

GOODBYE AND GOOD LUCK



Farewell to Peter McCumstie

The man who laid the foundations for one of Western Australia's most successful Aboriginal Corporations said farewell to his friends and colleagues this month.

Peter McCumstie, who led the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation for the past seven years, has retired for health reasons.

At a lunch for more than 50 guests on April 12, he outlined the strong sense of purpose which has driven the group's development since the Dambimangari Native Title determination in 2011.

Speaking before the event, he said the economic and community programs the group was developing were based on a powerful commitment to traditional identity.

"From day one the main goal has been - and still is - to ensure that the Dambimangari people are given the opportunity to go back to their country," he said.

"To do this, it has been imperative that we developed enterprise and employment opportunities to support the families and individuals moving back to their country in a sustainable manner, allowing them the flexibility to support their life style on country.

"It also means these families will be able to look to maintaining their culture, spiritual needs and the country itself in their role as Traditional Owners.

"Although I am leaving Dambimangari a bit sooner than I would have liked due to some health issues, I know that I leave when the organisation is well prepared to move forward and meet all challenges in the future and achieve positive outcomes for the Traditional Owners.

Mr McCumstie thanked his staff, including deputy CEO Renata Hogan, senior administrator Cassandra McCumstie and healthy country co-ordinator James Mansfield.

"Without the proverbial crystal ball I am not absolutely sure about where to from here but I am looking forward to some travel and perhaps some writing down the track."

Want to keep up with Dambimangari news? Visit <http://www.dambimangari.com.au/contact> to join our mailing list



Our Heritage –
Understanding who we are



Dambi Rangers –
Warrior takes to the sea



Healthy Country –
Qantas passengers support our projects



Fire Control –
Right time burning begins



Economic Development –
Koolan Island restart on schedule



Rio Exploration –
"An excellent example"

Strategic Review –
Guiding Dambi's future



Peter McCumstie (Centre row fourth from right) with friends and colleagues at his farewell on April 12

OUR HERITAGE



Understanding who we are

A unique collaboration of academics in Germany and Australia working with Dambimangari Traditional Owners is piecing together the story of life in the Kimberley Region of WA before white settlement.

The studies are based, in part, on evidence from rugged Kimberley rock art galleries and an unlikely group of German and Perth institutions.

The work began in 1938 with an expedition from Germany's oldest anthropological research institute, the Frobenius Institute in Frankfurt, where a group of scientists were researching the cultures of Asian, African and Australian civilisations.

The work of the expedition was brought to an abrupt halt and largely destroyed by the Second World War. But today, the remaining data is being recovered and studied to bring some of Dambimangari history to life.

Leah Umbagai, who is leading the Dambimangari contingent, says the work will be important in helping Dambi reclaim its traditional country.

"We need to collect as much information as we can about our past to move forward in the future," she said.

"Most of our people were relocated from our country to missions and settlements in the first half of the last century. Many of them lost their language and customs.

"The German expedition of 1938 meant that a lot of anthropologists, archaeologists and historians were able to put together information about our people.

"We are trying to reclaim our country and - to do that - we need to have a better understanding of who we are.

"As Woddordda, Ngarinyin and Wanambal Gambera people we are encouraging and practicing the traditions of our people. We continue to watch and carry the lore of the land."

Mrs Umbagai led a group of Kimberley Dambimangari and Wunambal Gambera AC members to Munich and Frankfurt Museums in November last year to follow up some of the recent work on the Frobenius expedition.

"The trip to Germany made me proud – proud of what our old people were able to achieve – and how much they understood about the land," she said.

"It was also very sad because so much has been lost – and so much has been changed.

The Kimberley team which is piecing together the historic clues to the community's origins is working with UWA rock art expert Associate Professor Martin Porr.

He says the Dambimangari work has international significance.

"No other place in the world has the same connection to people living a traditional lifestyle of this kind," he said.

"The important thing is for us is to be working with the Traditional Owners of this land.

