

Dambimangari News

July 2021

Dambimangari Young and Old sharing Kimberley Culture



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From the CEO's desk



Welcome to 2021! Wait, what month is it? Where did the first six months actually go? There's been so much going on over the last six months, it all seems like a blur....

There's been staff coming and going in all different directions; celebrations and accolades; new marine parks to plan for; training; fauna surveys; flora surveys; water-based patrols; heritage surveys; fire ops; museum openings; meetings (oh so many meetings!); joint management patrols; and so much more!! AHH!!!

After the madness of 2020, we had hoped that this year would see some semblance of normality returning to the way we operate, but alas that does not seem to be the case. It seems that we've become accustomed to one speed here at DAC: flat out!

But being so busy is a great sign of things to come for DAC as we enter a new era of economic development, and eventual prosperity, while consolidating our existing operations.. It is going to remain busy for the foreseeable future.

We have had to say goodbye to a few Dambi favourites in this edition, but that also means we get to welcome new fresh-faced individuals, bringing fresh perspectives to the Dambi team.

So without further comment, and potentially spoiling the content within, I will sign off on another great, jammed packed edition of the Dambimangari Newsletter. We hope you all enjoy the read...

New accolades for Yorna

Yorna hits yet another high!

By Kelly Gardner

There is no doubt about it, when you are in the presence of Yornadaiyn "Donny" Woolagoodja you know you are in the presence of someone very special. He carries a visible aura with a quiet determination rarely seen these days in the modern techno-crazy world.

So it's not surprise to hear that he has been afforded yet another accolade this time receiving the Red Ochre award for a lifetime of achievement in the Arts. The award was publicly announced on 27 May in a presentation by the Australian Council for the Arts, with the ceremony being aired on NITV.

Yorna has known since March he was the recipient of this highly regarded and prestigious award, but has made no mention, not even in passing of this truly outstanding personal accomplishment!

The list of achievements is staggering by anyone's standards and below are some of the highlights:

Yorna was the first Chairperson of Mowanjum Artists Spirit of the Wandjina Aboriginal Corporation in 1998. He was instrumental in establishing Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre which was completed in 2006. Under Yorna's leadership, Mowanjum Artists Spirit of the Wandjina Aboriginal Corporation started Mowanjum Festival in 1998. The Festival is one of Western Australia's largest cultural celebrations of art and Junba, traditional song and dance performance, telling the stories of the Mowanjum tribes.

Yorna started his own tour company, Wandjina Tours, to share his cultural teachings with an ever increasing audience. He has worked with researchers, anthropologists, linguists, film-makers, mining companies, and a plethora of government agencies.

Yorna would bring the Worrora culture to a world-wide audience during the Opening Ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympics, when he designed a large-scale Wandjina Namarali that rose spectacularly into the night sky.



Outside of the art world Yorna's influence was instrumental in the exclusive native title determination for the Worrora People, when he along with other Dambi Elders articulated the deep cultural connection he has towards his country and culture.

Yorna was quoted as saying about his art, "it is very important to me because that is the only thing keeping us going in the world is our culture. We are proud to have something very important to us and for the next generation. I'm just a front runner for the next generation."

Well Yorna, we're the ones that are proud! Proud of your grit, determination, and achievements! Mostly we are just proud of you...we know you are an awesome legend, and now so does the world!!



Yorna at last year's book launch.

Major heritage investment in parks

By Kelly Gardner

Top efforts come to fruition – a new park for Dambi!

By Kelly Gardner

Something remarkable happened in December 2020 that seemed to escape the attention of most – the declaration of a series of new national parks and marine parks across the State. Not that much pomp and pageantry was recorded except for a small mention on the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions facebook page.

A small group of Dambi People headed south for the occasion to meet with the Minister for the Environment, the Honourable Stephen Dawson MLC who signed an Indigenous Land Use Agreement which officially created the new Mayalum Marine Park over Dambi traditional waters in the Buccaneer Archipelago. Team Dambi present included: Janet and Crystalbell Oobagooma, Marilee Liddel, Adrian Lane, Francis Woolagoodja, with staff Cass McCumstie and Liz Vaughan.

This was the culmination of a fast paced, action-packed series of workshops over the proceeding 18 months to codesign these new areas. But in fact, the foundations of this work had been ongoing since 2012 when Dambi began working with DBCA in joint management for the series of Lalang-garram Marine Parks.

Now, as a result of the tremendous efforts of all those involved over the years, the entire area of Dambi's traditional saltwater country is protected as marine park! WOW!

DAC would like to thank those who gave up their time and endless energy to see through this final push: Rowena Mouda, Leah Umbagai, Francis Woolagoodja, Roslyn Dolby, Jason Sesar, and Warren Barunga. Everyone who has been involved with this landmark result over the years, you should be so very proud of your efforts and we applaud you!



Janet, Crystalbell, Marilee, with Roanna Goater from DBCA witness to the signing.



Francis and the Minister putting pen to paper in symbolic creation of a new marine park.

What's in a name...?

You might have noticed something going on with the spelling of certain words lately. Our partner, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) has been slowly introducing the new agreed spelling for some of our names. The Joint Management Board had a session with some senior Dambi people to try to work out a new, more phonetic way to spell some words, like:

Dambimangari is now Dambeemangarddee

Lalang-garram is now Lalang-gaddam

So, don't think DBCA have lost the plot and just changed things will-nilly, rather it's a coordinated approach to educate others how to say our words properly!

New Plan for healthy country

Dambi wins grants

By Delys Gebert

Dambi has been successful since our last newsletter winning several grants.

