



Cape York

Healthy Country

NEWSLETTER

Issue 44

2021

**2021 early dry season
burning on Cape York
a great success!**

Pages 10–11

**Threatened-species
'citizen science' initiative**

Pages 12–13

Date claimers



13 August, 2021
Special General Meeting
Wolverson Station

More info on pages 6–7

27 November, 2021
Annual General Meeting
Cooktown

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Welcome to the Cape York Healthy Country Newsletter



This edition of the Healthy Country newsletter reflects the huge amount of work going on across the Cape now that we are well and truly into the 'dry' season. It seems everything is busy across Cape York at the moment, with a massive number of visitors to the region, mustering underway on many properties and land holders busy getting their early dry season burning completed before 1 August.

Cape York NRM has been busy working on the governance, program and project delivery of NRM activities across all of Cape York.

At the project level, the article on pages 10–11 highlights the work in coordinating burning across 23 properties and 1.6million hectares. Other articles highlight the work being undertaken by landholders addressing erosion and sedimentation on the Reef while improving grazing land condition and efficiency.

On pages 12–13, we are launching a citizen science project that will make it possible for everyone to report threatened species sightings. This will start with the ant plant and southern cassowary, two species found in the rainforests of Cape York.

At the program level, we have been working with land managers across the full range of activities related to the carbon market. We recently completed a study into the feasibility of a multi-landholder, savanna burning carbon project in the Normanby catchment, assisted landholders with current projects at a workshop in Laura, and supported the Rinyiru and Melsonby Rangers to investigate the co-benefits of carbon farming (page 15). We've also been working closely with the Torres and Cape Indigenous Councils Alliance (TCICA) to try and address some of the challenges and opportunities the increasing number of tourists bring.

At the governance level, we have continued the development of the updated regional NRM Plan. The development of the Plan is driven by Cape York NRM, but this is not our plan, this is the plan for the whole region. We heard the feedback and have tried to minimise the number of workshops and events for developing the Plan, by considering all the previous plans and activities that have been undertaken across the Cape. The article on page 5 outlines the development of the plan, and the draft plan is on track for release in August.

Importantly, over the last 18 months the Board of Cape York NRM has been reviewing the governance arrangements for the organisation. This has culminated in a proposed new constitution that reflects the recommendations of the Board. The proposed new design is more open and will enable a stronger knowledge, skill set, and diversity to the current model, and make the organisation more efficient. The proposed new constitution will change the governance of the organisation—the 'how' we operate. The changes do not alter the 'what' we do or 'why' we do it, with the objects and purpose remaining the same. More information is available on pages 6–7, and I encourage all members to come along to the Special General Meeting on 13 August, or to nominate a proxy.

It's been an action-packed first half of 2021 and I hope to see you at the Special General Meeting, or somewhere on the Cape soon.

Warm regards
John Gavin



Cover image | Balurga Station



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Cape York vista

The Cape York Healthy Country Plan 2021-2030 is the Regional NRM plan for Cape York. It is a blend of the views and priorities of the communities of Cape York regarding natural resource management.

The primary purpose of the plan is to identify the natural resource management priorities for Cape York and to encourage investment in the region to:

- strengthen regional coordination
- build community capacity
- knowledge, and skills to assist with business models and strengthen livelihoods and governance systems, and
- ultimately to help build a more resilient region over the coming decade.

The new plan refines and builds on the foundation established through the previous plan (2016-2020). We have reviewed and refined the previous priorities, based on new and emerging threats, opportunities and community views.

The plan attempts to simplify the details of the previous Regional NRM plan to make it more readable, digestible and accessible for all communities and stakeholders. It also recognises the significant ownership, role, cultural history and obligations of the Traditional Owners of Cape York.

Cape York NRM recognises the planning fatigue of many communities across Cape York and sought to shape a planning process that minimised any impact and imposition on communities while maximising the inclusion of deep consultation that has occurred across Cape York over the last five years.

The broad planning process for the formulation of the draft plan was as follows:

1. The initial consultation regarding NRM priorities across Cape York using a simple online questionnaire.
2. The distillation and synthesis of publicly available Healthy Country Plans and other strategic documents.
3. One on one discussions with stakeholders and members regarding the draft results at a number of major events (grazing forum, horticultural roundtable and the Cooktown Business Expo).
4. The DRAFT plan will be made available online in August 2021 as a living plan, providing the opportunity for ongoing public engagement, consultation, and comment.
5. A paper copy version will also be released in August 2021.

Special meeting to vote on a new constitution

Cape York NRM members will vote on a proposed new constitution at a special general meeting in August.

It has been developed over the past six months, drawing on experience from Cape York NRM's first decade of operation.

CEO John Gavin said the 10th anniversary is a good opportunity to review and strengthen governance arrangements.

"We serve the people and communities of our region. Over the years, we've seen what works and what could work better," Mr Gavin said.

"We're not changing our goals or our purpose. We'll continue to support projects that deliver real benefits for the Cape York community."

Cape York NRM Chair, Emma Jackson, said the proposed changes are based on a broad and thorough review.

"It's time to draw on our experience, and the thoughts of Directors current and past, to design a structure that provides the most opportunities and outcomes for our people and our landscapes."

"The proposed constitution reflects our responsibility to our members, and the next generations, to grow, change and adapt," Mrs Jackson said.

Mr Gavin said the changes will enhance the influence of members and reflect the many ways that people live in and associate with the region.

"The changes proposed at Board level will lead to broader representation, and make sure we have the most effective governance arrangements in place.

"I encourage our members to support the proposed constitution," Mr Gavin said.

The vote will take place at a special general meeting at Wolverton Station on Friday 13 August.

