookery. After fire has gone through a tussock grass rookery, it is likely to become overgrown with fireweed (as happened recently on Big Dog).

After a fire, fireweed will grow and quickly take over the landscape. However,



yamina forest on lungtalanana



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Community birding on Big Dog Island

the natural life cycle of fireweed means that it will die off within a few years.

Fireweed is one of the major concerns of the community in relation to the rookery on Big Dog Island. There is widespread concern about the impact fireweed may have on the health of the birds. Currently, the fireweed is dense across the rookery and it is unclear if this is affecting the ability of the birds to scratch out burrows. Some birders claim that the abundance of fireweed is making the birds 'soft'.

Other weeds such as boxthorn, mirror bush and exotic grasses can also cover rookery. This can be seen on many other runi throughout tayritja.



Fireweed across the rookery on Big Dog Island.



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Weed removal and revegetation work.

Cape Barren Pine and tea tree remnant scrub:

Until recently, it was thought there were no Cape Barren pines (*Callitris rhomboidea*) left on Babel Island. However, a small patch of Cape Barren pine was found in 2013.

The Cape Barren pine is particularly sensitive to burning and over-harvesting, as was the case on Babel Island. In the 1800s, Babel Island was described as being 'heavily wooded'. This is in stark contrast to the island today.



Above left: Cape Barren Pine
Above right: Remnant Blue Gum



There are two endangered plants found on Babel Island. These plants are the shade pellitory and coastal twin-leaf shrub.



On Big Dog, the remnant scrub occurs mostly on the north-eastern side of the rruni. Although many of the plants that make up the remnant scrub are not endangered, there are endangered plants found there. These plants include:



Northern leek-orchids
(*Piasophyllum secitum*)



Broad-lip bird orchid
(*Chiloglottis trapeziformis*)



Grassland greenhood
(*Pterostylis ziegeleri*)



Banded greenhood
(*Pterostylis sanguinea*)

The large patch of scrub on Big Dog is thought to be the most ecologically diverse in outer tayariŋja.

The remnant scrub and Cape Barren pines are important because as ecosystems, they are reflective of the landscape before the introduction of European farming practices.

Why are ecosystems of significance rated as being in fair health?

Ecosystems of significance are rated as being in fair health because of the impact of invasive weeds and pest plants (such as fireweed). If action is not taken to rid the rruni of weeds and pest plants, they have the potential to take over and cause a lot of damage. The main weeds that pose a threat on the islands is African boxthorn and mirror bush, with the main pest plant being fireweed.



These places are important places, and they're important places just the way they are. We need to look after them. When are we going to stop thinking we have to develop things all the time? That's not our way.