Dambi is pleased to announce that we have secured an Australian Heritage Grant valued at more than \$342,000 to review the current Healthy Country Plan and establish a new plan. The current plan is due to expire in 2022 and Dambi had been told that no additional funds from our funding body would be made available to develop a new plan. This was going to be a significant issue as many healthy country plans are due to expire across the Kimberley at roughly the same time, and no one will have the money to do this important work.

Thankfully Dambi was successful in applying to the Commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment through the Australian Heritage grants program for funding that will allow the current plan to be reviewed.

The new plan will then articulate the aspirations of Traditional Owners and guide ranger activities over the next 10 years. The plan will also provide opportunities for other interested parties to help Dambi people reach their goals of careful and considered management of country and precious resources. These Heritage Grants are highly competitive process with groups from all over the country competing for a very limited bucket of available monies.

Funded by the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources, DAC will hold the first of three workshops at Kimbolton this coming September to review how our existing plan has gone over its lifespan of almost ten years, taking all the science that our rangers have worked so hard in collecting and scoring the success of projects and the overall program against the hefty targets set back in 2011.

In a nice piece of symmetry, DAC has managed to procure the services of Frank Weisenberger, the scribe of the original Dambi Healthy Country Plan to work with people to develop the new plan.

We hope people will remember Frank with fondness and welcome him back to the Dambi fold for this important project.



Team Dambi: Adrian, Janet, Crystabel, Francis and Marilee at Parliament House.

Dambi also successfully applied in partnership with Wilonggin Aboriginal Corporation and Australian Wildlife Conservancy, for a state-wide Community Natural Resource Management Grant of just over \$260,000 to address weed and feral animal issues across Wilonggin and Dambi traditional lands.

And again, a third grant was won through Biosecurity TopWatch program to upgrade our communications in the field with a \$10,000 grant to purchase a new marine base-station and satellite comms. This will vastly improve safety in the field of our Ranger staff operating in very remote and isolated conditions. Something I'm sure we can all agree is of vital importance.

Weeds and ferals are a significant threat to our native species and this program will provide a lifeline to threatened native fauna.

Dambi management thanks Kelly Gardner, the Healthy Country Manager for her efforts and giving up her holiday at Christmas to meet grant closing date deadlines.

Dambi and Wilinggin team up for early burn

By Larissa Potter and Strath Barton (AWC)



Hamish Mcalpine, Shorisha Ozies and Phil Ngerdu ready to head out for the day.
Photo Strath Barton / AWC.

Covid collaboration continues:

Dambimangari Rangers join Wilinggin Rangers and Australian Wildlife Conservancy for the early burn program once again.

Last year, amidst the Coronavirus pandemic, Dambimangari Rangers Cherylyn and Shorisha Ozies along with Ranger Coordinator Josh Vartto joined Wilinggin Rangers and staff from the Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) to deliver the extensive early dry season fire program across Dambimangari Country, Wilinggin Country and AWC managed properties. The team were based at AWC's Charnley River-Artesian Range Wildlife Sanctuary (old Beverly Springs) for the duration of the program, working in isolation while the Kimberley experienced its first ever lockdown. The program was a big success, so a similar arrangement has been embraced again for 2021.

Right way fire is one of the best tools for looking after Country and keeping it healthy. The Dambimangari Rangers have a well-established tradition of fire management, using right way fire to create a mosaic of burnt and unburnt patches across the landscape. By burning in Miljadawurru (the early dry season), the fire burns cooler and patchier, unlike the hot wildfires that

start from lightning later in Mirringun or Jalalabibibi (late dry season). This reduces the risk of wildfires spreading across large areas of Country and has benefits for bush fruits and medicine and native wildlife, because some animals like burnt habitat and others prefer unburnt habitat. Since Dambimangari Country is so big, today the fire program is carried out by dropping incendiaries from helicopters, with some ground burning in more accessible places. Lots of planning and discussions happen before the fire program starts, and lines are put on a map for the helicopter and the person navigating to follow.

This year, Dambimangari Rangers Cherylyn Ozies, Azarnia Malay, Kieran Bangmorra and Derek Oobagooma drove out to Charnley to once again work with Wilinggin Rangers and AWC staff for the first round of the 2021 burn program. On the first day, Cherylyn paired up with Larissa Potter from AWC to fly the lines in the north of Dambimangari Country, from Malandum the Prince Regent and Ngarlangkarnanya Saint George Basin to the Sale River and Boiwanyinoonoo Georgewater. The next day, Ranger Azarnia and Matt Ellis from AWC flew over the southern part of Dambimangari Country, around Iledda (Walcott Inlet) and Wotjulum.



*Cherylyn operates the incendiary machine while Larissa from AWC makes sure the team follow the planned lines.
Photo Larissa Potter / AWC.*



Cherylyn cleans the incendiary machine while the helicopter fuels up. Photo Strath Barton / AWC.



An example of a burn line that has just been flown – you can see the little smoke columns where each incendiary has dropped. These have been spaced to make sure the fire burns cool and not hot. Photo Larissa Potter / AWC.

The second round of the burn program was also conducted out of Charnley. With DAC Rangers Shorisha Ozies, Alan Mungulu Jr, Phil Ngerdu and Falau Umbagai all conducting aerial burning work with assistance from Luke Russ (from Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation) and AWC staff.

Charnley has once again been used as a convenient central location for most of AWC's burning work this year. We've all found it to be a great opportunity to work alongside one another throughout the season, Whether that be out in the helicopter on the amazing Dambimangari coast line or just back at base where all staff/rangers happily involved themselves in the ground operations around the sanctuary.

It's been an absolute pleasure all working together this year and having the opportunity to work in such a beautiful place, and we're all looking forward to finishing the season over the coming weeks together.



Cherylyn gives Azarnia, Strath and Larissa a demonstration of how the incendiary machine works Photo Larissa Potter / AWC.

