

**DHIMURRU**

# **Plan of Management**

**2023-2033**

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**Recognising critical friends**

We acknowledge and appreciate our network of critical friends that have supported us to develop this plan and the Yolju Knowledge Framework, in particular Greg Wearne.



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## List of Acronyms

BIITE	Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education
CDU	Charles Darwin University
CEM	Conservation and Ecosystem Management
ESS	Environmental Systems Solutions
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
IPA	Indigenous Protected Area
IT	Information Technology
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
LoC	Learning on Country
MERI	Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement
NCRM	Natural and Cultural Resource Management
NLC	Northern Land Council
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPWS	Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife Service



## Notes on Yolŋu Orthography

The Plan of Management seeks to conform with the current Yolŋu-matha (Yolŋu language) orthography.

Yolŋu words contain a number of letters and combinations that will be unfamiliar to many people reading this document. The following table is intended to assist newcomers in the correct pronunciation of these words.

<b>ŋ</b>	Pronounced like the 'ng' in ring	<b>dj, tj</b>	Don't pronounce the 'j', and pronounce the 'd' or 't' with the tongue in the same position as for 'ny' above
<b>ng</b>	Pronounce the 'n' and 'g' separately	<b>ä</b>	(Long) pronounced like the 'a' in father
<b>th, nh, dh</b>	Don't pronounce the 'h' but place the tip of the tongue between the front teeth to pronounce the 'd', 't' or 'n'.	<b>a</b>	(Short) pronounced like the 'o' in mother
<b>r, d, n, l, t</b>	Pronounced with the tip of the tongue backwards toward the roof of the mouth	<b>e</b>	(Long) pronounced like the 'ee' in meet
<b>rr</b>	Pronounced by rolling the 'r' or allowing the tongue to flap during pronunciation	<b>i</b>	(Short) pronounced like the 'i' in hit
<b>ny</b>	Don't pronounce the 'y', but place the tip of the tongue behind the bottom teeth to pronounce the 'n'	<b>o</b>	(Long) pronounced like the 'aw' in dawn
		<b>u</b>	(Short) pronounced like the 'u' in put



# Preface

by Timmy Murrmurrŋa  
Djäwa Burarrwaŋa

We are so proud to be celebrating more than 30 years of Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation (Dhimurru) as we launch this new Plan of Management!

Dhimurru was established in 1992 as part of the vision of our Elders. Their hopes were for Yolŋu to continue to look after the land and seas our own way. We honour our Elders and past leaders and cherish their contributions to establishing and continuing to support Dhimurru to flourish. Our new Plan continues to honour our Elders' vision into the future by looking after our estates and our songcycles and by understanding and addressing the changes that are happening on our Country.

Dhimurru is like a bush library, where you can learn. When you burn a library of books, it is gone. When you burn a bush library it grows again and brings new shoots and life. This is the knowledge of our ancestors that is reborn in our new generations. This is what we call our Yolŋu curriculum and pedagogy.

Our yothu-yindi (mother-child) and märi-gutharra (grandmother-grandchild) kinship relationships with the land mean that we are not an anarchy and lawless. We have always had our own Law that guided and fostered a deep respect for our Country since before time.





We have a strong agreement between Yirritja and Dhuwa moieties in our society as a structure for caring for our Country.

We are so grateful to be in partnership with Yirralka and we have strengthened our relationship with them in the last two years. Working together has been nourishing our kinship connections between our staff and our organisations to best care for our Country and our people. That is how Yolŋu people have always lived.

Together we have interviewed Elders from all the clan groups across Yolŋu Country to understand their ways, the old ways, the Law, listening to how they lived and looked after the Country. We have brought their wisdom together into a Yolŋu

Knowledge Framework (YKF) so that the old ways are directing us into the future, standing firmly in our foundations and our Law. The YKF recognises the oldest living culture in the world and our sacred and ancient wisdom.

Together we are changing our name from 'ranger' to wāŋawu djäkami – which means carers for Country, as our ancestors have cared for our Country since time immemorial. We have nurtured the land through our sacred areas, using our songcycles, our ceremonies, our kinship, our art, our seasons and using our land as the colour to paint our maps and sacred designs.

We have learnt that our Elders really want wāŋawu djäkami to know the songcycles and the names of the

Country, for both Yirritja and Dhuwa and to follow in the footprints of our ancestors so we can maintain and foster our knowledges of how our ancestors walked and understood Country.

I am excited to share our vision and plans for the next 10 years. We invite our partners to share in our vision and undertake their responsibilities on our IPA to keep our Country strong and healthy for our future generations.

A handwritten signature in green ink, reading "Timmy Murrurrŋa Djäwa Burarrwŋa".