"They can tell us a lot about the society which existed when the rock art and the other materials were discovered and first studied."



From left: Anthropologist Dr Kim Doohan, Leonie Cheinmora and Leah Umbagai at the Museum Five Continents in Munich. Photo by Associate Professor Martin Porr, University of Western Australia.

Professor Porr said the Germans in 1938 established a good relationship with Aboriginal communities of the North West. In some cases, they were better placed to work with Aboriginal communities than European Australians who had been responsible for the displacement of many communities.

DAMBI RANGERS



Warrior takes to the sea

The new Dambimangari patrol boat and its ranger crew have put the group's new ocean workhorse through its paces off the Kimberley coast. Destined to become the centrepiece of the Dambimangari marine park management program, the Manambadda (Warrior) has spent 10 days at sea on test runs.

The vessel has had two five-day sea trials to test the speed and handling capabilities under Kimberley conditions. The vessel cruised comfortably at 22 knots and operated smoothly under most conditions. Apart from a fuel problem, the mechanical and technical equipment performed well.

However, the team identified a couple of issues where efficiency could be improved. Work will begin next month to streamline the vessel and maximise the operating efficiency.

In addition to testing the patrol boat, the crew carried out some of the routine healthy country tasks which will be part of the regular management for Dambimangari sea country.

The program included collecting motion-sensitive wildlife cameras, cleaning up remote areas, preparing some ranger accommodation sites and checking data on wildlife trackers as part of the environmental management program.

Once the current modifications have been completed, the Manambadda will patrol the sea country on a regular basis.

The vessel will also transport rangers, equipment and environmental management teams to marine parks and coastal refuges for wildlife. Most of the region is inaccessible by road.

All of the rangers will be expected to go through offshore training runs in the next few months.

HEALTHY COUNTRY



Qantas passengers support our projects

Qantas Airways passengers are helping to secure a healthy future for Dambimangari country by choosing to Fly Carbon Neutral. The airline's Future Planet program is a world-wide initiative with a special significance here in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

Every time a passenger "ticks the box" to fly Carbon Neutral when they book a Qantas flight, the money is invested in a carbon offset program – like Dambimangari "right time burning" which reduces carbon emissions from wild fires in the wilderness.

Fire management plays a big part in keeping the land healthy. The rangers use Right Way fire – 'cool' fire that burns slowly and is not destructive like wildfire – to reduce fuel on the ground and create a mosaic of natural fire breaks. This prevents devastating wildfires from ripping through the Kimberley – protecting plants and animals, and preventing the huge carbon emissions that come from wildfire.

The Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation sells valuable 'carbon offset credits' from the work, reinvesting the money into the ranger program, ensuring this culturally important and spectacular part of Australia stays healthy for generations to come.

Rowena Mouda, Chairperson of the Corporation, says the contributions play a key role in the group's environmental management programs.

"Our country is very important to us and the management of the environment has become a significant part of our community and employment programs," she said.



Ranger Frank Martin with Rangers-in-training Kallem Mungulu, Derek Oobagooma and Jordan Barunga working on plans for the fire program

"We have an agreement with the State Government to manage the Lalang-garram marine parks and an agreement to work with the Australian Wildlife Conservancy to manage the traditional Dambi land .

"These programs are helping to build our future in a number of ways.

"The contributions help to provide training and employment for the rangers. We have recently acquired an ocean patrol boat to take care of the coast regions – none of which are accessible by road.

"At the same time, we are developing the skills and capacity to manage the environment and restore our links to traditional country."

More than 20 leading Australian businesses have joined the Qantas Future Planet Network, which has kept 3.1 million tonnes of CO2 out of the sky – that's the equivalent of taking all cars off the roads in South Australia for an entire year.

RIGHT TIME BURNING BEGINS

The Australian Wildlife Conservancy in collaboration with Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation is conducting a fire management program across Yampi Sound Training Area and the Dambimangari Indigenous Protected Area.