Magic of Mount Barnett



By Mitchell Castellarin

Dambimangari country is named the 'Last Frontier' by many around the world, and accessing a lot of the country by car is nearly impossible, especially when you have had a wet season like the one we have just had. However, sometimes country is calling you and you just need to roll your swag and grab some tucker and head out bush! So that's exactly what we did on the last weekend of the April School holidays and it was absolutely amazing.

With over 45 Dambimangari members, a few land cruisers and a big 4wd bus we headed to Ngarinyin country, for four days with the biggest mob of kids (the future Dambi leaders), and our current Dambi leaders.

Between swimming and more swimming, we ate fresh NGARLA (thank you Deborah, Dwaine and the family from Mt Barnett), we had yarns around the campfire, and we simply got out of town and showed our kids some of the beautiful Ngarinyin country. In between all this, we finished the second stage of the Indigenous Tourism course!

In the past, Dambi has not run anything like this but we intend to start focusing on more programs that involve the community and we will try and focus on the Dambimangari area. This time around we just needed to get out bush and show them how deadly the Kimberley is.



Dean Cooper, Falau Umbagai and Alan Mungulu Jr soaking up the course information.

The aim for this particular unit was to share knowledge and then learn how to pass it on to the visitors in your country. We had an awesome number of students attending the course, many students already having skills in this area. It brought great conversation to bear and it really shows how many potential leaders there are within the Dambimangari clan.

We were really lucky to have some of our elders come out and share stories around the campfire to the mob doing the course and the kids who just wanted to embrace their rich culture.

Unfortunately due to some internal staff pressures we have had to make the difficult decision to delay stage three, but we will be completing the course later in the year. This will involve doing a welcome to country with some of the commercial tour charter boats, so stay tuned because it's going to be proper deadly.

We also thank the Ngarinyin people and the mob from Mt Barnett for allowing us to use your country and looking after us so well while we were there.

Sharing Culture in the new Mowanjum Museum

By Monique Paschke

By Monique Paschke, Dolord Mindi Coordinator,
Mowanjum Aboriginal Art & Culture Centre.

The interactive cave space is a new favourite
with the crowds. Photo: Katie Breckon

A new museum celebrating the culture and history of the Worrorra, Ngarinyin and Wunambal and Gaambera peoples is now open at the Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre.

The Mowanjum Museum has been many years in the making and has been guided by a team of cultural advisors from the Mowanjum community, with the aim of creating a shared learning space for local community members and visitors alike.

Featuring an interactive cave and rock art experience, with important information about visiting country and sites, the museum also contains displays of significant objects from the Mowanjum Collection, such as Jack Wherra boab nuts and Kimberley spearheads.

A room dedicated to Junba (traditional song and dance) features multimedia projections, short films and clap sticks to try, as well as the historic Selsmark Collection, an exceptional set of dance totems, costumes and musical instruments made in the early 1970s by senior Worrorra, Ngarinyin and Wunambal men and women.

Entry to the Mowanjum Museum is by gold coin donation, with large groups encouraged to book in advance.

For more information about the Mowanjum Museum please visit www.mowanjumarts.com or phone (08) 9191 1008.

The Mowanjum Museum has been generously supported by Lotterywest and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (now Department of Planning, Land and Heritage).



Some important totems from the Selsmark Collection.
Photo: Katie Breckon



Just some of the crowd to venture in for the community opening.
Photo: Katie Breckon

Dambi visitor pass changes

A new price structure for the DVP

After the completion of another informative Marine Commercial Tour Operators workshop hosted by our partners DBCA, Dambi held its first Dambi Visitors Pass info session specifically for the recreational fishing sector. There was a packed room for the session, so it was great to see such interest from the “rec boaties”, largely from Broome and Derby. Over 60 people attended, including some who joined us online from outside the region.

Feed back received concerned what many felt were prohibitive costs for a family and others wanted the inability to purchase annual or six-monthly passes. Well, we listened! At the latest Healthy Country Advisory Committee meeting we sat down to think about ways we could improve the useability of the system to encourage visitors to do the right thing and get their passes and only go where Dambi mob were happy to see people go.

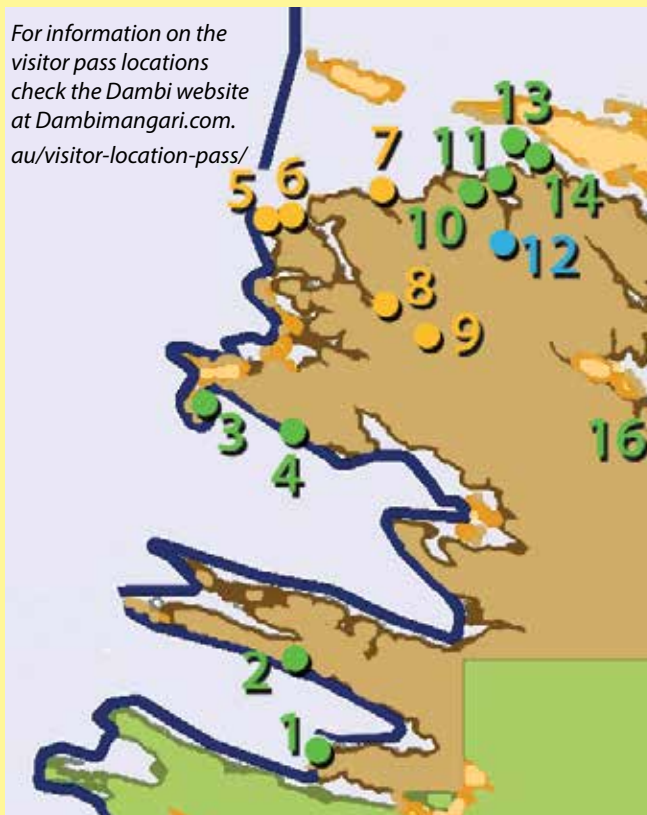
As of 1 July 2021, the system will change for recreational visitors to country. Now it will only cost \$35 per vessel per trip to go and experience this magical stretch of Dambi homelands. The Visitor Location Schedule will stay the same, but the conditions of use will now allow camping and campfires at all eight sites where visitors can go without being accompanied by a Traditional Owner between Cone Bay and Nares Point (just opposite Koolan Island).