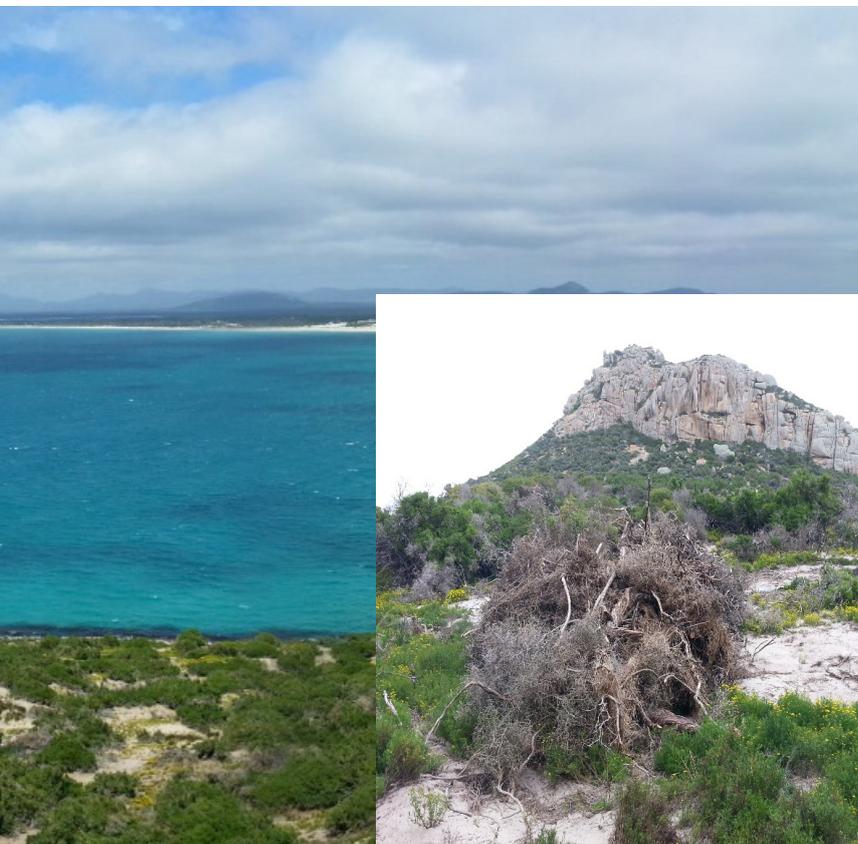
—RS



Babel Island

The main threat to the yamina forests on lungtalanana is *phytophthora cinnamomi* which is a plant disease. *Phytophthora cinnamomi* has been identified as being on lungtalanana, but at present, it has not had any extensive impact on the yamina forest.

Since invasion, clearing, grazing and too much fire have impacted upon our ecosystems of significance. Now, only a few small healthy patches remain, which is why it is so important we work to keep them healthy.



African boxthorn on Babel Island



yamina forests impacted by *phytophthora cinnamomi*

TARGET 2

YULA (MUTTON BIRDS)

POOR HEALTH

Why is yula a target?

yula are important to the community because birding is an integral part of our culture. The skeletal remains of yula have been found scattered throughout middens around all of lutruwita. Yula have been an integral part of our people's

diet for thousands of years – some people in the community say that our people have relied on yula for sustenance since time began.

yula arrive from the northern hemisphere in late September. They clean out their burrows in October and lay their eggs between late November and early December. Once the chicks hatch they are fattened up by their parents. The parents take turns feeding the chicks, at first nightly but as the chicks grow bigger and stronger, their parents will only feed them once every 2 weeks.

Once the chicks are big and fat, the parents leave them alone in the burrow and embark on the long journey back to the northern hemisphere.

Birding season usually starts in March and runs through to the end of April. By the time the birding season comes round, the chicks are covered in soft grey down and, in a good season, they are big and fat. Perfect for eating.

In the late 1870's it was recorded that birding was the only industry in Tasmania to provide a living for Aborigines. Back in those days, yula were a highly valued commodity, with

feathers and oil being sold for a good profit. However, by the early 1900s the exporting of feathers and oil had all but stopped, and the main focus for birding was getting yula to eat.



Community birding on Big Dog Island.

In the old days, salted yula was often the only meat available to Aborigines living on tayaritja, with other meat from European animals being too expensive for most Aboriginal people to afford.

Big Dog Island is home to the longest continuous mutton-birding operation in the world. It is the island where most of our birding is still done today. The majority of the sheds on Big Dog Island are operated by Aborigines.

Babel Island has the biggest rookery on the planet. However, in recent times, it has not been as readily birded as Big Dog. This is largely because of the remoteness of the island and the difficulty faced in travelling there.

Although Aborigines started petitioning the Tasmanian government to have Big Dog Island set aside exclusively for Aborigines to bird as far back as 1877, it was not until 1995 that the rruni was officially returned to our community. Babel Island was returned at the same time.



Community birding on Big Dog Island.



Birds prepared for eating.





Community birding on Big Dog Island.

Why are yula considered as being in poor health?

yula is considered to be in poor health because of the decrease in bird numbers. It is unclear why the numbers have dropped over the last couple of seasons, but it is of grave concern to the community. The community are also worried that not as many young people are interested in going birding as they have been in the past. This requires striking a careful balance between decreasing bird numbers and conserving our culture. People are worried our skills could be lost and that too many of our young people are missing out on experiencing and

participating in birding, while also being concerned about diminishing yula numbers.

Concerns were also raised about the impact of fireweed on the rookeries, particularly on Big Dog. Despite fireweed being a native, it is felt that because it is growing in such abundance it is degrading the rookery there.

