



# Cape York Healthy Country Newsletter

## BIG CHANGES, NEW YEAR FOR BOARD

### Joseph moves on, John steps up and David joins the board



**There** are new beginnings for Joseph Elu (pictured left) and Cape York Natural Resource Management Ltd as Joseph steps down from the role of Chairperson, and Local Government Sector Director.

A member of the Cape York NRM Formation Steering Committee and a Board member since the organisations inception in 2010, Joseph has now taken up the role of Chairperson for Torres Strait Regional Authority, which also acts as the NRM body for the Torres Strait.

Company Secretary and CEO, Bob Frazer is sorry to see Joseph go. "Joseph has been instrumental in our growth and in setting the direction of Cape York NRM. He's a strong leader, savvy businessman and true statesman. He will definitely be missed" he said. John Giese, Community Sector Director, steps up to become chairperson for the board and the process

for nominations for the local government role will be decided at the January board meeting.

Meanwhile, Kuuku I'yu Northern Kaanju Traditional Owner, custodian and leader, David Claudie (below) was endorsed by the Board at the October annual general meeting in Lakeland. Mr Claudie has established the only Cape York Indigenous Protected Area, and is renown for his leadership in clan estate mapping. He is Director, Indigenous Zone Two.



#### Message from Joseph Elu:

*"Thank you to our members for your continued support of Cape York NRM. I have enjoyed working with the Board and staff over the past few years, and wish you all the very best. Have a safe and happy festive season."*



#### IN THIS EDITION:

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Jabalbina small grant success  
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Indigenous Reference Groups

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#### WHAT'S HOT:

Wenlock River Catchment to form  
Fire Workshop movie available

#### PHOTO SHOOT:

Road-tripping in the Cape

# Nasty wetland weed knocked for six

By Jason Carroll, South Cape York Catchments

**Five** years after two hectares of the invasive waterweed *Hymenachne* was discovered at Keating's Lagoon, the wetland menace is now on the ropes. Consistent weed control efforts by Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program (CYWAFAP), Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and South Cape York Catchments, has enabled Keating's Lagoon to flourish, providing important habitat for many wetland bird, frog and fish species.

Located 5 km south of Cooktown, Keating's Lagoon Conservation Park is known for its rich wetland biodiversity, accessibility for visitors and for scientific study and education purposes. Called "Mulbabidgee" by the area's Traditional Owners, the lagoon was declared a conservation park because of the high ecological value of its freshwater wetlands and surrounding habitat.



In 2008 South Cape York Catchments successfully excluded feral pigs from the lagoon with fencing, and documented a dramatic improvement in wetland health. *Hymenachne* produced a new and serious threat to the conservation and ecological values of the lagoon.

Trevor Meldrum, Pest Management Officer from CYWAFAP, believes the key to the success of the eradication program was regular and sustained

## SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM STILL OPEN

Funding is still available through the Cape York NRM small grants program. Funds of up to \$15,000 are available to land managers including graziers, farmers and Indigenous individuals and organisations to implement on-ground projects that provide improved land management or cultural outcomes:

- implementing traditional fire management
- weeds and feral animal control
- recording, mapping and protection of cultural knowledge
- planning and implementation of environmental activities

Call us soon to discuss your ideas as we can support you to develop your application. Contact Luke Preece, Program Support Officer, 1300 132 262.

followup which reduced the seed bank in the soil and allowed native plant species to reestablish. *Hymenachne* is a semi aquatic grass that was introduced into Australia for cattle feed. Now escaped from cultivation, it is regarded as

one of Australia's worst weeds and is a serious threat to wetland and river health. Because *Hymenachne* can out-compete all other wetland plant species, it can quickly cover the entire surface of a water body impacting fish and other aquatic life. Dense stands can also block drains, cause flooding and reduce water quality.

Trevor said there is now very little *Hymenachne* left at the Lagoon. "Nonetheless it is necessary to regularly monitor the area and quickly remove any new plants as they emerge" he said.

With continued funding from Cape York Natural Resource Management, *Hymenachne* has little chance of impacting the health and functioning of Keating's Lagoon.



## Mapoon's night of nights

*Rangers awarded for hard work and dedication to land and sea country*

**Red** carpet was replaced with red pisolite country, stars were everywhere (despite some rain), cameras flashed and smiles were wide, as Mapoon rangers celebrated their hard work and dedication to caring for country at their graduation ceremony on Saturday 1 December.