Members can vote in person or by proxy. Those attending the meeting are welcome to camp for the night at Wolverton Station. There'll be a celebration BBQ, with food provided. BYO drinks.

View the proposed constitution in Events on our website at capeyorknrm.com.au.

"It's time to draw on our experience, and the thoughts of Directors current and past, to design a structure that provides the most opportunities and outcomes for our people and our landscapes"

Vote for change

All general members are invited to vote on Cape York NRM's new constitution

The new constitution will

- Increase efficiency
- Enhance the influence of members
- Broaden member representation

 13 August, 2021

 Wolverton Station

What is changing?

- Seven directors instead of nine
- Directors are appointed based on desired skills rather than sectors and zones
- General membership requires a demonstrated commitment to the objects of the organisation, a connection to Cape York, and may include people who do not live on Cape York

How do I vote?

Return your proxy form before **13 August** or in-person at the special general meeting.

Join us at the special general meeting on Friday 13 August, 4 pm, at Wolverton Station.

Those attending the meeting are welcome to camp, BBQ dinner provided, BYO drinks.

The draft constitution and further information is available on our website at capeyorknrm.com.au/news-events/news/2021/1378

For those unable to attend, a proxy form, is available to download.

RSVP and more information ~ Michelle Hamilton on 0448 779 416

Remediation works continue across the Normanby catchment



Aerial view of groundworks at Spring Creek Station

Gully remediation works are plowing ahead across the Normanby catchment through the Reef Trust IV Program. The Reef Trust IV Program is a four year Australian Government-funded initiative focusing on reducing fine sediment flow to the Great Barrier Reef by remediating active gully and streambank erosion.

At Turalba Station, R&L Contracting from Lakeland has constructed diversion banks, installed rock chutes and grade controls, and reshaped a large alluvial gully on the Laura River. Gypsum and fertiliser have also been incorporated into the soil to prepare the site to revegetate during the next wet season. Cape York NRM have supervised the works, which will save close to 300 tonnes of fine sediment from flowing into the Laura River every year.

The diversion banks at the head of the gully will guide flowing water to two rock chutes, which are engineered ramps that safely transport water into the gully channel and stop the gully headcuts from growing.

The worst areas of erosion in the channel have been reshaped to encourage revegetation and return the landscape to a productive state with perennial pastures.

Just down the road at Spring Creek, the landholder has been contracted to reshape and revegetate a large scalded area that is losing hundreds of tonnes of sediment every year. The area is fully cattle excluded and cattle will be kept out for at least three years while grass re-establishes. The site is just next to the PDR, so keep an eye out next time you are driving past!

More gully remediation is scheduled for the next two months at Olive Vale Station and Normanby Station, with all works supervised by Cape York NRM staff. The Reef Trust IV Program will finish in June 2022.

The Scaling Up Normanby Basin gully and streambank remediation in priority areas project is funded by the Australian Government and delivered through the Reef Trust



Remediation work at Spring Creek Station

Breeder fertility workshop at Pinnacle Station

Under the shade of a tree at Pinnacle Station, graziers sat down for a conversation with Dr Geoffry Fordyce.

Geoffry comes to the Cape from the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation, with four decades of knowledge and experience in cow fertility and managing cow and calf losses.

Graziers from seven properties attended the event, armed with questions ranging from nutrition and monitoring cattle weight gain, measuring productivity of breeders, calf mortality issues and cow lactation. (Castration, lactation and rumination)

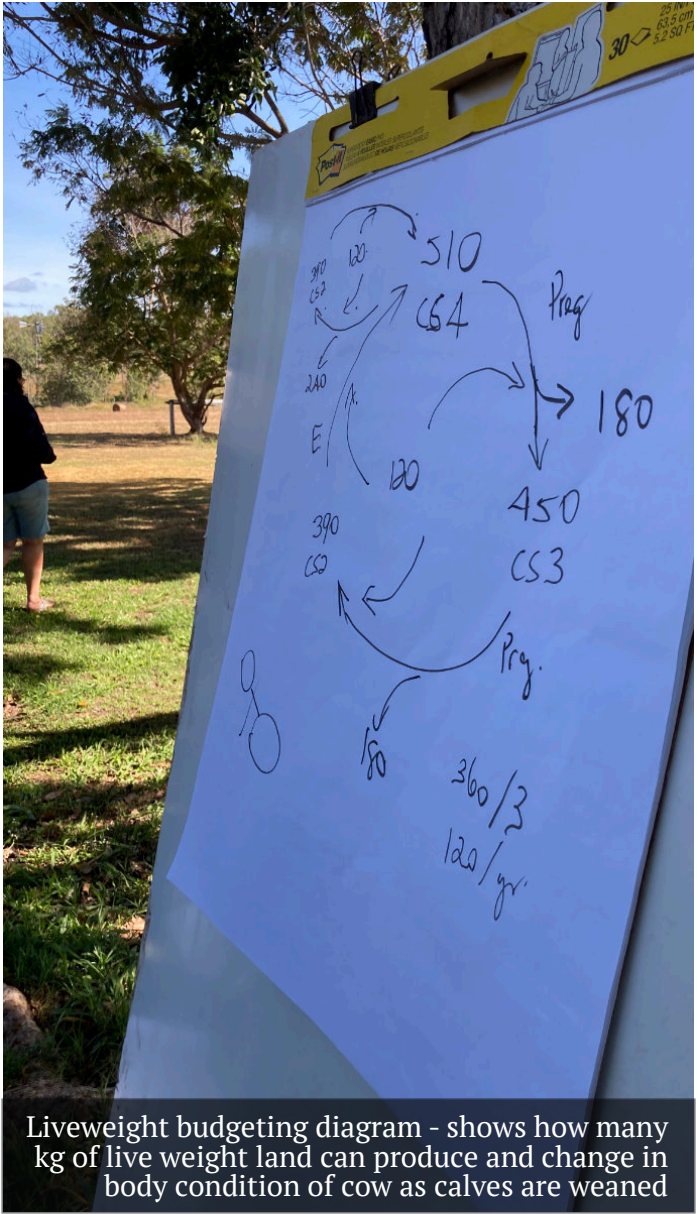
Emerging technologies for managing herd genetics were a particular point of interest. Animal genotypes can be used to identify which bulls will produce female progeny with higher fertility and are better at converting grass into liveweight.

