

Dambimangari

Update

December 2016

A foundation for the future

A strategy for healthy country, thriving oceans and economic development

The Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation is setting new directions for the future with a plan for a diversified program of environmental management and economic growth.

The new plans will mean healthier country, well managed marine parks and a stronger business development strategy.

Key decisions for the group's economy and community were signed off by the State Government and Traditional Owners at a ceremony in Derby on November 23. The ceremony followed a special Indigenous Land Use (ILUA) community meeting on October 25.

WA Environment Minister Albert Jacob said the plan would deliver unprecedented environmental outcomes, along with tourism and job opportunities.

"We have been working with the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation since 2013 and have signed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement to jointly manage their sea country and provide employment opportunities for Dambimangari people," he said .

Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation Chairman, Francis Woolagoodja said the initiatives would help to build a sustainable future for the region and its people.

He said it reflected the success of recent co-operative research and monitoring programs combining western science with traditional knowledge.



Dambimangari director Leah Umbagai, Chairman Francis Woolagoodja and WA Environment Minister Albert Jacob sign the joint management agreement for Dambimangari sea country.



Ezrah Rastus, James Mansfield and Frank Martin on duty on Dambimangari sea country.

Approval for joint management of some of Australia's most important marine parks

Under the terms of the Indigenous Land Use Agreement, Australian scientists and Dambimangari Traditional Owners will work together on research, environmental protection and tourism management programs for marine environment in the Dambimangari Native Title determination area. The programs will mean a significant increase in monitoring and management work for rangers. The parks include

- Lalang-garram Camden Sound Marine Park (Dambimangari Part)
- Proposed Lalang-garram Horizontal Falls Marine Park Area
- Proposed North Lalang-garram Marine Park Area.

Expansion of the Ranger program

The DAC is establishing a well equipped and well trained ranger team to help manage Dambimangari sea country in the Kimberley region. The nine-member group is working on -

- Biodiversity monitoring – in a program which will help to protect endangered and threatened wildlife species
- Marine wildlife monitoring – such as tagging and photographing dugongs, turtles and dolphins
- Training for rangers – in research support, marine operations and wildlife monitoring
- Cultural site visits [to be discussed with James]
- Burning and fire fighting training – to protect the onshore rangelands in Dambimangari country.

The strategy has been designed to give Dambimangari Rangers a key role in the essential work of managing and monitoring the land and sea environment. The work, which will help to provide funding for the ranger program and valuable training for the employees who are working on the projects, is expected to increase with the ILUA programs for Marine Parks. A joint management board of nine Traditional Owners and three Department of Parks and Wildlife representatives has been set up to implement the plan.

A visitor permit system

DAC has been working with the State Government to manage the increasing numbers of tourists who travel the region (mostly by sea) to see the unique scenery and sea life. The visitor information program includes a chart of popular tourist locations. Visitors to these areas are required to register their plans and secure approval from the Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation and the Aboriginal Lands Trust (for access to reserves). For more information on the Dambimangari Visitor Guide go to: <http://www.dambimangari.com/welcome>



Edmund Jungine and DPaW Senior Ranger, Daniel Barrow checking turtles offshore

Other AGM Projects

Partners in conservation

Dambimangari is building important links with scientific research, education and conservation groups to develop a key role in the future management of parks and reserves. In a major step forward, one of Dambi's potential partners, the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC), has secured a contract to manage land at the National Defence-controlled Yampi Sound Training area. The AWC, which operates Mornington, Marion Downs and Charnley River stations, will provide a demand for additional ranger services. The two organisations will work in partnership on management of Dambimangari land.

Other partners in the ranger programs include:

- Kimberley Land Council
- World Wildlife Fund
- University of WA



- Murdoch University
- Western Australian Marine Science Institute
- WA Department of Parks and Wildlife
- Department of Fisheries
- Department of Agriculture and Food

Koolan Island production break

Mount Gibson Iron, is reviewing its options to rebuild a sea wall and resume mining at Koolan Island. If approved, the resumption of operations would take 12 to 18 months.

Mount Gibson Iron was a significant contributor to Dambimangari funding and local employment. The loss of iron ore mining support has led to tighter budgets and strict cost controls in Dambimangari programs.

Right time burning more important than ever

An outbreak of uncontrolled bushfires beyond the borders of Dambimangari country this year, highlighted the significance of defensive burning ahead of the bushfire season. Dambimangari Rangers were called to help fight the fires but, closer to home, much of the rangeland was protected by right time burning to reduce fuel load. The fire prevention program - one of the established roles of the rangers - is also a key to reducing carbon dioxide emissions, a program which has earned the DAC funds from carbon credits.

Asserting Dambi's rights at Cockatoo Island

Meantime, DAC has protested at Government and iron ore mining operator Pluton Resources' failure to resolve issues of tenure on Cockatoo Island. Production has been suspended by Pluton which is now in receivership. The DAC has made it clear that the Dambimangari people will expect to exercise their right to be consulted before any attempts to sell the operation or resume production.

Fish farms on the menu

One of Dambimangari's biggest potential projects is the Aarli Mayi Aquaculture Venture. The Department of Fisheries has formally advised Dambimangari, Bardi Jawi and Mayala Traditional Owner groups and Maxima Opportunity Group that the joint venture can plan for a 5,000-tonne facility in Cone Bay. The partnership will now need to commission a feasibility study and seek funding support for a project to go ahead in the next 1-3 years. If the project proves viable, it will provide an income and substantial employment opportunities for Dambimangari people on their own Country.

Keeping up to date on line

The website established at the beginning of this year provides an insight into the Dambimangari people, their history and their future. This website is updated regularly and is still being improved to provide better community access through social media and other communication tools. Newsletters, using the website as a base, will be published on a regular basis.