For any visitors who are reading this, please remember your passes need to be purchased before you go and you still need to get your Aboriginal Lands Trust Permit from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (available from www.aplh.wa.gov.au/entrypermits). Both the Visitors Pass and the Lands Trust Permit are only required if you are coming ashore to access land.

Prices for commercial tour operators remain the same at \$90 per person for 30 consecutive days. Usually we would charge according to how many places were available on a cruise/tour, but with the uncertainty caused by ongoing fluctuations with travel restrictions this has been changed to how many passengers actually set sail.

“We are really hoping these changes will make it easier for locals in particular, to come and enjoy our country”, said Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation

For information on the visitor pass locations check the Dambi website at Dambimangari.com.au/visitor-location-pass/



Legend

- Visitors need a Visitors Pass to access these sites but can go there without having to be accompanied by a Dambi person.
- Tourists need to be accompanied by a Dambimangari guide to visit these sites, as well as having to buy a Visitors Pass. Because of Covid-19 all of these sites are closed due to the unavailability of Traditional Owner guides.
- Silver Gull is being established as a ranger base. Access to freshwater is available from the boat ramp, but further access to the site is prohibited for safety reasons, except in an emergency.

Chair Francis Woolagoodja. “We look forward to sharing our country with visitors, as long as it’s done in a respectful and sustainable way.”

The new changes are being implemented as a trial and we will continue to monitor compliance with the Pass System for the remainder of this tourist season and into the next.

For more information in relation to the Dambimangari Visitors Pass please contact Kelly Gardner, the Healthy Country Program Manager on 9191 2383, or feel free to drop into the Dambi Office.

Dambi Partnership with DBCA

By Mitchell Castellarin

In the middle week of May, we headed north to the Lalang-garram Marine Park to run our joint patrol with DBCA (formerly Parks and Wildlife) on our ranger vessel Manambadda.

With Kieran Bangmorra as the designated skipper and Amon Jungine as the lead deck hand and DAC Ranger seconded to DBCA on board, we departed Derby early Monday 17 May. We also had our Vice Chairperson Adrian Lane on the team for this auspicious trip. Adrian works for DBCA as a Senior Marine Grade 2 Ranger and Dambi representee within the Marine Parks. Also from DBCA we had Chloe Rings the new Senior Marine Ranger for Lalang-gaddam Marine Parks and Ellen D'Cruz who works alongside as a ranger.

Alongside Manambadda, we had the patrol vessel Worndoom that is owned and managed by DBCA vital to running the park and managing the huge workload that the DBCA rangers spread out across the field to complete roughly ten patrols each year within the marine park.

Through the Indigenous Land Use Agreement DAC has signed with DBCA, DAC rangers are given three patrols where we bring our own ranger vessel Manambadda. To see the vessel driven by a Dambimangari Person and run by another Dambimangari person is something special, then to be able to invite the DBCA rangers aboard for the trip is what feels right to us.

The role that Chloe, Ellen and Adrian play is huge and they are lucky to always have Adrian's cultural leadership on every patrol.

To see all three Dambi men sit back and hear them talk about what's important culturally and how they want their country to be managed from a ground level and then to have the support of the DBCA rangers to put everything together it's like being part of magic.

The coastline will always be owned and managed by the Worrorra people, but as more and more people want to come and see the spectacular place you mob call home, we are going to need more tools to manage country.



Ellen D'Cruz (DBCA) and Dambi Rangers Amon Jungine and Kieran Bangmorra with marine debris collected on patrol in LgMP.

To have to Dambimangari rangers show the DBCA Rangers the way around on their own vessel, while also sharing our cultural aspirations with Chloe, Ellen and other users of Dambimangari country gives a body goosebumps. And being on country also provides a platform for future Dambimangari Rangers to rise through the ranks and new places for new rangers.

The partnership has taken years to get right, and we still have so much to learn but this trip is a prime example of why partnership is one of the keys to success when managing country.

Special thanks to Adrian Lane for always being there for country, Amon Jungine for becoming the strong leader that your country and mob needs and Kieran Bangmorra being the sharpest skipper and getting us though these notorious waters safe and sound.

Ranger coordinator says goodbye

Fond Farewell to a Dambi Favourite

New Horizons for Josh

By Kelly Gardner

We have the sad news to report that Josh Vartto, our beloved Ranger Coordinator has left us for greener pastures. Josh's last day in the office was 23 April however his last official day was 28 April when we celebrated his departure with a low-key farewell, with rangers being out in the field.

Those in attendance presented Josh with a gift to remember us by – a gorgeous painting by Mildred Mungulu depicting the Worrorra Wanjinas.

The same low-key affair could not be said to occur the following evening when rangers returned from the field on Saturday to bid their colleague and friend all the very best in his new endeavours! Just about all the rangers turned out with Dambi family and friends to make sure that Josh was given the farewell he deserved in appreciation for all the hard work and dedication he had shown in his time with DAC. The party was well attended, and a fantastic time was had by all – a fitting goodbye for our friend. As is typical of such affairs, there was many a sore head the next day! Thankfully it was a Sunday, providing all the necessary time to recovery in time for work on Monday.