“We understand the many and varied challenges experienced by graziers in the north.

“Issues such as cow fertility and calf losses can sound basic, yet are underpinned and influenced by a multitude of intertwining factors that require an in-depth understanding of land condition, pasture science, animal nutrition, genetics, and the list goes on,” said John McLaughlin from Northern Gulf Resource Management Group.

“Our hope for these workshops is to delve into these issues and provide graziers with sound scientific data and reasoning to inform on-property decision-making.”

This event was funded by the Queensland Government’s Natural Resources Investment Program



Liveweight budgeting diagram - shows how many kg of live weight land can produce and change in body condition of cow as calves are weaned



Guest on Pinnacle Station for the Breeder Fertility Workshop

2021 early dry season burning on Cape York a great success!

Savanna burning has occurred across Cape York for more than 50,000 years. In the past, traditional owners would move across country lighting fires for a myriad of reasons throughout the year, to enhance or assist in the capture of bush foods, setting up camp, ceremony and protecting cultural sites to name a few. Today, fire is still conducted for cultural reasons but there are also new drivers shaping fire management across the north.

Fire is quite possibly the most powerful tool in the landscape management tool box. Today, savanna burning conducted in the early dry season can substantially reduce the risk of late dry season wildfires and threats to people, livestock and infrastructure. Importantly, it is also the basis for a new carbon economy, supplementing the incomes of pastoralists and Indigenous Landholders alike.

This June, July, Cape York NRM's Andy Hartwig worked closely with landowners on Cape York to coordinate an aerial burning program across an area a quarter the size of Tasmania. Andy's aerial burning work spanned 23 properties from Bonny Glen Station south of Cooktown to Wolverton Station north of Coen, an area of around 1.6 million hectares. Andy delivered a total of 37,000 incendiaries and shaped effective fire breaks and burn mosaics that will greatly reduce the risk of late dry season wildfires for the targeted and neighbouring properties, Land Trust Areas, Parks and Nature Refuges.

Landholders and delivery partners South Cape York Catchments were really pleased with this season's results, and greatly appreciative of the support by Cape York NRM and the funding from the Australian Government's Healthy Farming Futures and Reef Trust VII programs

Image | Bonny Glen Hills



Getting ready at Artemis Station



Artemis Station



Good cool fire

On the Cape?

Join this exciting threatened-species 'citizen science' initiative

Within Australia, citizen science is increasing exponentially in popularity. Community volunteers or 'citizen scientists' are known to play an important role in recovery efforts on a wide variety of ecological and environmental themes.

Involvement of the community by scientific data collection and analysis is known to lead to local management of important habitats or sites through ownership and connection with the recovery process. Citizen science represents a significant opportunity to engage the public with threatened species to capture valuable information such as incidental sightings that provide presence/absence data.

Cape York NRM has launched an online 'Citizen Science' threatened species sighting portal as part of our Biodiversity Bright Spots Rainforest Project.

This sighting portal currently provides the opportunity for members of the public to report sightings of the Ant-Plant (*Myrmecodia beccarii*) and the southern cassowary (*Casuarius casuarius*) within Cape York Peninsula, but will be extended to include other threatened species in the future.

To enable an up-to-date assessment of the conservation status of these species we need information on population size, distribution, key habitat requirements, and the relative impact of threats.

The process for members of the community to contribute their sightings data is via Cape York NRM's website and via the QR code on our 'species profile and identification' fact sheets specific to the Ant-Plant and the Cassowary.

These resources are available on our website and in the coming months will be distributed as hard copies to key locations across the Cape from Lakeland to the northernmost Roadhouses at the tip with the aim to reach as many locals and visitors as possible.

Cape York NRM values the public's contribution to increasing our knowledge of threatened species in the region. Importantly, the format and type of data that we request as part of your sighting contribution mirrors the Queensland Government's WildNet database.

Your important sightings data will be forwarded to the WildNet database that supports Queensland's biodiversity and protected areas by providing important wildlife information that underpins conservation policies, programs and management responses.

We look forward to receiving your contributions to this important initiative!

This project is supported by Cape York NRM, through funding from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program



Identifying an ant plant in Cape York



Ant plant

Southern cassowary

HOW YOU CAN HELP

You can report your sighting when you get home.

Scan the QR Code with the camera app on your phone or go to

<https://cli.re/N9R8dj>



Cassowary 'scat'

The business of beef on Cape York

Beefing up your business was the focus of seven Cape York graziers at a Business workshop hosted in Lakeland in June.

The event focused on improving record keeping skills for beef businesses and identifying the areas of business management where producers can take control to increase performance.

Ian McLean from BushAgribusiness led the workshop, sharing valuable insights from the Australian Beef Report and his many years of experience working as an advisor for beef businesses.

Key factors in consideration were having more productive herds, that means having cattle which are better at turning grass into beef, targeting expenditure more effectively, and using labour more efficiently.

One of the biggest challenges for many producers is having appropriate accounting on herd numbers.

Without these numbers graziers can't calculate the grazing load, can't calculate herd productivity (e.g. how many kilograms of beef is my land producing, mortality rates, or reproductive rates), can't calculate herd value, or business income.