Fifteen rangers and other council staff graduated from various certificates in conservation and land management, and also completing training in boat handling, applied chemicals and shorebird identification. Five junior rangers also received awards.

Thomas Pitt is a traditional owner and has a leadership role within the team. He says that being a Land and Sea Ranger makes him and his family proud because he is learning to combine cultural and environmental ways of caring for country. "I can pass down cultural knowledge to my son because of my position in the community as a ranger" he said.

As part of the Land and Sea Ranger program, Thomas recently had the opportunity to fly over his country and see it from the air. "Seeing it from the air was amazing. It showed we've been caring for the land traditionally, because it is still in its natural state. People from the Wenlock [River] need to have their voices heard [about caring for the land and water] from the mouth, to the highest point. It's for my son" he says.

Pride beams from faces of Edwin Ling and Jocelyn de Jersey, and their families, as they receive their awards. They have both graduated from Certificate II, Conservation and Land Management. They are young, shy and keen as mustard when it comes to conservation and land management in Mapoon.

Edwin has been hunting on his traditional lands since he can remember, but through the Ranger program, Edwin has been able to access country he has never visited, including the part of the river where his grandfather passed away. "The more I learn about my country and our history - just makes me want to know more" he said.

Jocelyn lived away from Mapoon for a few years, but is happy to be back, and proud to be a Land and Sea Ranger. A budding photographer, her family recently supported her hobby with a gift of a good quality camera. Now Jocelyn

takes beautiful photos while at work, and is helping to document the great work the rangers do.

Jane Blackwood is the coordinator of Mapoon rangers and has been for almost three years. It's a job she finds very rewarding.

"I love seeing the pride in the faces of the rangers when they receive their certificates. It's a really proud moment for their families too. It brings them prestige, knowing their children have graduated. The training is tough, if you don't do the work, you don't pass, so graduation means the rangers have really applied themselves" she said.

The Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers cover 183 000 hectares of spectacular country as they go about their work, including 70 kilometres of coast, and three river systems. The rangers are of all ages, are male and female, they have distinct roles and have connections to different parts of Mapoon country.

The awards night is an annual celebration and a reward for doing good work. It's an opportunity to bring people together and be proud of what's been achieved on Country. Attended by almost one-fifth of the Mapoon population, it is clear that the work the rangers do is highly valued, and has broad community support.

### *Awards presented:*

Certificate II in Conservation and Land Management (graduation): Earl Charger, Jocelyn de Jersey, Edwin Ling, Maggie Peter, Mildred Wilson

Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management (statement of attainment): Geraldine Mamoose, Diane Nicholls, Nickolas Woodley, Eli Tabuai

Graduating Junior Rangers: Lila Jia, Samantha Peter, Zaneeka Ingui, Gegory Hudson, Kymani Morris (special award for enthusiasm and talent).

*Below:* Mapoon Rangers-Jocelyn, Judy, Stanley, Edwin and Thomas



## Caring for Country at Jajikal-Balabay

*With Jabalbina*

**Jajikal-Balabay** (Weary Bay) is part of the Country of the Jajikal-Warra Traditional Owners of the Eastern Kuku Yalanji People. During 2010, most of the Weary Bay coastline was placed under the trusteeship of the Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation. An Indigenous Small Grant from Cape York NRM to Jabalbina has enabled Jajikal Traditional Owners to again care for Country.



Works have begun on the Jajikal (Bloomfield Mouth) Beach Protection Reserve at the southern end of Weary Bay. Traditional owners have removed lantana, resurrection plant and other weeds and undertaken burning. Rubbish has been removed, including the old car body that has been an eyesore for years at Bloomfield Mouth.

The next jobs are to close the vehicle track to the mouth and replace it with a walking track. Camps on the beach side of the track will also be closed and revegetated during the 2012-2013 wet season.



Reserve signs in Yalanji and English have been made and will soon be put up. Traditional Owners hope to extend these works further north along Weary Bay in 2013.

Traditional Owner Marie Creek said it was good to see Jajikal Traditional Owners working back on Country again, "Thanks to Cape York NRM and everyone who's helping with this project. We would like to see this happening all year round, but we need more funding."

