

Cape York

Healthy Country Newsletter

Issue 29 Summer 2016

What a year we've had!



As we wrap up another year, it serves us well to take a moment to reflect on the year that was. It has been another incredibly busy year for Cape York NRM, and not without challenges. While funding for NRM continues to tighten, the need for strong on-ground projects continues to grow. Finding the balance isn't always easy, but we do our best to get it right. Over 60% of funding income for our 2015-2016 financial year went to Cape York on-ground projects.

This year Cape York NRM have delivered the first approved NRM plan for Cape York, the first Eastern Cape York Water Quality Improvement Plan and have seen a significant amount of funds go to gully remediation projects in the Normanby Catchment.

All five Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance ranger groups have completed a full season of turtle nest monitoring. Predation rates on turtle nests is estimated at 12% across the WCTTAA regions for 2016, well under the 30% maximum predation needed for population success. Filming commenced for the WCTTAA turtle documentary, which will be released next year.

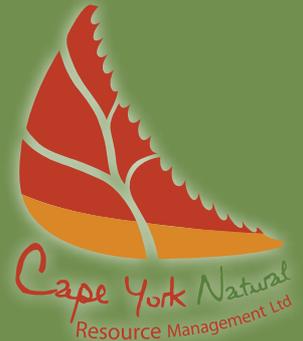
Together with Jabalbina Aboriginal Corporation Rangers, Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council and Mulong we hosted the sixth Cape York Indigenous Fire Workshop. We also recently partnered with Firescape Science and The Nature Conservancy to host the first Cape York Fire Forum.

We worked extensively with Lakeland growers holding several workshops for growers, and we continued to support graziers in central Cape York, community-based NRM groups and Traditional Owners to carry out National Landcare Programme small grant projects on their country. The Thoughtful Travelling Cape York group, facilitated by Cape York NRM, launched Cape York Keep It Clean aimed at reducing littering and illegal dumping across Cape York, while the Cape Create Crew again hosted environment arts workshops in schools and at events to raise awareness of problems associated with plastics and other rubbish in the environment.

We welcomed Trevor Meldrum, Mikayla Down and Joseph Elu to our board, and said a fond farewell to outgoing Directors Marilyn Kepple, Dale Motlop and Jodi Hamilton. We extend our sincere thanks to each of you for your service to NRM on the Cape. We have formed an alliance with Terrain NRM and Northern Gulf Resource Management Group to reduce administration costs across our shared operations, such as finances. The North Queensland Natural Resource Management Alliance comes into effect in July 2017.

Cape York NRM exists because of you, our partners, whether you are an on-ground land and/or sea manager, a government Minister or liaison officer, or a Cape York resident interested in caring for the environment. We thank you for your continued support. We wish you a wonderful and safe festive season, and look forward to working with you into 2017.

Emma Jackson Chairperson, Sector Director - Primary Industries



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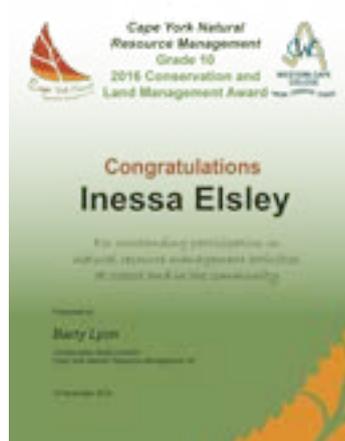
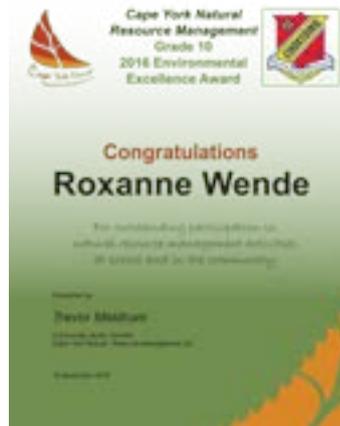
Within this newsletter Cape York Natural Resource Management is shortened to Cape York NRM

Cape York's future land carers



Above: Director Trevor Meldrum with Roxanne Wende - Cooktown State School

Below: Inessa Elsley - Western Cape College



Cape York NRM congratulates Cooktown State School's Roxanne Wende and Western Cape College, Weipa, student Inessa Elsley on each receiving an award of excellence in natural resource management. The two students were presented with their prizes at their school award nights held on Thursday 10 November 2016.