Josh managed to achieve great things in his two-year stint as the Ranger Coordinator, molding the ranger team into a force to be reckoned with! Under his guidance and determined attitude, the team was one of the very few in the country that completed the pre-covid operational plan for the year, and certainly the only team



Josh accepting his parting gift from his Dambi friends. A stunning painting by Mildred Mungulu.

that managed such a feat that had been in lockdown for four months – half of the operating season! As one WA Minister was rumoured to have said when he read of the successful competition of the Early Dry Season Fire program – “the AFL footballers should get in touch with these guys to see how it’s done!”

Josh isn't sure where he will end up at this point as he has four fantastic offers from other ranger teams, so we can't tell you exactly what he's in store for, but we're certain he will be up for the challenge!

DAC wants to take this opportunity thank Josh for all his thoroughly amazing work while he was with us and to wish him all the very best wherever he finds himself.

Josh, you will be sadly missed by us all! And remember, you are a unicorn!

Post script: We've just heard that Josh has finally made the agonising decision of where to next! Josh has accepted a new position of Ranger in Charge of Trephina Gorge, located just 30km from Alice Springs. We hope Josh has his winter woollies sorted!

A good friend and Dambi mentor

February saw long time DBCA Lalang-gaddam Marine Park Senior Ranger, Danny Barrow resign his commission with the joint management team that had helped Dambi realise its marine based aspirations.

Danny has worked in Lalang-garram since 2013 and remembers the rocky start to the concept of joint management, "we all got together for the very first meeting, sitting around the table, all thinking what the hell are we doing! We just didn't have a clue how it should work – we understood the concept, but not how to actually do it on the ground."

Fast forward almost nine years and joint management is flourishing with staff such as Danny delivering outcomes on the water, as a key component of success.

"Working together on Dambi country has truly been an incredible experience. I feel humbled to have been part of this extraordinary effort to make joint management a reality for Dambi People. Blessed is how I'd put it!"

Danny has left the Lalang-gaddam Marine Parks team, but not DBCA, instead taking up a new challenge as the Operations Officer for the Nature Conservation Unit, still based in the Kimberley. "Now I get to work with cute and fluffy threatened species, which is so different from what I did the Marine Parks unit. I get to go to work in the field in a chopper, rather than a boat!"



Danny and the some of the JMB showing off his prized new possession.

Dambimangari Aboriginal Corporation and many of its members turned up on 24 February to say goodbye to Danny when he attended his last Joint Management Board meeting. To say thanks for all his hard work and dedication, Danny was presented with a piece by Kallum Mungulu.

"I feel like I'm taking one of the paintings from off the wall and walking out with it!", reflected Danny, such was the grand gesture by this awesome artwork.

Danny's replacement, Chloe Rings, comes to us with extensive field and joint management work undertaken largely at Eighty Mile Beach with Karajarri and Nyangumarta Rangers. Though Chloe has huge shoes to fill, we warmly welcome her to the team!

As for Danny, Dambi will miss you my friend!

Another goodbye...

By Chloe O'Meara

It seems as if this edition is full of sad farewells.

However, it is our sad duty to announce that well loved Admin Officer Kerrissa O'Meara has left us for greener pastures. Kerrissa is starting her new life with Marnin Bowa Dumbara Aboriginal Corporation as their Outreach Officer. This is a significant change for Kerrissa and not an easy gig, but we know she's up for the challenge!

Make sure if you see Kerrissa out and about that you say g'day and thanks for all the hard work she put in helping with member services applications, and keeping all of the office crew on the straight and narrow.

Dambi Management and staff would like to take the opportunity to wish Kerrissa all the success in the world in her exciting new role.

To celebrate Kerrissa's departure the Admin Team and a few members came together for a lunch and arvo tea that was enjoyed by all, especially Kerrissa.



Kerrissa got her cake, and ate it!

Marine Park update

By Liz Vaughan

Helicopter Patrol:

On the 12 February, The Lalang-gaddam Marine Park team conducted their yearly post cyclone helicopter flight to inspect the infrastructure of Journey Beyond at Horizontal Falls and Paspaley Pearls Kuri Bay Pearling lease infrastructure. The flight was planned to check the coral reefs in around the coral monitoring sites as well the fringing reefs to check for any signs of coral bleaching. The team also inspected key iconic locations around the marine park to collect human use information for the Visitor Plan. It also provided the perfect way to introduce two new DBCA staff to the West Kimberley District: Ian Hughes, who will oversee PVS (Peoples Visitor Service) for the Kimberley Region; and Ellen D'Cruz (Grade 2 LgMP Ranger). All patrol objectives were completed, and the Worrorra Homelands is looking green with lots of waterfalls.



Kings Cascades in full throttle!

Human Use Monitoring Plan Workshop:

On the 23 March, Kate Rodgers and Brook Shields of PVS Science facilitated a workshop with the DBCA Marine, PVS, Licensing Branch and the district Manager. The main aim of the workshop was to come up with a draft plan detailing -

- 1) questions of Human Use we want answered
- 2) methods on how to Implement the work plan out in the field
- 3) data storage programs and how the data will be used to make management decisions (e.g., Visitor Plan, zoning, site capacities etc.)

We have a project plan for 2021/22 patrol season and will review at the end of 2022 season. The end goal is to take what works forward and implement a long-term human use monitoring project. It was a big day for everyone, and we achieved a lot, giving Kate and Brooke an overall view of the park logistics and capabilities to feed into the process and fit it to the Lalang-garram Marine Park. We're excited to begin implementing the project this year and to see how it progresses.



Park staff meet to determine how to tackle the issue of managing people in LgMP.

The Commercial Tour Operators workshop (CTO):

The Commercial Tour Operators workshop was held 16 of March this year in Broome, and it was a little different this year!