*Left and Above: Barry, Leon, Philip and Uncle Sonny Olbar removing weeds around the croc sign at Bloomfield Mouth.*

*Below: Marie Creek and Lizzie Olbar planning works at Jajikal (Bloomfield Mouth)*



**Do you want to do something to improve the environment of the Walsh or Palmer Rivers and help increase biodiversity? The Mitchell River Watershed Management Group needs your help with a weed control program.**

If you had to invent the meanest, most invasive weed possible you'd be hard pressed to come up with something worse than Bellyache Bush. Much of the plant is highly toxic to both animals and humans, making it responsible for significant stock losses. It invades riverbeds, banks and riparian zones, thrives on any natural or man-made disturbance and forms dense thickets that can even choke out rubber vine. It's exploding seedpods can throw seed up to 13 metres and reproduces vegetatively from stem cuttings or whole removed plants, allowing it to spread very readily in the typical wet season floods of the Mitchell catchment. Seeds also travel easily in soil or sand on vehicles or machinery, which is how it is believed to have travelled from the Palmer River, where it's main infestation is in the region, to Emu Creek in the upper Walsh River catchment.

How can you help control this weed? Actually, you can do quite a lot. Currently Bellyache Bush control programs are being carried out by Tableland Regional Council in the Walsh catchment and Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Program in the Palmer catchment. They are working on the established upstream areas of Bellyache Bush as no one is certain how far downstream it has spread. You can help by learning to identify Bellyache Bush and report wherever you see it in your travels. If you find only a few young plants before they form seed you can kill them by pulling them out, breaking the stem and putting them either on exposed rocky ground or up in the fork of a tree. It's important to break the stem to dry the plant out and prevent it from taking root again if it gets in contact with moist ground.

Find out how to identify and report Bellyache Bush by contacting **Brynn Mathews** at the Mitchell River Watershed Management Group on **0413 112 719**, or email [brynn@mitchell-river.com.au](mailto:brynn@mitchell-river.com.au)

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NEWS IN BRIEF...  
NEWS IN BRIEF...  
NEWS IN BRIEF...

NEWS IN BRIEF...  
NEWS IN BRIEF...  
NEWS IN BRIEF...

## NOW

### *Call for papers:*

Protected Areas and Place Making Conference (Brazil, April 2013)  
<http://canjerana.esalq.usp.br/PAPM2013/doku.php>

### **December 2012**

20 Weipa Town Authority Christmas Lights judging  
24-30 Cape York NRM office closure  
25 Christmas

### **January 2013**

2 Cape York NRM office reopens

### **February 2013:**

18-20 National Rural Women's Conference - register before 11 November for \$100 early bird discount

<http://www.cvent.com/events/national-rural-women-s-conference-2013/event-summary>

### **May**

27-31 Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Land and Sea Managers Network Conference (Darwin) <http://www.nrm.gov.au/about/key-investments/indigenous-network/index.html#conference>

### **June**

21-23 Laura Festival

### **July**

5-6 Cape York Big Day Out, hosted by Bramwell Junction

### **ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE:**

Correction: The Annual Community Report was incorrectly labelled 2012-2013. Please note it relates to the 2011-2012 financial year. For information: In the financials section (p.11) the profit referred to is unspent funds. This money is tied grant monies, with specific allocations (ways it has to be spent) in accordance with the grant agreements.

**World Heritage** is a hot topic in Cape York. While there are many views, it helps to have access to the right information. To know more about the World Heritage process: [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa\\_worldheritage/](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/wcpa_worldheritage/)

The Australian Human Rights Commission has recently released its *Native Title Report 2012*. The report includes submissions and case-studies from Don De Busch & David Claudie about Cape York Indigenous governance and Indigenous Reference Groups. Contact us on 1300 132 262 for an e-copy.

### **On the road with Cape York NRM**



Road works on the PDR. Invasive weeds are often spread to new areas by cars and roadworks. Thoroughly washing your car can prevent weed spread.



Numerous 'hot' fires have burnt throughout the Cape this season. Hot fires have a devastating effect on the health of landscapes and biodiversity.

### **Your Feedback Needed!**

*What would make you read all of this newsletter?*

*How do you want Cape York NRM to give you information?*

*What do you want to find out about? Cape York NRM wants to know your communication needs.*

**Please contact us on 1300 132 262.**

A **Wenlock River Catchment Group** is to form, following a conservation meeting held at Moreton Telegraph Station in November. The group will focus on sustainable management and conservation of the river system, which is of high ecological value. More info: 1300 132 262.