Every year Cape York NRM proudly sponsors an end of year award to a continuing Grade 10 student from each of these schools. The awards go to a student who is immersed in conversation and environmental activities both at school and in the community.

At Cooktown State School Roxanne received the Environmental Excellence award from Cape York NRM's Community Sector Director Trevor Meldrum; and at Western Cape College, Conservation Sector Director Barry Lyon was honoured to present the Conservation and Land Management Award to Inessa.

Cape York residents can be very proud that the Cape is home to many young people who are actively involved in natural resource management activities.

Congratulations again to both Roxanne and Inessa on a well-deserved achievement.

New Directors welcomed to Cape York NRM

Cape York NRM held its Annual General Meeting at the Laura Racecourse and Rodeo Grounds on Saturday 29 October 2016, at which time Company Secretary Bob Frazer formally announced the result of director elections.

The current Board of Directors is made up of the following Cape York NRM members:

Emma Jackson	Director for Primary Industries, and Chairperson
Barry Lyon	Director for Conservation, and Deputy Chairperson
John Charlton	Director for Tourism, Mining, Small Business and Other Industries
Trevor Meldrum	Director for Community
Desmond Tayley	Director for Local Government
Sandra Woosup	Director for Indigenous Sector Zone 1
Joseph Elu	Director for Indigenous Sector Zone 1
Pauline Smith	Director for Indigenous Sector Zone 2
Mikayla Down	Director for Indigenous Sector Zone 3
Trevor Shane Gibson	Director for Indigenous Sector Zone 4

Attendees at the AGM in Laura had a great time getting together and camping for a couple of days at the beautiful Laura Racecourse and Rodeo Grounds.

Preceding the AGM, on the Friday night, a scrumptious barbeque was prepared with the generous assistance of Mary Shephard and volunteers from the Laura Rodeo and Camp Draft Association. The barbeque was followed by Cape York NRM's Climate Change films, and a documentary on Cape Melville produced by Barry Lyon. The Climate Change films can be viewed on the Cape York Atlas <http://climate.capeyorknrm.com.au/weather-stories/films>

There were two Director positions left vacant at the AGM which have since been filled by Joseph Elu and Mikayla Down. Joseph and Mikayla will hold the positions as interim Directors for Indigenous Sectors Zones 1 and 3 until the Director elections in 2017.

Below from left: Cape York NRM Directors - Shane Gibson, Pauline Smith, Barry Lyon, Trevor Meldrum, Desmond Tayley and Emma Jackson



Fire planning with Jabalbina



Cape York NRM visited Jabalbina Yalanji Aboriginal Corporation Rangers (pictured above) in December to help establish communications and monitoring supports for the Ayton and Shiptons Flat ranger programs. The work is funded by Queensland Government through the Queensland Regional Natural Resource Management Investment Program.

Thoughtful Travelling Cape York

Cape York NRM facilitated the December meeting of the Thoughtful Travelling Cape York working group at Nature's Powerhouse in Cooktown. The group mapped out plans for the 2017 Cape York Keep It Clean program, which is supported by the Queensland Government's Litter and Illegal Dumping Community and Industry Partnerships Program.



Introducing our new staff - Gary, Jorg and Kerri



GARY SEARLE

GIS Technical Leader - Cape York NRM shares this position with Terrain NRM



JORG EDSEN

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Leader - Cape York NRM shares this position with Terrain NRM



KERRI WOODCOCK

WCTTAA Coordinator - Cape York NRM hosts this position on behalf of Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance Coordinator

Gary's strengths lie in environmental, regional and statutory planning, spatial analysis, cartography, data management and data visualisation. Gary has also developed strong skills in community engagement and workshop facilitation.

Jorg has worked in international agricultural and rural development for 20 years. His main interests include: project cycle management; planning, monitoring and evaluation; Management Information Systems; and project and program planning.

Kerri has over 10 years' experience in community-based natural resource management and has worked in the coastal sector since 2007, focusing on developing and implementing coastal management plans. During this time Kerri has worked on a range of planning, community engagement and on-ground system repair projects being delivered across urban, island and natural coastal systems.