GOALS:

- Annual monitoring of bird numbers through checking burrow occupancy rates
- By 2018 have an annual camp for young people to bird islands during birding season

SEE: Action Plan 1 & 2 Big Dog Island Plan (2007), Action Plan 5 Babel Island Plan (2008)

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS

TARGET 3

POOR HEALTH

Why are historical buildings a target?

The historical buildings identified as being of particular importance to the community are the old homestead on Big Dog and the birding sheds on Babel.

These historical buildings are important to our community. The community feels that by letting the old buildings fall into disrepair, we stand to lose an important part of our heritage.

The historical buildings often have the names of the people who worked in them written about the place – especially in the old sheds on Babel.

Our community feels that both the buildings and the writings need to be preserved.

The community considers these writings are an important record of our community's history. Some people thought that the writings in the buildings would help people feel connected to deceased family members who had worked the sheds many years before, and some people thought that seeing family members' names in these places would help those who have not spent much time on the islands, forge a more meaningful connection to these places.

It was also suggested that minor maintenance works could be undertaken on lungtalanana to make the island more appealing for community to visit when the island is not in use by programs.



Nissen hut on Babel



The names of birders - Babel Island.



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Why are the historical building rated as being in poor health?



Historical shed falling down.

On Babel, many of the old birding sheds are falling down and will soon be lost. The old homestead on Big Dog Island needs work to ensure community feel comfortable using it.

The community feel that the buildings on lungtalanana could be freshened up to ensure they remain in good condition.

Given that many of sheds on Babel have fallen down or are in a bad state of disrepair, they were rated as being in poor health. The community thought work should be undertaken as a matter of urgency to ensure these buildings (and their writings) survive long into the future.

GOALS:

- By 2018 one additional old shed on Babel Island is stabilised
- By 2018 the homestead on Big Dog is usable

SEE: Action Plan 1 & 2 Babel Island Management Plan (2007), Action Plan 5 Big Dog Island Management Plan (2008), Action Plan 1 lungtalanana (2008)

TUNAPRI

FAIR HEALTH

Why is tunapri a target?

tunapri is our knowledge and our stories. The community identified this as an important target, as without the passing on of tunapri, the significance of our connection to tayaritja could be lost – especially for younger generations.

The community identified tunapri as being: the knowledge of our cultural resources, how they are used and where they can be found, as well as who worked what sheds and which families were strongly connected to what islands. Many people also thought important tunapri included the story of our struggle to have the islands returned to our people.

The passing on of tunapri involves telling our contemporary stories of the islands, as well as making sure our history of these places is known.

Why is tunapri rated as being in fair health?

The tunapri of the islands is considered to be in fair health. It is felt that teaching the stories of the islands and passing on tunapri about each place could be improved upon. This is considered to be a two-way street – Our community feel that more of an effort should be made by our elders to tell their stories, and more of an effort should be made by our youth to listen.

The community feel that a greater effort should be made with getting people back on country – particularly to the tayaritja. Trips back to country would allow community members to develop their own tunapri about tayaritja. This is how we keep our tunapri strong.

Only by going back on country and sharing tunapri with young people will we ensure our young people understand the significance of tayaritja and what these rruni mean for our peoples' story.

TARGET 4





Birding on Big Dog Island.



Community gather on the islands. Images from the 1970s through to more recent times

GOALS:

- Each year ensure there are at least 2 organised community trips to the islands (in addition to mutton birding) where tunapri is shared and cultural resources are used.

SEE: Action Plan 2, lungtalanana Management Plan (2008)

CULTURAL RESOURCES

TARGET 5

FAIR HEALTH

Why are cultural resources a target?

Our community are very strong in the belief that cultural resources are everybody's business and everybody's responsibility. We all have an obligation to make sure our cultural resources survive long into the future. Our cultural resources are an important part of our story as Aboriginal people. Without cultural resources we would be unable to practice our culture. Practicing culture connects us to our ancestors and strengthens our identity as Aboriginal people. Cultural resources include many different things, such as yula, stringing shells, kelp, shell fish and other kipli, heritage sites and tunapri.

Why are cultural resources considered to be in fair health?