A short documentary about the Cape York NRM **Indigenous Fire Management Workshop** is now available online. The movie, by Mulong, shows the great work undertaken by land managers across Cape York and beyond. It highlights the importance of traditional ecological knowledge in natural resource management, and how this knowledge is leading the way in contemporary land management practices.

Check it out on Cape York NRM's **YouTube channel**: <http://www.youtube.com/user/CapeYorkNRM>

During the 2012-13 wet season, the Department of Transport and Main Roads will use **load limits** to manage heavy vehicle movements on unsealed sections of the **Peninsula Developmental Road** and Burke Developmental Road. **Permits** may be available for locals during this period. For permits contact Christine Forrester 4050 5448; [cairns.office@tmr.qld.gov.au](mailto:cairns.office@tmr.qld.gov.au)  
More info: [www.131940.qld.gov.au](http://www.131940.qld.gov.au)

## REGIONAL TOURISM TO BENEFIT FROM INDIGENOUS RANGERS

*Rangers excel in tour-guide training - with South Cape York Catchments*

Dean Nulty of Industry Accreditation, in association with South Cape York Catchments, recently conducted three on-country tour guide training courses with the Laura Land and Sea Rangers, the Bana Yarralji Working On Country rangers and the Melsonby Rangers. The training provided the rangers with the essential skills for conducting tours and sharing knowledge of culture and country to customers.

The training, fully funded by Queensland Tourism Industry Council, has enabled rangers to gain a skill set of five units of competency from a Certificate III qualification. The training focused on potential tour sites and integrated traditional cultural and ecological knowledge.

South Cape York Catchments coordinator Jason Carroll said the training was an important step towards the rangers beginning their own tourism enterprises.



“It has enabled the rangers to develop the skills and knowledge required to lead safe, enjoyable and successful tours. The wider Cooktown community stands to benefit from further tourism enterprise in the region. With quality operators showcasing their culture and country, Indigenous tourism can be far reaching in its customer base” he said.

Dean Nulty was proud of the commitment and work that each ranger gave to the training. “Each of the rangers proudly led their group, and handled the difficulties that arise when leading a group of tourists. They expertly interpreted the plants, art and cultural sites on their country for the tour group” he said.

Dean and the rangers enjoyed their time together on country sharing skills, knowledge and customs. The rangers can now provide a quality tour-guiding service about the Indigenous culture of the region to customers visiting their country.

### Right people speaking for right country: olds ways for new governance on Cape York

Engagement of traditional owners on Cape York Peninsula should follow the lines of traditional governance and customary tenure.

A governance framework, which ensures the right people speak for the right country, was implemented earlier this year after decades of discussions between all people of Cape York, including traditional custodians of country, Cape York Natural Resource Management, governments, tourism, and other Indigenous and non-Indigenous landholders including pastoralists and farmers.

Cape York Natural Resource Management have been working with Land and Sea Indigenous Reference Groups (IRGs), a process initiated by Cape York traditional owners to establish the ‘right way’ for consultations for issues such as World Heritage.

The reference groups advocate a ‘bottom-up’ approach to ensure correct representation and engagement of traditional owners.

Indigenous Engagement Coordinator, Don De Busch, says the IRG process is a repatriation of traditional governance arrangements that have always existed in the governance

of the landscape through Indigenous law.

“The Indigenous Reference Groups provide a pathway for people to work together so all landholders can have a say in managing country. Through the IRG’s there is now potential for the Cape York community to work together to manage country, with Cape York Natural Resource Management guiding the way.

“The people in an IRG are individuals who have the authority from the Elders (or are Elders themselves) to speak for country and pass on information to their clan estates. Rather than telling people what to do, we ask - what do **you** want to do” Mr De Busch said.

IRGs are enabling Traditional Owners in Cape York who speak for their country, a new path of self-governance and self-determination. This is based on a governance system that allows everybody in the community of Cape York and other interested parties to be heard. The IRG governance structure enables better coordination and informed decision-making for those relevant parcels of landscape in Cape York.