Clean Cape beaches for another year

It's been a big couple of months for both the Tangaroa Blue crew and Australian Marine Debris Initiative partners and volunteers around the country.

Our Cape York events wrapped up at the end of September in Napranum, bringing the total of marine debris and plastic pollution removed from Cape York this dry season to a whopping 12 tonnes! Clean-ups were conducted at 5 Beaches Loop near Somerset, Captain Billy's Landing, Chilli Beach, Mapoon, Napranum and Cape Bedford in Hopevale.

A big thanks to all our partners including Land and Sea Rangers, councils, businesses and volunteers for another great season in the Cape, and also important acknowledgement to our funding partners the Queensland Government's Everyone's Environment Grant and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority through Reef Trust.

The data in the Australian Marine Debris Database is showing that those sites that are receiving annual clean-ups are decreasing in debris load! Volunteers removed a massive 5.5 tonnes during our first full clean-up at Chilli Beach in 2012 – this year there was just 2.3 tonnes. Each year we collect less and less debris. We are now in a maintenance phase at these sites, which is great news as it requires a lot less effort and time than the first years and shows the importance of these regular clean sweeps!

We are looking for clean-up event partners for the 2017 dry season in Cape York, make sure you get in contact us if you are keen to partner in a beach clean-up event – info@tangaroablue.org

Thanks for all your efforts in the last year! Over 67,000 volunteers have now removed and recorded over 7 million items of ocean pollution into the Australian Marine Debris Database, weighing over 620 tonnes from 2,020 clean-up sites across the country! Source Reduction Plans are using this data at all levels of industry and government to find practical ways of not only removing this pollution, but also preventing it in the first place. If all we do is clean-up, we'll be doing it forever! Also a big thank you to our partners - your support is vitally important!

*by Heidi Taylor, Tangaroa Blue
Photos supplied*



Cape York Golden Thong

The golden thong for 2017 goes to ... Mapoon for the third consecutive year, with 1853 thongs.

In 2014, 5769 were removed from Back Beach at Mapoon in one clean-up - this shows that the debris is dropping every year from the sites the clean-up crews get to annually.

Total 2017 Cape York thongs count:

7139



Daryl Hill's soils workshops

Cape York's Landcare Facilitator Andrew Hartwig, and Daryl Hill, a highly respected Northern Territory cattleman with extensive experience in soil conservation projects, recently visited several properties on Cape York.

Daryl conducted workshops and assessments at four grazing properties in south Cape York in mid-October. At Normanby, the Normanby Rangers, Melsonby Rangers and Hopevale Congress Rangers were given a general introduction to soil erosion. They learnt why it happens and how to find solutions to erosion, like looking beyond the problem to find the cause, which will help reduce sediment runoff to Great Barrier Reef. Participants learnt how to construct whoa-boys and contour banks with equipment available to them such as graders, tractors, and loaders, and how to align fences and roads to reduce erosion problems.

Daryl then undertook contour assessments at Glen Garland and Springvale stations and looked at various impacts of erosion including fire, weeds, feral animals, and land management practices.

This project was supported by Cape York NRM through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Programme.



Lakeland horticulture roundtable

The Lakeland horticulture roundtable was held on Thursday 24 November at the Lakeland Community Hall and was well attended by all large horticultural enterprises from the Lakeland region.

Will Higham (pictured below) from Cape York NRM facilitated the discussion on the new Cape York ABCD Framework, and Tony Crowley from Farmacist gave a presentation on Electro Conductivity (EC) mapping. This technique looks for soil variability to a depth of about one metre.



Are you a thoughtful traveller?

Cape York is a beautiful place, please help keep it clean.

Photo: Kerry Trapnell

- ✓ Take your rubbish home or to a designated refuse tip
- ✓ Report illegal dumping
- ✓ Be well toilet trained – bury your waste properly
- ✓ Become a campaign champion: pick up rubbish left by others, share our information, use the logo

**CAPE
YORK**



Keep it clean

**to get involved call
1300 132 262**

This project is supported by the Queensland Government's Litter and Illegal Dumping Community and Industry Partnerships Program.

Rubbish, illegal dumping and littering have become issues on Cape York that affect everyone.

Not only is rubbish unsightly, it poses health risks for people, plants and animals and environmental risks for our waterways and the land.