The program, from mid April to June 30, is part of an annual “right time” burning strategy to reduce the risk of wild fires in the region. Aerial burning will be conducted in 3-7 day blocks throughout this time depending on weather and seasonal conditions.

Burning will involve a combination of controlled ground fires (along road and track networks, around infrastructure and cultural sites) and aerial burning using helicopters.

The core strategy for the fire control program is the use of prescribed burning – to light fires across the region at the right time of the year and under the right conditions.

This will help protect wildlife, including threatened and culturally important species, and their habitats.

Our prescribed fires are designed to be “cool”, moving slowly through the landscape without consuming all of the vegetation in their path.

A successful prescribed burn serves to reduce the risk of wildfire and to minimise the damage caused by any wildfire that does occur (e.g., by protecting old-growth vegetation).

We also establish and maintain fire breaks (often around roads) where appropriate.



Landowners and other stakeholders will be provided with regular updates throughout the season. People in the area are asked inform Dambi Rangers of any changes in contact details.

For more information, go to the Dambimangari Web Site at <http://www.dambimangari.com.au/>

TOP RANGER

Edmund Jungine, Ranger of the Year for 2017, is setting high standards for qualifications and achievements in Dambimangari’s ranger group.

The 27-year-old father of two was selected from a team of five permanent rangers and 10 casuals.

One of five rangers to have completed theory training for coxswain’s tickets to crew the patrol boat Manambadda, he has also qualified in most of the key areas of management and education.

He has worked as a ranger for six years, including a nine-month stint with Mount Gibson Iron.



Ranger Co-ordinator Dale Furley says Edmund has become a role model for his colleagues and the broader community.

“He has an excellent work ethic and reflects the kind of professionalism which makes the entire Dambimangari Community proud. Edmund is an inspiration to his peers and young Dambi men and women.”

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Koolan Island re-start on schedule

Mount Gibson Iron is planning to resume mining at Koolan Island before the end of this year, in order to commence iron ore sales in early 2019.

The company has committed to training and employment programs to deliver important benefits to the Dambimangari community, as part of the project mining agreement.

Operations at Koolan Island were suspended in November 2014 following a seawall failure which flooded mine's main pit.

The Company has since commenced a \$100 million reconstruction project to rebuild the sea wall and dewater the main pit. In a presentation to the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation last month, CEO Jim Beyer told the group's directors that the project was on schedule and on-budget.

Koolan Island was one of Australia's first iron ore mines. It was developed in the late 1940s as a supplier of some of the world's best quality iron ore.

The site is Traditional Dambimangari country and the community has traditionally enjoyed a good working relationship with Mount Gibson.

The company has made an important contribution to programs aimed at improving the health, education and cultural awareness of Dambimangari people.

Past operations at Koolan Island operations had also been an important source of training and employment.

The Board considers Mt Gibson has been respectful in acknowledging the heritage and cultural significance of the area.

Mr Beyer said: "Mount Gibson is extremely proud of the longstanding productive relationship we have enjoyed with the Dambimangari over many years.

It is especially pleasing to restart the Koolan mine and so continue working together to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes well into the future."

A BLUEPRINT FOR EXPLORATION



Rio project “an excellent example”

Dambimangari management and Board are looking to make a recent Rio Tinto Exploration (RTX) program a blue print for future mineral searches on Native Title land.

The project was endorsed under a voluntary exploration agreement between Rio Tinto and Dambimangari in December 2016.

The exploration covered Dambimangari Traditional Country and Australian Defence Department Yampi Sound Military Training areas.

The exploration program involved land clearing, drilling, earthworks for vehicle tracks and rehabilitation of the site once the work was complete.

Under the terms of the agreement, the company carried out heritage surveys, environmental management and rehabilitation programs and cultural awareness training.

Locally recruited Dambi employees were involved in field work and cultural awareness training throughout the program.

Although the exploration failed to identify any commercial mineral discoveries, the project has been an excellent example of cooperative management.