This is where the Herdflow calculator comes in. Ian has developed a simple tool, an excel spreadsheet, which allows graziers to track sales, purchases, births, deaths and transfers. Attendees were able to try this tool out for themselves in an interactive exercise.

Underpinning all this business management are good grazing practices. A successful, long term beef business will maximise performance when using appropriate stocking rates.

The message of the day echoed by all attendees was to improve their herd information and recording keeping practices.

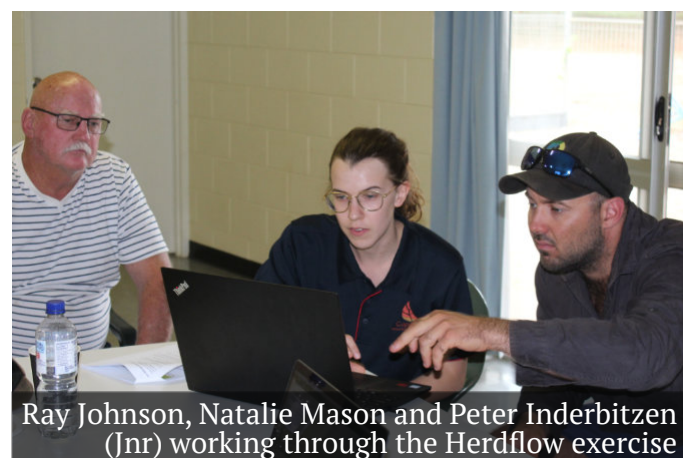
This event is a joint initiative between AgForce Queensland and Cape York Natural Resource Management, and funded by the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal



Harry James and Fred Meyer working on the Herdflow exercise

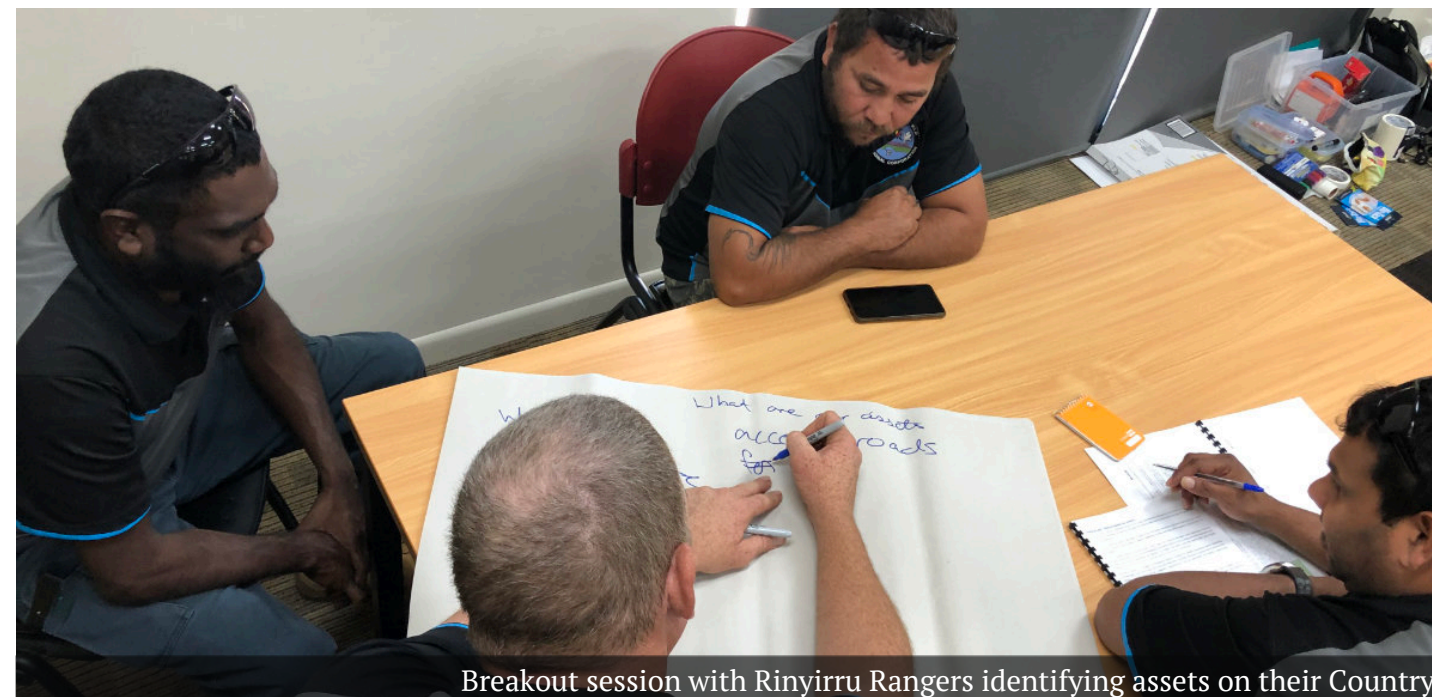


Ian McLean supervising Beth Ward and Erica as they work through the Herdflow exercise



Ray Johnson, Natalie Mason and Peter Inderbitzen (Jnr) working through the Herdflow exercise

Co-benefits of carbon farming



Breakout session with Rinyirru Rangers identifying assets on their Country

There are positive outcomes to carbon farming in addition to emissions avoided or carbon stored.

These are called co-benefits and could, for example, have cultural heritage management benefits for an Indigenous land management organisation.