Photo: Mapoon Land and Sea Rangers

As travellers on Cape York there are a number of things that we can all do to minimise the impacts of our rubbish and waste.

1. PLAN TO TAKE RUBBISH HOME

- Take plenty of sturdy rubbish bags, sealed containers for rubbish, a shovel, cans rather than bottles (cans can be squashed), bulk water containers and minimal plastics
- Use 4WD rubbish bins on the back of your vehicle or use sturdy rubbish bags. Ensure rubbish is well secured and sealed to avoid losing it along corrugated roads
- Cook Shire Council and Weipa Town Authority provide facilities for disposal of domestic waste Locations and further information are available on their websites
- LAWMAC has an interactive map of disposal facilities here: www.lawmac.org.au/wastedisposalsites

2. BE PART OF THE SOLUTION

- Lead by example and pick up rubbish as we go and dispose of it at waste management facilities
- Become involved in local clean-ups with www.scy.com.au, www.capeyorknrm.com.au and www.tangaroablue.org

3. REPORT ILLEGAL DUMPING

- The Queensland Government encourages travellers to report illegal dumping incidents online at report-littering-dumping.ehp.qld.gov.au or to the Litter and Illegal Dumping Unit on 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or by emailing illegaldumping@ehp.qld.gov.au. Fines start from \$1950.

4. BE WELL TOILET TRAINED

- Toilet facilities can be few and far between, so remember to take a shovel and bury waste at least 100 metres from tracks and waterways, and at least 20 cms deep. Find out in advance where Council dump points are located, and empty waste responsibly.

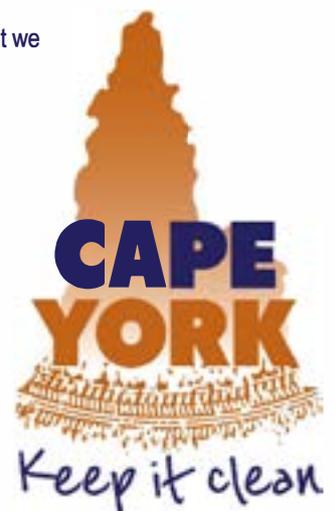
5. PLAN AHEAD

- We plan our trips carefully - researching our trip is part of the fun of travel. We also need to carefully plan what we take and think about how we will store and thoughtfully dispose of the rubbish we accumulate along the way.

Cape York is a beautiful place, please help keep it clean.

Thoughtful Travelling Cape York is an alliance of Cape York organisations working together to reduce the damaging environmental impacts caused by people travelling on Cape York. Rubbish, spreading weeds, illegal dumping, unplanned fire and illegal access can all create longer term problems for the environment. The key organisations currently involved in Thoughtful Travelling Cape York include: Cape York Natural Resource Management, South Cape York Catchments, Tangaroa Blue, Cook Shire Council, Cape York Weeds and Feral Animals Inc, Cape York Landcare, Weipa and Western Cape Tourism, Lama Lama Rangers, Yuku Baja Muliku Land Trust, Tourism Cape York, Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance, Wenlock Catchment Management Group, Protect Cape York and Regional and Remote Newspapers. **To become part of this campaign and to get your copy of the logo please contact Cape York NRM on 1300 132 262 or South Cape York Catchments on 07 4069 5443.**

This project is supported by the Queensland Government's Litter and Illegal Dumping Community and Industry Partnerships Program.



Our Cape Kids

Here's a special treat for our Cape York Kids.

In each issue of Healthy Country newsletter we will have a special section for kids.

Let us know what you want to see, or send us a short story about your favourite Cape York place, animal or plant. We will also put your stories on our website.

Contact us at: capekids@capeyorknrm.com.au



Can you find the EXTRA word?

Find the words from the list on the right in the find-a-word below. Can you find the extra word in the puzzle which is not on the list? Hint: It is what the puzzle is about, and it starts with 'P'.

Send your answer to capekids@capeyorknrm.com.au by 31 November 2016. All correct entries will go into the draw for the gorgeous Cape York Fire book.

Conditions of entry Entries must include name, age, location (town or area), and parent/guardian phone number. Entrants must be primary school age or younger. The winner's name will be published in each newsletter (with consent from parent/guardian). There will be a new competition for each newsletter.