Due to Covid restrictions many commercial operators joined the meeting via Zoom, and we had limited Dambimangari representatives at the Mangrove Hotel compared to previous years. However, with the small team we had present we still got some important messages across!

Pete O'Connor kicked-off Dambimangari's presentations for the day with a lively overview of what Dambimangari had been up to for the past 12 months, which was well-received by operators.

Francis Woolagoodja (LgMP Joint Management Board Chairperson) and Darren Stevens (Lalang-gaddam Marine Park Coordinator) provided an update on the LgMP for the year, as well as launching the much anticipated Lalang-gaddam Marine Park Visitor Plan.

The all-important Visitor Plan will be the guiding document for the LgMP to manage users in the park, and ensure they have every opportunity to have the best experience possible. For example, it sets out anchorage areas at popular locations such as Montgomery Reef and Horizontal Falls, with the aim of reducing crowding and separating the different size classes of vessels that visit the marine park.

This means that the big cruise ships have designated areas and the local charter vessels that are smaller in size have their own areas to anchor, which should improve the usability of key locations.

Buccaneer Archipelago Marine Park information sessions

Another highly anticipated event at the CTO workshop was the info-session on the proposed Buccaneer Archipelago Marine Park (BAMP).

The three traditional owner groups that constitute this new proposed marine park Dambimangari, Mayala and Bardi Jawi, co-presented the info-session on the first ever co-designed marine park in WA history. With the declaration of this new area, all Dambi waters are protected as marine park – a triumph for Dambi People.

The next day on the 17 of March, Dambimangari along with the other traditional owner groups that form part of the BAMP, carried out an information session for the recreational fishing sector of the community.

There was a good turn-out, with some fishing enthusiasts coming over from Derby to participate, and RecFishWest flew up from Perth to be in attendance.

The BAMP has been an important issue for many keen fishos in Broome, Derby and other local areas, and there has been a lot of community discussion since the draft marine park management plan was released for comment in December 2020.

Some members of the local community, particularly keen fishos who have frequented the Buccaneer Archipelago over the years raised concerns about no longer being able to visit some of their best-loved places.

This meeting was a chance for anglers and traditional owners to get in the room together and have some discussion on zoning and protection of the area.

The feedback from many attendees was that it was a productive meeting and an important touchstone to kick-off further discussions locally.

DBCA gave a presentation on the history of the BAMP negotiation and creation process to date, as well as going over key ways to put in a useful submission on the management plan.



A full house for rec fishos learning about the new marine park.

Investigating the fish and shark species

in Australian Marine Parks of the North-west Network



Crew of the RV Naturaliste, Dambi Chair and rangers with DPIRD science staff.

By Mike Travers (DPIRD), for the North West Marine Parks network.

Many of our Australian Marine Parks are relatively unexplored, providing a great opportunity to undertake cutting edge research and establish baselines to inform our management. The North-west Ecological Baselines project does just that. After kicking off in August 2020, the project has been collecting data on the fish, shark and ray species that call some of our Australian Marine Parks home. Information from the project will contribute to our long-term understanding of marine life in the Kimberley, Roebuck Bay and Eighty Mile Beach Marine Parks in the North-west Marine Parks Network.

The project is a collaboration between Parks Australia, WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) researchers, and Kimberley Traditional Owners and their Indigenous rangers including Dambimangari, Bardi-Jawi, Jabirr-Jabirr, Yawuru and Karajarri. So far, rangers have helped tag no less than 24 species of shark and four species of ray.

A number of sampling methods are being used in the field. For instance, environmental DNA has been collected in water samples which, once analysed, will provide an indication of how many fish and shark species are living in an area. This method is particularly useful in areas like the Kimberley where large tides, upwards of 12 metres,

typically make the water too murky to use traditional techniques such as underwater visual surveys.

Other sampling methods include baited underwater video systems and scientific long-line surveys. Many of the species captured so far are believed to use discrete coastal nursery areas in the first few years of their lives as juveniles, before moving to offshore areas, including our Australian Marine Parks. These types of life cycles are challenging from a management perspective as different life stages occur in different habitats, depths and management jurisdictions. Ongoing investment in research like this will inform management activities and help us better understand and protect Australian Marine Parks.

Day 1 leaving port. Phil, Mike, Pedro and Sam.



Fire fighters setting impressive new records



Our heroes Cherylyn, Josh and Shorisha have made us proud!

As we approach the end of another successful early dry season fire operation, something amazing has happened...

The end of 2019 saw some pretty intense wildfires strike Dambi country that resulted in over 400,000ha of country being burnt. Not only did this result in the immediate loss of habitat for many threatened species, but it also impacted our carbon project returns.

If you recall the Bumper Ranger edition of the newsletter last year, a small dedicated crew headed out to Charnley to isolate from the potential risk of covid-19 to deliver our early dry season fire operations as had been planned prior to the advent of the pandemic.

Josh Vartto, Cherylyn Ozies and Shorisha Ozies were the pride of the organisation when they volunteered to sequester themselves at the AWC base for nine weeks to create a network of fire breaks across Dambi country to prevent the kind of devastation that occurred with the wildfires in 2019.

And now we can share with you all, just how incredibly successful they were in their efforts! On average Dambi usually earns approximately 28,000 Australia Carbon Credit Units every year through their fire operations

(that's creating the breaks in the early part and then using those breaks to help defend against wildfire in the later part of the year). Over the 2019 season, as a result of the wildfire events, only 16,000 units were earned.

The credits from the 2020 season have just been calculated by the regulator, and we have earned a whopping 57,000 units. That's a RECORD people!!! The highest amount ever achieved by Dambi!!!

This incredible achievement is the result of many hours of hard work by the entire team (and our friends at AWC) over the late part of the season ensuring wildfires did not take hold and lead to the same devastation as the year before, but special mention needs to be made of our three heroes.