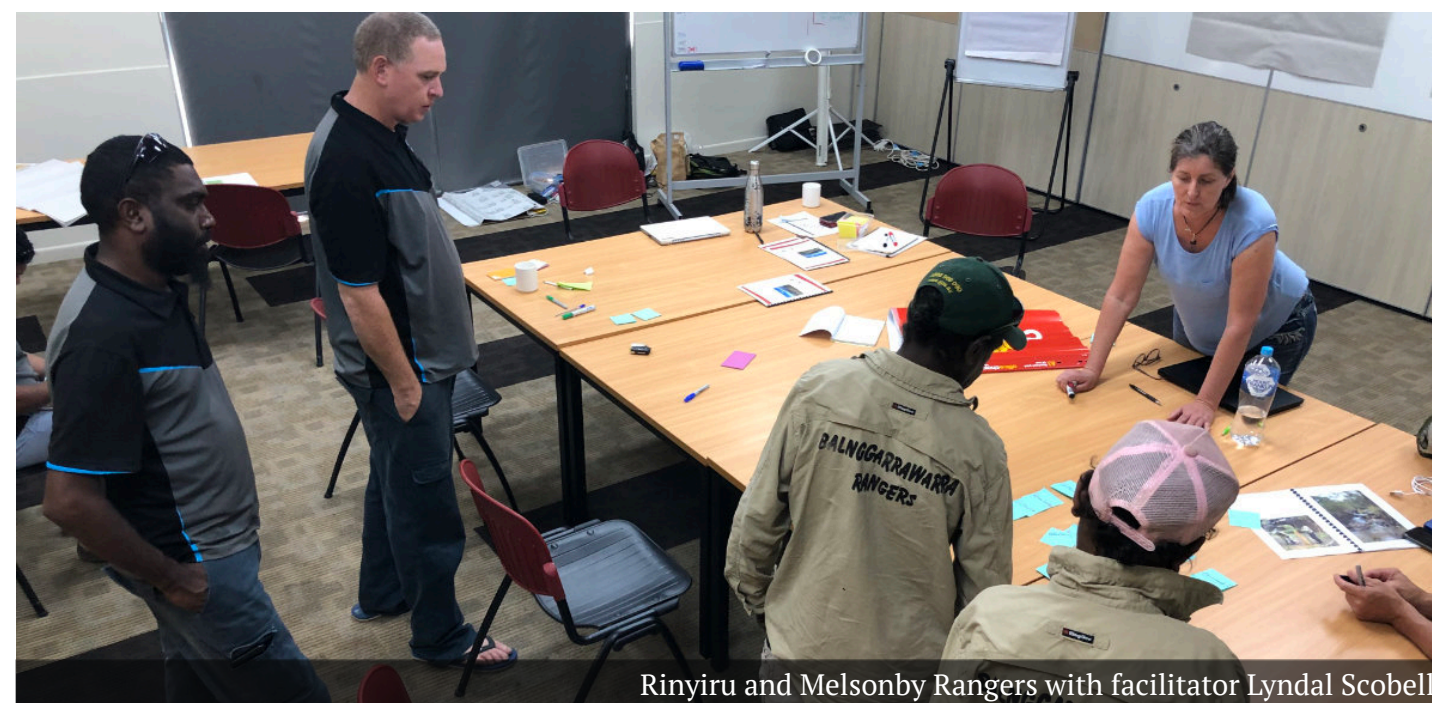
Recently, nine Rangers from Melsonby and Rinyirru Ranger groups attended a co-benefits workshop in Cooktown, to document and explore ways to verify how a savanna burning carbon farming project could provide cultural co-benefits.

The workshop was about looking at new ways to assist groups to document and verify potential co-benefits using the Healthy Country Planning (HCP) Framework, which ensures culture, people and their knowledge are central to the process.

If you would like to learn more about co-benefits of a potential carbon farming project, contact:

Cape York NRM's Fire Coordinator Alex Debono on 0419 148 426, or email him at alex.debono@capeyorknrm.com.au

The project is supported by the Queensland Government and delivered by Cape York NRM, the CSIRO and The Nature Conservancy, and delivered in partnership with Community Bred



Rinyiru and Melsonby Rangers with facilitator Lyndal Scobell

GRASS program enables plans for ten Cape York properties

It's been an eventful month of property visits as part of the Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program. The GRASS program offers graziers on-ground extension support to improve land in degraded (C and D) condition and maintain water quality. The program is implemented across the Burdekin, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary catchments, and Cape York is trialling the program to provide additional support for graziers.

During the visits, property action plans were completed for ten grazing properties in eastern Cape York. The properties spanned the Jeannie, Normanby, and Endeavour catchments, and ranged in size from 100 to 75,000 hectares. Landowners worked with Cape York NRM staff to identify areas of their property that are in degraded condition, and to come up with possible solutions.

Graziers had lots of great ideas for improving their land, including fixing up breakaways, fencing wetlands, sowing productive pasture species, spraying weeds and creating additional paddocks to spell country and reduce grazing pressure.

Peter and Judy Irwin from Valley View appreciated being involved in the program.

"It was great to work with Nat and Harry to identify areas of the property that we'd like to improve. We're always looking for ways to manage weeds, reduce erosion and increase our productivity, and hopefully this project will help us work towards making those improvements."

For staff members Nat and Harry, the GRASS program has been a great opportunity to engage with more graziers.

"It's always a privilege to visit grazing properties across Cape York. We learn so much talking to graziers and seeing how they manage their land. People know and love their land and they often have great ideas for improvements. Our job is to provide whatever support we can to help turn ideas into plans, and plans into action."

The GRASS program is funded through the Queensland Government Reef Water Quality Program and is delivered by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries and Cape York NRM

Image | Valley View

Land Condition Assessment Tool training in Cooktown

Early in April, Cape York NRM hosted a training session in Cooktown utilising the Land Condition Assessment Tool (LCAT).

Rob Hassett from the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries travelled to the Cape to share his expertise in identifying grasses and accurately monitoring grazing land condition.