**TO FIND OUT MORE CALL US ON 1300 132 262.**

# Business Navigator Initiative:

## Professional business acumen for Remote Queensland

Q. What does business and natural resource management have in common?

A. A lot, when you live on Cape York.

If natural resources are to be looked after sustainably, the surrounding populations need to have solid, reliable incomes to survive on. In recognition of this, the state (DEH) and federal (FaCHSIA) governments have placed the Business Navigator Initiative (BNI) under the auspice of Cape York Natural Resource Management. The initiative aims to provide people in remote areas with professional business expertise. Enter BNI consultant Kim MacDonald and the BNI Advisory Panel.

Kim is known to many people on Cape York from his previous role with FaHCSIA's Indigenous Coordination Centre for the Western Cape and Coen. He was originally recruited from DEEWR, Canberra to negotiate the Western Cape Regional Partnership Agreement. Kim has now been in the Business Navigator role since August, and already he is making headway.

With projects right across Cape York, businesses-in-the-making are diverse. They can involve the eradication of weeds and feral animals,

fire management, marine enterprises, tourism, conservation; or they could be mainstream businesses. Some are significant enterprise development on Country, some are tourism activities and some look at safety for locals and visitors.

Kim is supported by the BNI expert advisory panel, which has recently been strengthened with new panel members Tony Martens and Leon Epong from Recruitment Outcomes Pty Ltd, Greg Williams from North Queensland Civil Engineering Contracting PL and Stephen Goodchild from GCG Accountants. The advisory panel members have diverse expertise including architecture, tourism, law, accounting, remote eco-tourism, construction and project management. They provide advice to Kim and to emerging entrepreneurs under the initiative.

In the end though, it's all about establishing businesses that have a good chance of providing people in Cape York with steady and sustainable incomes, as well helping families return to Country. So, if you have a great business idea contact Cape York NRM on 1300 132 262, or email [kim.macdonald@iinet.net.au](mailto:kim.macdonald@iinet.net.au). The BNI now has a permanent presence in Weipa.



Above: Kim MacDonald, Dr Steve Burroughs, Tony Martens, Dick Foster, Leon Epong at the BNI meeting held at Tjapukai on 30 November

**The BNI has also maintained a long and rewarding association with Tjapukai. Former Tjapukai CEO, and renowned musician David Hudson has recently stood down from the panel to pursue other interests. The panel thank David for sharing his knowledge and providing assistance to the BNI and Cape York NRM, wish him well in his new adventures, and look forward to a continued relationship with both David and Tjapukai.**

Bruce Martin, Luke Preece & a cranky bull on APN Homelands



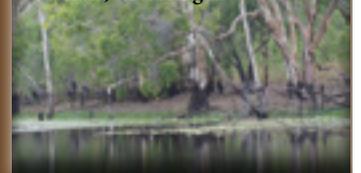
Turtle and pig tracks, near South Arm

### CEO's Update - with Bob Frazer

In late October I spent seven days on the road with Michael Bradby from DEH, visiting a handful of the many projects running across the Cape. We spent time in APN Homelands, South Arm, Chuulangun, and the NPA. Thanks to our hosts along the way for sharing your Country. It is inspiring to see such diverse and important work.

Cape York NRM have worked closely with our partners on major submissions for the Biodiversity Fund. If the projects go ahead, they will inject significant funds for fire management, Indigenous ecological knowledge, and weed and feral animal management.

Waterhole, Chuulangun



Bob with Wally, Apudthama Land and Sea Rangers

## MEET THE BOARD



John Giese, Acting Chairperson  
Director - Community Sector



Reginald Williams  
Director - Indigenous Zone One



Richard Tamwoy  
Director - Indigenous Zone One



David Claudie  
Director - Indigenous Zone Two



Gavin Bassini  
Director - Indigenous Zone Three



Desmond Tayley  
Director - Indigenous Zone Four



Peter Inderbitzen  
Director - Primary Industry Sector



Dick Foster  
Director - Tourism, Other  
Industries & Small Business Sector



Barry Lyon  
Director - Conservation Sector

## MEET THE STAFF



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### *Not pictured*

Vicki Wundersitz - Administration Officer  
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Cape York NRM thanks Karrell Ross and Greg Omeeny, who have been working with the Indigenous Reference Groups, for their hard work this year.

### CONTACT US:

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[www.capeyorknrm.com.au](http://www.capeyorknrm.com.au)  
and social media pages ->



CARING  
FOR  
OUR  
COUNTRY



Queensland  
Government