O C R E I Z A R G J J N E T Z
 D S O J V R G E B N P T L R S
 S U S M E Q S N I J E N A N R
 L T P H M M K V X F U E N O E
 R I I I R U P U U A G M D I G
 W N H C H S N C D M A N S T N
 C D S Y E S N I H I E O C A A
 U I R M R G D X T L L R A R R
 L G E C S T D N V Y L I P O N
 T E N N T F N E E R O V E B P
 U N T V N A A U L I C N Y A B
 R O R K A Q Y R O W R E Q L B
 F H A D I K M Q M C O F T L J
 S H A R E R N M O G
 L S Y F R R C K C P

Word List

- Colleague
- Culture
- Friendship
- Rangers
- Indigenous
- Country
- Community
- Family
- Knowledge
- Environment
- Grazier
- Farmer
- Plants
- Animals
- Landscape
- Collaboration
- Share

More known about the Jardine River Turtle



In October staff and volunteers with the Queensland government's Department of Environment and Heritage Protection, along with a James Cook University Tropwater fish biologist and Apudthama Ranger Group, revisited the Jardine River to continue surveys and monitoring for the threatened freshwater turtle species *Emydura subglobosa subglobosa* or Jardine River turtle.

This trip further emphasised how rare this turtle is in Australia with intensive searches resulting in it only being found at two sites, one of which only had one individual. The good news is that it has helped to further clarify the preferred habitat of this species which should help the NPARC Apudthama Rangers to better manage for its survival.

At the same time fish biologist Dr Brendan Ebner began what we hope will be a long and fruitful partnership with the Apudthama rangers and the Apudthama Land Trust studying the ecology of the fish community throughout the Jardine River catchment. Ultimately this work, along with the turtle research, will help to inform management priorities in this river system.

As freshwater ecosystems continue to degrade around Australia from the human demands placed on them, largely pristine river and wetland complexes such as the Jardine will become more and more important as biodiversity depositories. Through a cooperative partnership between indigenous land managers, academic scientists and state government biologists the Jardine River is well on its way to fulfilling this role.



Photos supplied

Cape York Region

Over 100 people meet in Cairns this week to discuss their fire management and carbon projects on Cape York. This included land managers from local government, cattle stations, Traditional Owner groups, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and representatives from the Rural Fire Service.

Every year, wildfire impacts thousands of hectares of Cape York affecting livelihoods, plants, animals and delicate ecosystems. There are 33 savanna burning projects across Cape York, creating a new industry for Cape York's land managers.

Cape York land managers are committed to working together to find solutions for better long-term fire management on Cape York. Peta Standley, Operations Manager, Cape York NRM said a key outcome of the Cape York Fire Forum was the commitment from land managers to collaboration.

"There was a strong desire to develop, and train, a regional fire management support and response team that would be made up of people who are experienced managers of Cape York lands and who understand the challenges of fire. The forum enabled connections to be made that will improve communication between neighbours on the Cape" she said.

Dr Leasia Felderhof, Director of Firescape Science was co-facilitator of the event.

"It was so great to see how much the ranger groups have progressed over the years – to planning and undertaking their fire projects and confidently reporting back their work to others. There was such a positive attitude from all participants and a real willingness to share, learn and collaborate and improve things in a positive way.

"There was an overall willingness to engage. It was great to see the presence of a number of 'influencers' such as The Nature Conservancy, Department of Environment and the Queensland Rural Fire Service, so they could hear firsthand what the issues are for people on Cape York, and hopefully help to chart the way forward" Dr Felderhof said.

Barry Lyon, Conservation Sector Director, Cape York NRM said savanna burning projects were providing a real option for alternative incomes for Cape York's land managers.

"However, this year there have a high number of late season wildfires across Cape York, and it seems many have been deliberately lit. Not only does that have serious consequences for our rare and threatened species on Cape York, it also has a serious impact on the livelihoods of the people who live here. Cape York NRM will be working to secure resources needed to continue coordination of regional fire management into the future" Mr Lyon said.

For more information about the Fire Forum, contact Peta-Marie Standley on 0418 198 244.