The Land Condition Assessment Tool is a rapid science-based method used to score the health of grazing land from A to D, A being the optimal score. It uses information including the dominant pasture species, density of declared weeds, ground cover, and many other factors to calculate a score.

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries extension officers from Rockhampton, the Northern Gulf RMG grazing and rangelands team, and the Department of Environment and Science representatives, joined Cape York NRM staff for the two day training.

Dan Wingett from Northern Gulf Resource Management Group said that the LCAT tool, with associated reference guides and assessment rules, puts any user in a good position to record technical monitoring data.

"The land condition scoring system's a great addition to the ABCD framework," he said. It provides incremental steps to evaluate change throughout the project."

After a day of theory, the group headed out to Beefwood Park in Lakeland to try out the tool and test their skills where the group was joined by property owner Wal (Ken Vale).

Cape York NRM'S Harry and Nat have been busy exercising their new skills in grass identification and land condition assessments, while developing property action plans with landholders through the Grazing Resilience and Sustainable Solutions (GRASS) program.

The Land Condition Assessment Tool—referred to as LCAT— is a rapid science-based method used to score the health of grazing land



Left to right: Matt Brown—Dept Agriculture & Fisheries, Dan Wingett—Northern Gulf RMG, Jeff Ikin and Pamela Batchelor—Dept Environment & Science, Rob Hassett—Dept Agriculture & Fisheries, Keerah Steele—Northern Gulf RMG

Western Cape turtle monitoring season has started

Sea turtles are beginning to arrive on western Cape York Peninsula beaches to lay their eggs. The Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance (WCTTA) is once again ready to protect these endangered creatures.

Turtles come to nest on the western Cape from July to October, many of them returning to the beaches where they hatched many years ago.

Australia protects its sea turtles well, but their offspring face danger on our beaches. A turtle might lay up to 100 eggs in a nest, and may create more than one nest.

But feral pigs plunder the nests, eating or breaking the eggs. Not long ago, only 10 percent of nests survived to hatching.

Now, that figure is close to 90 per cent, thanks to the Indigenous Ranger groups that make up the Western Cape Turtle Threat Abatement Alliance.

Since 2013, rangers from Mapoon, Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council/ Apudthama, Pormpuraaw, and Napranum have been running feral pig control programs, and taking practical steps to protect turtle nests.

This year, they will monitor seven remote beaches – about 150 kilometres of coast – during the peak turtle nesting season. Some of those beaches have been harder to reach this year, due to the long wet season.

Cape York NRM Biodiversity Manager Kerri Woodcock said the goal is to ensure at least 70 per cent of local marine turtle clutches survive to hatching.

“70 percent survival is what’s needed to maintain viable marine turtle populations in our region.

“The WCTTA program has made a real difference on the Cape, protecting nests, reducing predation, giving these vulnerable creatures a much better chance of survival,” Kerri said.

Read more about WCTTA and learn how you can support turtle protection on Cape York at <https://capeyorknrm.com.au/projects/western-cape-turtle-threat-abatement-alliance-wcttaa>

WCTTAA is supported by Cape York NRM and the Nest to Ocean Turtle Protection Program, a joint initiative of the Australian and Queensland Governments

Mapoon Rangers installing nest protection cages

Help protect marine turtles and their nesting habitat

- Obey local regulations about using vehicles on beaches and camp locations
- Where vehicles are allowed on the beach, only drive at low tide and stay on the wet sand below the high tide mark
- At night, keep light to a minimum on the beach. Lights can confuse nesting turtles and hatchlings
- Don't let your dog disturb nesting turtles or their eggs

Sawfish monitoring project gets underway

The Sawfish Monitoring in Far North Queensland project got underway on Cape York recently, delivered by Sharks And Rays Australia (SARA) in partnership with Cape York NRM. The three-year project will conduct surveys for sawfish to increase knowledge around sawfish populations on the Cape, while building capacity within local communities to survey and protect these endangered species.

Northern Australia is home to four sawfish species, and three of these are listed as vulnerable on national legislation.

The freshwater sawfish (*Pristis pristis*) was once abundant on Queensland's east coast north of Brisbane, but is now restricted to rivers flowing west into the Gulf of Carpentaria, and possibly Princess Charlotte Bay / Rinyirru National Park on the east coast. Lack of data, including information about the general biology, distribution and abundance of sawfish, is a major problem in sawfish protection.

The principal threats to all sawfish species include; fishing activities, habitat degradation and modification, and entanglement in, and ingestion of, marine debris. In Queensland, the main threat to sawfish is commercial fisheries, with these animals being particularly susceptible to being caught as by-catch.

Dr Barbara Wueringer, Sharks And Rays Australia (SARA) is leading the project and has been delivering Sawfish projects on Cape York since 2015. Dr Wueringer provides the training in sawfish sampling, capture, handling, tagging and release methods.

The first survey expedition ran from 12-25 June in partnership with the Kowanyama Land and Sea Rangers, Cape York NRM and Northern Gulf RMG. For 14 days, the waters of the Mitchell River were sampled between Chillagoe and Kowanyama. Surveys are done with gill nets, hand lines and drum lines, under strict animal ethics and research requirements.

Additionally, in collaboration with James Cook University's Global Sawfish Search Project, water is sampled for eDNA (environmental DNA, small particles of DNA shed by sawfish into the surrounding water). The results of the project will be shared as they become available.