These three put their lives on hold for almost three months, locking themselves in isolation and dedicating themselves to protecting Dambi country. And don't forget this was happening at the same time the world was going to hell in a handbasket!

We applaud you!!

The whole team (DAC, Wiliggin and AWC) – take a bow people for your extraordinary efforts!



Delys with all things Admin

By Delys Gebert

We have a sad, but an exciting announcement to make. The exciting part is that we have two employees bringing into this world new Dambi children.

Grace Matos is adding to her tribe and Natashka Ozies has now had her first baby. We are all looking forward to meeting these very special people and wish both mothers and their families happiness as they welcome their new babies into this world.

The sad news is that both are taking maternity leave for the next year and they will be missed.

But this leads us to other exciting news: we have two new employees to introduce to you!

- Amber Malo – she is a Derby resident returning to work after having a child (is there something in the water around here!?). She will be filling Grace's position as Member Services Officer.
- Geraldine Gore –is filling Natashka's position in reception. Geraldine already has some experience, as she was relieving for Natashka when Tashka was off completing her studies at the end of last year, so many of you might have already met our Gero. You will hear her happy voice when you arrive at the office or ring on 9191 2383.

Last, but not least we are proud to announce that Tashka was presented with a special award prior to her departure for her outstanding work and tireless efforts – the inaugural Awesome Employee Award! So that means Geraldine has some serious shoes to fill in Tashka's absence.



Geraldine Gore,
filling in for
Tashka.



Amber Malo filling in for Grace..



Natashka's
baby Elyarnah.



Grace Matos
with new arrival
Isla Reigm.

Dambi gets economically savvy!

It's no secret that Mt Gibson Iron is getting close to finishing mining operations on Koolan Island. Royalties from the operation have been a mainstay for Dambi people for a number of years now, with the establishment of a trust to run essential services and the corporation, but with the closing date looming, where does this leave funding for these crucial services that the corporation performs for members?

It has become a priority for the current DAC Board of Directors to investigate other sources of sustainable income to be able to continue these services well into the future.

But this type of investigation can be complex, confusing and extremely time consuming to say the least, especially as it's an area that is not within the usual scope of the corporation.

There are so many opportunities that Dambi can take advantage of, if we know how to sort the good ideas, from those higher risk, or less viable options. So we decided to create a new position of Economic Development Officer. This new position is designed to establish an economic enterprise arm of the corporation.

Enter, Jess Forrest...

Many of you might already know Jess as she is a born and bred Kimberley gal! Jess has been working over



the years to provide economic and community-based outcomes for many groups across the region.

She will be based in Broome, where she currently resides with her family.

Please make Jess feel welcome.



There's a New Ranger in Town!!

DAC would like to formally welcome our new Ranger Coordinator to the team! Sam Hughes comes to us from the Northern Land Council where he was engaged as the Numbulwar Ranger Coordinator, sporting years of experience running successful ranger teams in the Top End.

Is Sam another familiar face?. Before life in Arnhem Land, Sam worked as the Ranger Coordinator for several groups in the Pilbara.

If you see Sam around town make sure you say hi and give him a big hug to make him feel welcome!

Sam Hughes – our new Ranger Coordinator.

Koolan Report



Dambi Elders presiding over the new Laawun Airport opening

All things Koolan...

NAIDOC celebrations a first for Koolan

Too late for inclusion in the last edition, but still well deserving of a mention, was the first ever NAIDOC celebration held on Koolan Island 24-25 November 2020. This important celebration had been postponed from its usual July timeslot until November due to Covid-19 biosecurity restrictions in place in the Kimberley.

It was apt that Mt Gibson Iron hosted the celebration on Koolan Island with theme, "Always Was, Always Will Be..." 'recognising that First Nations people have cared for this country for countless millennia'. The event brought Dambi Elders back to part of their homeland usually restricted (for obvious safety and logistical reason) to just the Mt Gibson workforce.

A stop-work was organised for the ceremony that was attended by the Mt Gibson workforce that were on-swing, as well as some senior company officials who had flown in earlier in the day to open the new Laawun (brown hawk) Airport, so named in recognition of Dambimangari traditional ownership of the island.

Elders on tour

Dambi Elders, who also attended the airport opening, were treated to a tour of the mine operation and the Cultural Centre. Elders and staff were accommodated overnight on the island after a huge day of celebrations and firsts.



Dambi Elders ready for junba.

Cultural Centre upgrade

On a side note, the Cultural Centre has been upgraded. Additions will allow the centre to open to the public and provide staff and visitors a level of comfort, that's if we can ever put an end to coronavirus issues!

Want a job? We want to know all about it!

If you would like to be employed, not just on Koolan, but wherever takes your fancy, then we want to hear from you! Please go onto the Dambi website and click on the link in the news items. Tell us what you want to do and we'll see about making your dreams become reality, no matter what you want to do!! Seriously, we can help arrange work-ready training and support, and career mentoring. Fill out the form, hit submit and you'll be on your way...!



Dambi Elders on tour across Koolan Island.

Member information profiles

We want your input and your info! We want to be able to better target our Member Services programs to suit your needs as members. The information collected will be placed on a Member's database (strictly in-confidence) so our team have the ability to assess and/or develop member services, programs, policies to the areas that members really want.

The form can be found in the news items on the Dambi homepage, or come into the office and fill out the form.

All information collected will be held in strict confidence and will not be shared externally. Every member who fills out the form will go into the draw to win one of four \$100 Wish cards (winners drawn at random).



Junba crew with keen onlookers from Mt. Gibson and DBCA staff.