Cultural resources are considered to be in fair health, because the community are concerned about decreasing yula numbers. There is also concern about individuals being 'gutty' with cultural resources. That means, people taking more than their fair share.

The community feels that the best approach to guaranteeing our cultural resources survive long into the future is to encourage more people to use less resources. This is about striking a delicate balance between the conservation of our resources and the need to practice and pass on our culture.

For the cultural resources to be considered in good health more community members would need to be using them, but they would need to be using them in a more sustainable way. That means not being gutty with them!!



Cooking shellfish at lungtalanana



Birding on tayaritja



Rookery

As a community, we need to be more proactive in recording when we use our cultural resources, as well putting more effort into monitoring presence and abundance of our resources over time.

The community feels that there needs to be more sharing of tunapri surrounding cultural resources, such as what they are, what they are used for and where they are found. Our community feels it is important that we make a greater effort to pass this invaluable tunapri on to our youth.

GOALS:

- Log books on islands for community to voluntarily record observations of cultural resources such as presence/absence/abundance and use.
- Each year ensure there are at least 2 organised community trips to the islands (in addition to mutton birding) where tunapri is shared and cultural resources are used.

COMMUNITY USE

FAIR HEALTH

Why is community use a target?

Community use of our land is important because it strengthens our connection to these places. We see community use as a target because gathering on land as a community is a way to strengthen our ties to each other, as well as the best possible way to ensure we all have the opportunity to know our country.

We want to encourage more community to use our lands, but especially our young people, so that they can know the story of the tayaritja and be proud of who they are as Aboriginal people.

Why is community use rated as being in fair health?

Community use of tayaritja is considered to be in fair health because many people visit the islands annually to bird. However, it is felt that more people should be encouraged to visit the tayaritja outside of birding, and that this would need to occur before our community use could be considered in good health.

The community feel we need to focus on getting our young people to tayaritja, so they can feel connected to these places from a young age.

TARGET 6





“I really want to see more community back out on country with regular trips to the islands occurring. Our island country is beautiful. It’s breathtaking. I wish more people in our community had the opportunity to spend time out on the islands.”

-AM

GOALS:

- Each year ensure there are at least 2 organised community trips to the islands (in addition to mutton birding) where tunapri is shared and cultural resources are used.



Community gathering on tayaritja both recently and in the 1970s.



TARGET HEALTH RANKING:

A quick view of how we ranked each target's health. :

Targets	Indicators	Poor	Fair	Good	Very good	OVERALL HEALTH
Ecosystems of significance	Vegetation Condition Problem species reduced over time	Weeds, disease and erosion Increasing	Some weeds & erosion Same	No great weed threat & little erosion Decreasing	Weed free & no erosion	Fair
Community Use	Number of organised community visits to islands	None	1 trip organised	2 trips organised	3 trips organised	Fair
tunapri	Oral history recorded from Elders about time on islands Organised trips (in addition to mutton birding)	None None	1 trip organised	1 oral history recorded 2 trips organised but not many young people	More than 1 oral history recorded 2-3 trips organised with lots of young people	Fair
yula	Bird count over 4 consecutive years	Significantly below average	Slightly below average	Average	Above average	Poor
Historical Buildings	Sheds stabilised Homestead usable	None None	Some Some	Most Most	All All	Poor
Cultural Resources	Presence & Abundance Times used	None None	Present but not abundant Twice	4 Times	Present and abundant 6 Times	Fair

A health ranking table is an easy way to see how the community ranks the health of each target. We have used indicators which show what it takes for targets to be considered in excellent health.



THREATS

WHAT IS A THREAT?

A threat is something that negatively impacts on the health of one of our targets. A threat can be either tangible or intangible. A tangible threat is a thing in the landscape that you can see and touch. Examples of tangible threats are weeds, rubbish, fire and erosion. An intangible threat is something that cannot be seen or touched such as a lack of community interest or loss of tunapri.

UNDERSTANDING THREAT RANKING:

LOW:

- The problem is only likely to slightly harm some or part of the target.
- The problem is likely to be very local and only affect very few places in the project area, and;
- The problem is easily fixable at a fairly low cost and with little effort from workers.