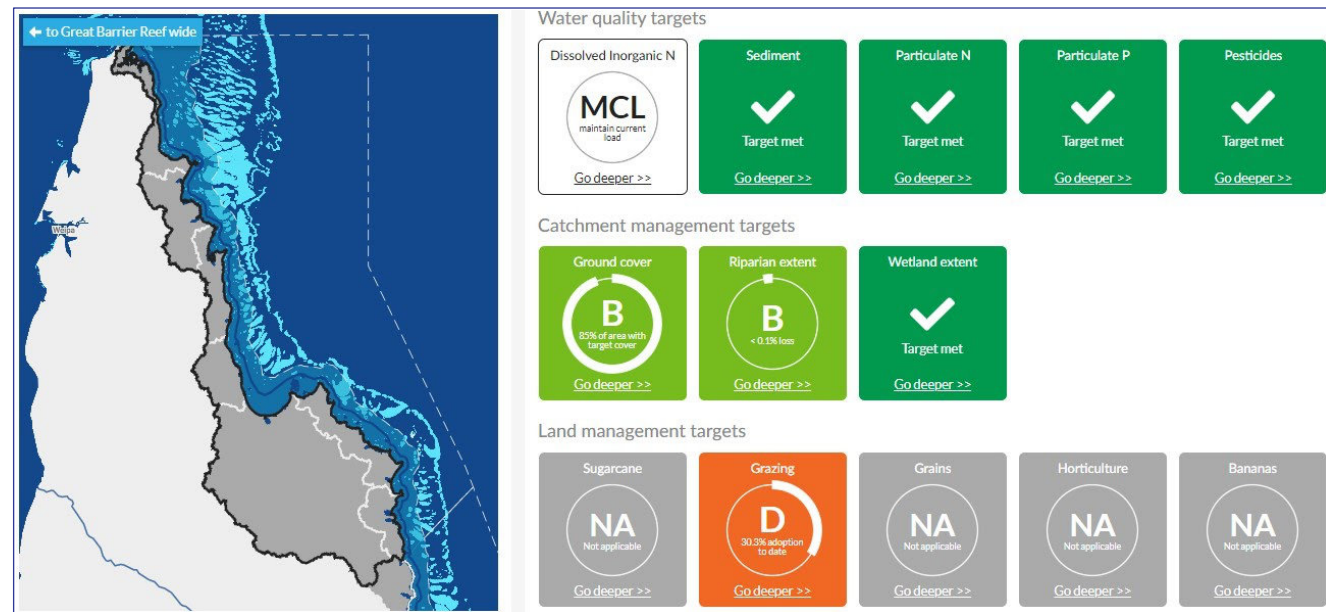
You can help to increase our knowledge about sawfish by reporting any sightings or accidental catchings, no matter how long ago, on the Sharks and Rays Australia website sharksandraysaustralia.com on the *Report Your Sighting* page

The project is funded by the Queensland Government's Community Sustainability Action Grants



Participants in the sawfish monitoring project on the western Cape

Reef Water Quality Report Card shows encouraging progress



The Reef Water Quality Report Card 2019, released in February 2021, found that encouraging progress was being made towards achieving the Reef 2050 Water Quality Improvement Plan targets.

The report card, which measures progress towards the targets up to June 2019, showed good outcomes particularly at a region and catchment level, with improved practices leading to pollutant reductions.

The report card captures the results of landholders' efforts to invest time and resources in programs, supported by government, that are designed to deliver productivity, profitability and water quality benefits.

The report card also helps to identify areas of success and where further gains can be made.

The Cape York region fared well, meeting all the water quality targets which cover sediment, nitrogen and phosphorus. The 5% sediment reduction target was met in 2016 and further reductions in 2018-2019 have contributed to an overall reduction of 10.1%.

The area also made good progress towards ground cover targets, with 85% of grazing lands having greater than 70% ground cover in the late dry season. However inshore marine condition declined to poor in 2018-2019.

Above-average sea temperatures, rainfall and extreme weather events all contributed to poor inshore marine condition across the Great Barrier Reef and in Cape York.

However, land management targets for grazing are still registering as poor in gully, pasture and streambank management.

Large gains can and are being made through major gully projects, like those funded through the Australian Government's Reef Trust projects, and effective land management practices.

There are also lots of voluntary efforts by landholders and communities that contribute to improved water quality and a more resilient reef.

This includes increasing ground cover by matching stocking rate to land carrying capacity, protecting land from wildfires, managing stock access to wetlands and frontage areas, stopping the spread of weeds and applying fertiliser more efficiently.

The Australian and Queensland governments have invested \$667 million (from 2017 to 2023) in actions to drive progress towards the targets.

The progress recorded in this report card demonstrates important on-ground improvements are underway but more action is required across all Reef catchments to continue to drive progress towards the targets.

The Cape York results would benefit from obtaining more data from land managers to better reflect the condition of land in this region.

Fully explore the results through the interactive report card. Read the supporting case studies to learn more about how communities and land managers are taking action to improve water quality.

Report card results are collated through the Paddock to Reef Integrated Monitoring, Modelling and Reporting Program which is funded by the Australian and Queensland government's Paddock to Reef Program and the Queensland Government

News from South Cape York Catchments

EMMA ROBERTS, PROJECT SUPPORT OFFICER, SOUTH CAPE YORK CATCHMENTS

I'm so excited to be a part of this incredible community organisation, working with and alongside other individuals, groups, and organisations who are all passionate about protecting our environmental and cultural heritage, what a dream come true!



On the 10th of June 2021, Conservation and Land Management (CALM) students from Cooktown State School headed to Melsonby to assist the Melsonby Rangers with maintenance for a path to the lookout overlooking Battle Camp range.

Melsonby Rangers plan to take visitors here in the future to share stories and connect with country. The purpose of this project is to give CALM students an opportunity to not only meet criteria for their Certificate in Conservation and Land Management, but to also give them an opportunity to connect with rangers and listen to stories about the importance of looking after country.