Throughout the program, Rio Tinto agreed to all of Dambimangari requests for protection of the environment and areas of cultural importance.

The company recruited and trained local employees – ensuring that Dambimangari people derived some benefit from the project.

Land and Mineral Rights Advisor Tori Arkell said the open and clear communication with DAC throughout the exploration program had been greatly appreciated.

“It was wonderful to have participation during the work program including the cultural awareness sessions, earthworks monitoring and employment during drilling,” she said.

“The feedback from the RTX team and contractors who had the opportunity to work with Dambimangari representatives has been extremely positive and of enriching experiences.

“We very much look forward to working together again in the future.”



Back row L-R, Ricky Roe, Kirsty Burgu, Edna Mungulu, Mike Haerdle (Rio Tinto), Warren Barunga (Vice Chair), Kirk Woollogoodja, Adrian Lane, Kenneth Gibson.

Front row L-R, Bronwyn Liddel, Rowena Mouda (Chair), Tori Arkell (Rio Tinto), Aaron Mungulu (standing), Ric Davies.

GUIDING DAMBI'S FUTURE

Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation will involve the group's Traditional Owners and members in a major reorganisation and planning program to design the group's future.

The Corporation has one of the most ambitious operational programs in the North-West. The initiatives will involve members in economic development, conservation, environmental management, tourism, cultural development, education and health programs.

In a process expected to involve hundreds of people from several different communities, directors and executive staff will hit the road next month for a series of information sessions and local consultations.

The project is designed to enable the Board and key staff to focus on meeting the strategic goals:

- Strengthening governance and leadership of the group
- Securing the group's asset base, and
- Improving access and connection to Country

"People's Information Sessions" will provide members and Traditional Owners with a comprehensive guide to the group's future programs. The sessions will be organised for key locations throughout WA where members and Traditional Owners are living.

The key issues for discussion at the information sessions will be

- The Strategic Plan implementation and restructure
- Healthy Country Plan review
- Visitor Management Plan for marine parks
- Dambimangari Visitor's Pass implementation
- Proposed marine park at Buccaneer Archipelago

Apart from delivering information, the session will be taking on-board the views of meeting participants.

The preliminary schedule for information sessions is listed below:

- **May 3 2018** **Perth**
1pm-4pm State Library of WA, Great Southern Room, 4th Floor, 25 Francis Street, Perth Cultural Centre, Perth WA
- **May 4 2018** **South Hedland**
1:30pm-4:30pm JD Hardie Centre, Performing Arts Room, Lot 5991 Cottier Drive, South Hedland WA

- **May 8 2018** **Broome**
10am-2pm Broome Lotteries House, Lot 642 Cable Beach Road East, Broome WA
- **May 9 2018** **One Arm Point**
11am-3pm Community Hall, Ardyaloon Community Via Cape Leveque Rd, Broome WA
- **May 15 2018** **Derby**
9am-3pm Derby Sportsmen's Club, Ashley Street Derby WA

The management group will also send notices and summary information to members located across Queensland, Northern Territory, South Australia, Kununurra, Kalumburu and other members living outside Western Australia. The Dambimangari office will close for two months from June 4 to July 27 to allow the Board and senior staff to focus on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

This will mean that some services will be restricted or deferred for the review period.

- All Trust-related enquiries and requests (including health fund, education fund and funeral fund support) will be re-directed to Australian Executor Trustees, which can be contacted on dambimangari@aetlimited.com
Australian Executor Trustees
T 1800 078 680 | aetlimited.com.au
Level 28, 152-158 St Georges Terrace, Perth WA 6000
- No Regional Project Fund requests will be processed during this period.
- Office staff will be unable to help with member requests for assistance with items such as birth certificate applications, license renewals and other general assistance.
- The ranger program will continue to operate as usual.

For more information contact

reception@dambi.org.au or 08 9191 2383

Published by Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 648, DERBY WA 6728