Member Services Update:

DAC signatories meet to improve your member services

By Delys Gebert

Family signatories got together at Mowanjum 21 May to talk about how they would like to improve our applications process to improve our services for corporation members. The 18 signatories came together to discuss all manner of options moving forward.

Part of the discussion focused on the Members Service Agreement, which is like a code of conduct for members and DAC staff when dealing with applications. One of the critical areas of the Agreement was improving the lines of communication. Members often report that they don't know how their applications are processed and where their application is at in the different stages of the process.

This brings us to the big news: DAC is going live! That's right, our website now has a member's area where you can lodge your applications online, attach relevant documents (like quotes) and be able to track its progress from start to finish. In short, we've finally caught up with the age of instant communication!

Other things of note from the meeting outcomes:

- Based on the feedback provided by your signatories, DAC is now looking to introduce some extra health assistance for the over fifties, our seniors!
- Changes to health funding to introduce a new family rate. Currently each member is entitled to \$2,000, but it is recognised that families need a bit of extra support for their children, so a new family rate of \$5,000 is going to be put to the Board.
- New Cabcharge cards of \$50 will be available to get you from the airport to your accommodation and appointments when away for health reasons.
- A change to the funeral assistance funding to now include food for the wake.

These suggested changes will now be taken to the next Board of Directors meeting for final approval.

Related to member services, but not strictly to do with member application processes, discussions were also had regarding genealogies. Signatories recommended a dedicated DAC person to work on this matter and suggested the corporation should employ someone to maintain the database and make sure everyone is included that should be.

So in the not too distant future we are going to hold a family workshop where families can send along two representatives to work through their current family trees to make sure they are up-to-date and correct.

So keep an eye out for bigger things to come

Dambimangari Eco tents at Kimbolton

By Tim Woods, AWC

It has always been fantastic to have the Dambimangari Rangers out to assist with science and land management programs at Yampi Sound Training Area but there has often been a limitation to the number of rangers that can come out to Kimbolton and for how long, due to the lack of decent sleeping arrangements.

Kimbolton gets cold over the dry and sleeping in a swag every day becomes a bit much.

In 2020, AWC decided to get some decent accommodation for the DAC rangers, so that they can come to Kimbolton and stay for as long as they like.

When AWC got word that the brand-new tents at Yeeda Station were up for sale, they jumped at the opportunity.

AWC got together an entire team to take down the tents, pack them on a truck and get them out to Kimbolton.

In October 2020, Matt Ellis, Hamish McAlpine, Corey Malay and Tim Woods set about constructing the ranger tents at Kimbolton.

After a few hard and very hot days, we eventually got the tents up and in place.

Looking forward to the DAC team using these tents in 2020!



Kimbolton with swags but no tents.



AWC team constructing DAC ranger tents.



Matt Ellis, Corey Malay and Hamish McAlpine taking a well earned rest.

Screeches in the Night

Nigel Jakkett, Broome-based Masked Owl researcher



I'm passionate about birds. As well as researching migratory shorebirds in Broome, where some of you might know me from, I research the elusive Night Parrot in the Great Sandy Desert and I'm part way through my PhD studying the Masked Owl.

Northern Masked Owls are very shy and hard to find because they sleep during the day tucked up in dense trees, and they are only active at night when it's dark and hard for us to see them. However, when the owl lets out a screech, it is unmistakable - a long, loud, terrifying scream!

The Northern Masked Owl eats small to medium-sized mammals, which can disappear from the landscape if fires are too hot or too frequent. They need good fire management to survive. Places with lots of mammals are likely to have Northern Masked Owls, so Dambimangari Country is perfectly suited for them. Unfortunately, other parts of northern Australia have lost their small to medium-sized mammals, with Northern Masked Owls disappearing from these areas as a result.

At night around Kimbolton, we heard screeches of yuwurn (Barn Owl), whose calls and looks are very similar to the Northern Masked Owl. Yuwurn is also white with black eyes, but it has smaller talons (feet)

and bill for catching small food like mice and insects. The Northern Masked Owl has bigger, stronger talons for catching larger mammals such as karimba (bandicoots), wungkarnbanja inja (Golden-backed Tree-rat) and langkurmannya (Savanna Glider).

At night we played Northern Masked Owl calls through a speaker, but we couldn't find any Northern Masked Owls in the open woodlands around Kimbolton or Old Kimbolton. So, we travelled west towards the Trent River. Upon reaching the river, we played some calls, and almost immediately a pair of Northern Masked Owls screeched back and flew towards us to see who the intruder was. These were the first Northern Masked Owls I had seen in the Kimberley, so it was a very special occasion! We didn't want to disturb them any further. In nearby trees, we placed two sound recorders (song meters) that could record their screech calls during the night for many months.

A few nights later we continued further west on an unmanaged old track to the Trent River mouth. In the middle of the night while asleep in our tents, we awoke to continuous screeching. We walked over with a spotlight, and there in an ungkurnbeem (paperbark tree) was a young Northern Masked Owl, begging for food from its parents! The fledgling owl appeared to be at its nest tree.

The ungkurnbeem tree was 10 metres tall, and the bark was scorched black from previous hot fires. The top of the tree had snapped off, leaving it hollow at the top. This is likely to be where the owls were nesting and roosting during the day. Another sound recorder was placed nearby to record the calls of the young owl and its parents.

The AWC team is planning to download the data from all three of the sound recorders in early May. Hopefully there will be many hours of calling Northern Masked Owls. Knowing how often these owls call, and at what time of the night, will help us to better understand Northern Masked Owl breeding behaviours in the Kimberley. It is very exciting to know that Northern Masked Owls are breeding along the Trent River

I look forward to working with the Dambimangari Rangers to learn more about the Northern Masked Owl and hope my research can help with their management activities. I'm sure with more searching these beautiful owls will be found in many other places on Dambimangari Country.