The students and rangers worked hard to complete this activity, and all worked well as a team, enjoying come laughs along the way.



CALM students on Country

On Monday 14th of a June, Pando Harrigan officially started as a Normanby Ranger, and both SCYC and the Normanby Rangers are thrilled to have Pando onboard.

Here are a few words from Pando.

"I am privileged to join South Cape York Catchments and to come onboard with my brothers, and the whole ranger team working back on country. To be on country with my family, and looking after our cultural heritage, working both as a ranger and as a tour guide means I can now fulfil my obligations and responsibilities as a cultural custodian on these lands, sharing stories from our grandfathers and our own upbringing on country."



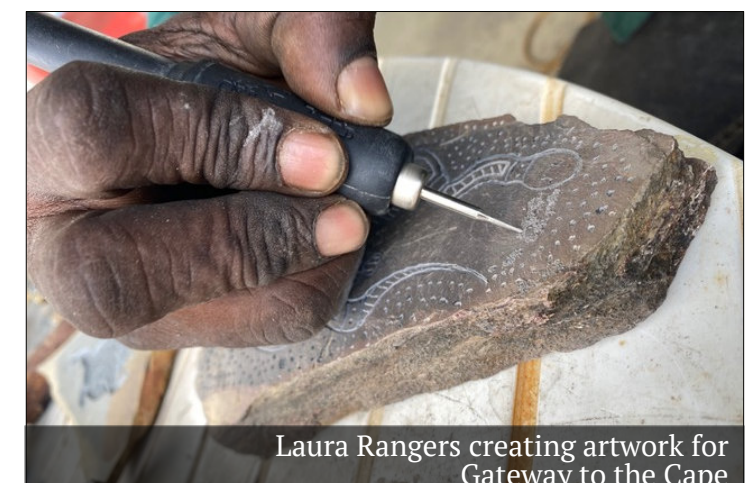
Pando burning Country

Jason and I took a trip out to visit the Laura Ranger team.

I got talking to senior ranger, Christine Musgrave, and I learned her father was the late Dr. George Musgrave, and so Christine invited me to visit the cemetery so we could pay our respects to the old people, and what an honour this was.

Back at the ranger base, we got to catch up on their projects and yarn about different things happening on Country.

The team has been busy designing art pieces for their sculpture (competition) which will be placed at the Gateway to the Cape in Lakeland.



Laura Rangers creating artwork for Gateway to the Cape



Update from the Directors

You have looked through this fantastic newsletter and caught up and what we are doing out on the ground and a little behind the scenes. You will have also seen that we are asking our Membership to support a new Constitution.

This is an opportunity for us, as Directors, to explain a little about how we see the Constitution in a very simple way. Many people across Cape York are a partner in a business, a sole trader or perhaps an employee, or volunteer. We have some governance structures across the region, but for many of our Members, it is quite unfamiliar territory.

The Constitution is our document providing the 'rules' with supporting policies acting as our 'guidance' for the organisation. We have a governance structure, which means a Board of Directors come together to make decisions around the direction of Cape York NRM, providing oversight, strategic planning, decision-making and financial planning. The Board appoints the CEO who is then delegated to oversee all operational matters.

The Constitution is the 'go-to' document, containing the principles and 'laws' for the Board to follow. The Membership approves this document and the Membership appoints the Board of Directors.

The Constitution that was developed back in 2010 was written for the 'then' structure and business model, which was designed to suit the Membership, but also State and Federal Government funding models. The funding streams have changed, Cape York has changed and so have we.

We, as a Board, have found our hands are tied with some opportunities, and decisions are made for us because of the rigidity to the current Constitution. The new Constitution offers a little flexibility so that the Membership has the opportunity to consider more broadly the make-up of the Board.

We have a Selection Committee established, with an Independent Chair of this committee. They make recommendations to the Board and Membership around preferred Director nominees and consider the current Board and the diversity of Cape York. The Board needs to have a design that enables a level of diversity that mirrors the region with males and females, younger and more experienced, Indigenous and non-Indigenous plus a variety of skills, knowledge and experience.

Any Member who becomes a Board Director has a huge legal responsibility, with an opportunity to learn, contribute and share their personal Cape York wisdom. It is exciting, fun and a wonderful experience.

The Constitution really is an opportunity for us to improve how we function as a Board and will therefore improve the whole organisation's functionality, approach and delivery.

Thank you for supporting us and please reach out if you are considering becoming a Board Director.

Warm regards
Emma Jackson

Cape York NRM Board of Directors



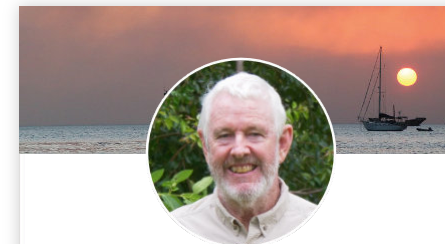
Emma Jackson
Chairperson
Primary Industries Sector



Pauline Smith
Indigenous Sector
Zone 2



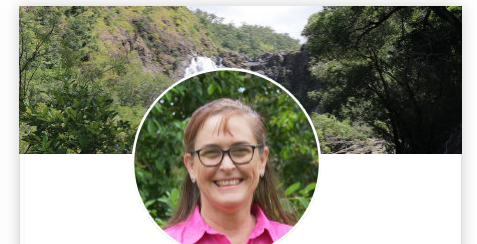
Katherine Steffensen
Indigenous Sector
Zone 4



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



Sally Gray
Conservation Sector



Marilyn Morris
Local Government Sector



2021 CONQUER THE CORRUGATIONS

1-4 October

Registrations open on Sunday 1 August

Go to the Events tab on our website at capeyorknrm.com.au

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