MEDIUM:

- The problem is likely to moderately harm some part of the target.
- The problem is likely to be somewhat local and affect the target at some places in the project area.
- The problem can be fixed with a reasonable commitment of funds and effort from workers.

HIGH:

- The problem is likely to seriously damage or destroy some part of the target.
- The problem is likely to be widespread and affect the target wherever it is in the project area.
- The problem is either really expensive to fix or it's not fixable at all.



THREAT RANKING TABLE:

A quick view on how our community ranks threats

TARGET	Ecosystems of significance	Community Use	tunapri	yula	Historical buildings	Cultural resources	THREAT RANKING
THREAT							
Over harvesting				High		Medium	High
tunapri Loss		Low	High	High		Medium	High
Lack of funding		Medium			High		High
Weeds	High	Low		High			High
Fire	High			Medium			High
Lack of interest		High	Medium	Medium	Medium		Medium
Erosion	Medium			Low			Low
Rubbish	Low	Medium					Low
Feral animals	Low			Low			Low
Phytophthora	Medium						Low



THREATS

“Our cultural resources are important, and they’re important to all of us. So we need to use them sustainably and encourage other people in the community to use them sustainably too. We need to educate people about not getting all gutty with them.”
-VMG

OVER HARVESTING

HIGH

Over harvesting is considered a threat, particularly to yula. However, over harvesting is also considered a problem for other cultural resources such as shell fish for eating and shells for stringing.

GOALS:

- By 2016 community limits are established for vulnerable cultural resources
- By 2018 Educational resources developed to educate community on not being gutty and using our resources sustainably.

SEE: Action plan 5, Babel Island management plan (2008), Action plans 1 & 2 Big Dog Island (2007)



WEEDS AND PEST PLANTS

HIGH

Weeds are considered a threat to the islands, especially to ecosystems of significance. Weeds and pest plants are a threat because of their invasive nature and their impact on environmental values such as rookeries and coastline. If action is not taken to rid the islands of weeds, they have the potential to take over and cause a lot of damage to the landscape. The main weed that poses a threat to the islands is African boxthorn, with the main pest plant being fireweed.



GOALS:

- By 2020 no weed is a major threat on lungtalanana
- By 2020 the boxthorn on Babel Island has decreased by 50%
- By 2020 all mature mirror bush has been controlled on Big Dog Island.

African boxthorn removal on tayaritja.

SEE: Big Dog Island Mirror Bush Action plan (2015), Babel Island Boxthorn Action Plan (2013), Action plan 4 lungtalanana Management Plan (2008)

THREATS

INAPPROPRIATE FIRE:

HIGH

Inappropriate fire (too often and too hot) is considered a threat not only to our environmental values, but also to the historical buildings on the islands. Inappropriate fire has caused a lot of environmental degradation since colonisation. Inappropriate fire leads to outbreaks of fireweed in the rookeries - as has recently happened on Big Dog.

Inappropriate fire can also degrade the tussocks in the rookeries. This means there is nothing on the ground to hold the rookery together, which increases the risk of erosion, weeds and sand blows developing.



GOALS:

- Each year adhere to existing fire plans

SEE: Action plan 8 Babel Island Management plan (2008), Action plan 4 Big Dog Island Management Plan (2007), Action plans 7 & 3 lungtalanana Management plan (2008)

Impact of the 2014 fires on lungtalanana.

TUNAPRI LOSS

HIGH

tunapri loss is deemed a threat. If we do not work towards creating opportunities for our tunapri to be passed down we risk losing it in generations to come. By passing tunapri down to our younger generations we keep both our country and our tunapri healthy.

GOALS:

- Each year at least one oral history is recorded about island life

“More access to the islands is what we need. Without increased access to the islands our younger generations won’t feel as connected to these places as they should.”

-RM



Community on Babel Island both contemporary and in the 1930s

THREATS

LACK OF FUNDING

HIGH

Lack of funding is considered a threat to the islands because without adequate funding our ability to complete works as required is severely impacted. Lack of funding also lessens our ability to organise trips for community in addition to birding.

GOALS:

- Indigenous Protected Area funding has been secured for the islands beyond 2018.



Visiting Babel Island.