Below: Land managers from Batavia Traditional Owner Aboriginal Corporation (left) and Kowanyama Land and Natural Resource Management Office (right) attended the forum.



ional Fire Forum



Above: Cape York Indigenous Rangers discuss issues impacting fire management and carbon projects, such as wildfires.

Below right: Nanum Wungthim Ranger Coordinator Phillip Mango presents work in conjunction with Rio Tinto which is protecting Northern Quoll populations on western Cape York. Below left: Representatives from carbon abatement programs and government attended the forum to listen to the issues faced by Cape York land managers.





Above: Seventeen members and guests of the Wenlock Catchment Management Group attended the group's last meeting for 2016 hosted by Napranum's Nanum Wunghim Rangers in November. The next meeting will be in Napranum in February. For more information contact Chairperson Jason Jia: Mapoon.Culture@mapoon.qld.gov.au



Above: Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance met in Cairns in December. Agenda items included scheduling mid-2017 screenings of the documentary which is currently under production, and planning for the WCTTAA review and forum in February. WCTTAA member groups include Kowanyama Land and Natural Resource Management Office, Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council Rangers, Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council Nanum Wunghim Rangers, Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council Land and Sea Rangers and Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council Apudthama Rangers.

Balnggarrawarra Ranger Indigenous Land and Sea Program

by Denis Kelly - Balnggarrawarra Rangers
Photos supplied

On Australia's doorstep lies a plethora of pests and diseases just waiting to colonise our agricultural industry. Preventing any new outbreaks requires constant vigilance across the north of our country. To help keep an eye out, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources has implemented fee for service contracts with the Balnggarrawarra Rangers and Laura Rangers. Both Ranger groups complete activities as determined by departmental Northern Australia Quarantine Strategy (NAQS) scientific staff who monitor the health of plants and animals on country.

Recently NAQS officers Vivien Attwood and Harry Tamwoy worked with Balnggarrawarra Rangers Larry Banning, Ray Mclvor and Dakota Lyall on Melsonby and Normanby country. Vivien mentored Larry, Ray and Dakota with the Plant Host Mapping activity. This work consisted of GPS mapping and recording the types and numbers of all food trees in an area. The background to this work is to monitor the health of the food plants, and also for knowledge and record keeping. If a specific pest or disease of a food plant was to enter Australia, for instance a pest that uses mango trees as a host, we will know where all our mango trees are and we will be able to target our efforts in managing the incursion. As plants in areas are subject to change, we do this work annually.

"It's good to work together. It's something different" Senior Ranger Larry Banning said.

"We usually look for rock art sites, back burn, spray weeds and trap pigs. We don't usually work with fruits, but now it'll be good to keep it going, recording all the fruit trees out here. It's also good to be out on country having a good look around, not just for the fruits, but for animals too, to make sure the animals and trees are healthy - to take care of our country. And now we know we can call NAQS if we see something sick and they can help.

"We are out here taking care of everything, and we are seeing the animals come back to their native places. We want to keep our country healthy."

Plans are now underway to visit all the old out-stations on Balnggarrawarra country, even the original Normanby homestead, looking for fruit trees that may still be surviving.



Above (left to right): Vivien Attwood, Ray Mclvor and Dakota Lyall collecting data on Melsonby Landholding vegie patch



Above (left to right): Cliff Harrigan, Harry Tamwoy, Ray Mclvor and Vivien Attwood collecting data on Normanby Station mango trees.

Board of Directors



Emma Jackson
Chairperson
Primary Industries Sector



Barry Lyon
Conservation Sector

Pauline Smith
Indigenous Sector, Zone 2



Mikayla Down
Indigenous Sector, Zone 3



Shane Gibson
Indigenous Sector, Zone 4



Sandra Woosup
Indigenous Sector, Zone 1



John Charlton
Tourism, Small Business,
Mining and Other Industry
Sector



Trevor Meldrum
Community Sector



Joseph Elu
Indigenous Sector, Zone 1



Desmond Tayley
Local Government Sector



Cape York Calendar

December

- 6 WCTTAA meeting
- 7-8 Cape York Fire Forum
- 21 Cape York NRM office closure
- 25 **Season's Greetings!**

January

- 3 Cape York NRM office re-opens

February

- tbc Wenlock Catchment Management Group meeting, Napranum
- 22-23 WCTTAA turtle forum and review

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