LACK OF INTEREST

MEDIUM

Lack of community interest was identified as a threat, particularly for our younger generations. It was felt that without a proactive approach to engaging our youth with tayaritja, our connection to these places might be lost. This is particularly the case for birding islands, where the community are concerned visits are only undertaken by people during the birding season.

GOALS:

- Each year ensure there are at least 2 organised community trips to the islands (in addition to mutton birding) where tunapri is shared and cultural resources are used.

EROSION

LOW

Erosion, particularly sand blows, are considered a threat on the islands, especially those that have been fire affected. Erosion is considered a threat to yula and ecosystems of significance because of the impact it has on a rookery.

SEE: Action plan 3, lungtalanana management plan (2008) Action plan 3, Big Dog Island management plan (2007)



Planting tussocks to stop erosion.

RUBBISH

LOW

Rubbish is considered a threat to the islands. It is felt that rubbish is often left behind and that more of an effort needs to be made to rid the islands of rubbish at the end of each birding season. .

SEE: Action plan 8 lungtalanana Management plan (2008), Action plan 1.5 Babel Island management plan (2008).

FERAL ANIMALS

LOW

Feral animals are considered a threat because of the impact they have on native animal populations. A particular concern was the impact cats and rats may have on yula numbers. At present the cat populations are low, and therefore the threat is ranked accordingly.



THREATS

PHYTOPHTHORA CINNAMOMI

LOW

Phytophthora cinnamomi is a threat, particularly to the yamina forests on lungtalanana. Phytophthora cinnamomi has not been seen on many of the other outer islands, but it is present in tayaritja. Given that our land management practices often involve taking machinery from one island to another, there is a chance that the disease could be spread accidentally.

SEE: Action plan 9.1 lungtalanana management plan (2008) Action plan 6.1 Big Dog Island management plan (2007), Action plan 9.1 Babel Island management plan. (2008)



yamina infected with Phytophthora cinnamomi



WORKING ON TARGETS AND WORKING ON THREATS.

There are two main approaches used for ensuring a target is healthy. Those approaches are either threat focused or target focused.

A threat focused approach concentrates on managing threats and minimising the impact a threat has on target health. Whereas a target focused approach means our efforts go toward improving the health of the target, by undertaking works which focus directly on improving the target itself.

This can seem confusing at first, because often the desired outcome of the strategies is the same. However, depending on which approach is taken the strategies used will differ significantly.

EXAMPLE

Ecosystems of significance are a target identified by the community as something that should be focused on.

Weeds were considered a major threat to this target.

A threat focused approach would require land management workers to look at how the threat is impacting on a target, and work towards fixing the threat. In this case, that would mean working towards eradicating weeds (that are having an impact on ecosystems of significance). If we think about this in terms of improving the tussock grass rookeries, strategies might include;

- Employing a specialist work crew,
- Embarking on a prolonged campaign of cutting and pasting boxthorn and other weeds on the islands.



A target focused approach means that workers focus their efforts on improving and/or maintaining the target itself (rather than removing or fixing any particular threats). If we think about this in terms of the yamina forests on lungtalanana, strategies might include;

- Monitoring vegetation health,
- Ensuring people scrub their boots before entering the area,
- Limiting vehicle access to the area.

Why do we bother breaking down our strategies to threat focused or target focused?

Breaking things down in this way helps ensure any work being undertaken is meaningful, because it addresses community concerns. It also allows for the community to come up with achievable strategies that take into account any limitations, such as the skill base of our land management crews at any given time, as well as budgetary restraints, while still allowing us to work towards meeting our aspirations.

Although the latter strategies would have much less of a measurable impact on ecosystem health, they would also cost a lot less money, a lot less manpower and a lot less skill. Yet both of these strategies work toward achieving the same goal – ensuring our ecosystems of significance are maintained in good health.



Action plans and monitoring.

It is important to check that strategies and an action plan are put in place to make sure we are on track to achieving our vision and our goals.

We need to work out how healthy things are today, and continue to measure their health by collecting the kind of information that will allow us to check whether or not our targets are getting healthier (or at least, not getting worse).

This information can be used to help us keep our healthy country plan on track.

Ongoing input from our community is important. An integral part of healthy country planning is for plans to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

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