**Timmy Murrurrŋa Djäwa Burarrwŋa**  
Managing Director, Dhimurru



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A wide, shallow waterway, possibly a tidal creek or marsh, flows through a landscape. The water is dark and reflects the sky, with gentle ripples on its surface. The banks are lined with lush green grasses and small shrubs. In the distance, a dense line of trees forms a dark horizon against a bright, overcast sky filled with soft, white clouds. The overall scene is a natural, serene wetland environment.

••  
**Background**



# Vision Statement



Dhimurru’s vision statement honours the memory and wisdom of those Elders who inspired and developed Dhimurru. Dhimurru continues to be motivated by the commitment and passion of its Founders and Elders.

## **Vision statement in Yolŋu Matha by Roy Dadayŋa Marika M.B.E**

From dhawuru dhanu ŋaya yaka wāŋa ga hundred or more than one hundred years dhanu dhäruk ŋarru dhäya wekarram. Mä nhän yaka ŋarru yolŋuyu bäki, banhaya ŋayi generation ga generation ga generation ŋayi yaka ŋarru dhäya mä, dhanal ŋarru nhäma banhaya ŋayi banha yakan nhalpiyan dhanal nyenan ŋatjil dilak.

Ga nhalpiyan dhanal yakan gatjpu’yuan ŋätili dilak.  
Yo – Dhuwa Yirritja.

Yothu ga Yindi

Bukmak ŋayi malanyinha yaka dhäya manikaymi, rommi, dhulanmi, dhäwu’mi, Banhalana ŋayiŋa, dhanalingu uku djalkiri. Bitjan nhan yaka ŋayim, malanya dhäya ga ŋunha Land Rightsŋa dhäruk bilanya bili. Yo decision maker nhanbayi yana landowner.

Ŋarru nhan ŋarru, ŋarruŋam goŋmurrum nhumalingurumurru. Conservation Commission or Rangerwurumurru Dhimurruwurumurru.

Bukmak ŋayi malanyinha djäkawu goŋŋa Dhimurruwura. Yirritja ga Dhuwa ŋarru warkthun dhanal further development bilanya bitjan Conservation ga dhal’yun ŋarru protecting nhänjuru developmentjuru.

Dhanu ŋayi yolŋuwu yana. Yolŋuyu ŋarru warkthun dhäruk nhanbayi Yolŋuyu yana. Djinaku ŋayiwu ŋarakawu, yaka Gapmandhu wo bilan yolthu waripunyu ŋayinharrayu Yolŋuyu. Nhanbayi yana ŋayi-waŋanjuyu, rom-waŋanjuyu, waŋarr-waŋanjuyu, gamanunngu-waŋanjuyu wo maŋayin-waŋanjuyu.

Ŋarru dhärukma dhanu gunyanda bayikuŋ ŋalapalmiyu banha ŋarruŋan ga dhanu badak nyena yaka. Ŋarru dhärukma dhanalingu ga gatjpum’ badak wälŋa.

Djinaku Dhimurruwum self developmentkum, ga self-managementkum.

## Dhimurru Plan of Management



### Vision statement in English

“Dhimurru’s vision is guided by the wisdom of our Elders who founded Dhimurru. They have inspired us in our work. They exhorted us to look after the land for those who will follow, to protect and maintain it. In 1990 on behalf of the Elders Roy Dadayŋa Marika said,

“Be firm and strong for the land, and the strength of your solidarity will sustain you in your cause.”

“Our Country (land and sea) will exist forever. It must be protected so that it will remain the same, so that it can be seen in the same way that the Elders saw it in the past. Our vision and hope is that Yolŋu will continue to use our Country for all the generations to come.”

The Elders said, “We the old people hope that Dhuwa and Yirritja Country will continue to be looked after through the connection of yothu yindi. “All our Country is Yirritja and Dhuwa. Our songs, our Law, our sacred art, our stories are embedded in our Country, which is the foundation of our knowledge. That’s how we see our Country; that is what our Land Rights Act says.

“The decision-makers are the landowners, the clans that are connected through Yothu Yindi and Märi-Gutharra kinship. They have placed certain areas of our land in the hands of the Dhimurru Committee, which authorises the Dhimurru Rangers to manage and preserve, maintain and protect the areas designated for recreation use.

“The landowners put the recreation areas in Dhimurru’s hands to manage. They envisage one committee, one voice, and one body under one umbrella, Dhimurru. Only Yolŋu will make decisions for this land, not government officials or any other person who is not a landowner.

“We envisage working together with the Parks and Wildlife Commission and other IPA collaborators; we need their help in making our vision a reality. With respect to the sea Country in the IPA, we are committed to work together with all relevant agencies to ensure that our sea Country remains healthy, our sites and their stories are protected, and our marine resources are used sustainably. But the only people who make decisions about the land are those who own the Law, the people who own the creation stories, the people whose lives are governed by Yolŋu Law and belief.”



# ●● Dhimurru Indigenous Protected Area (IPA)

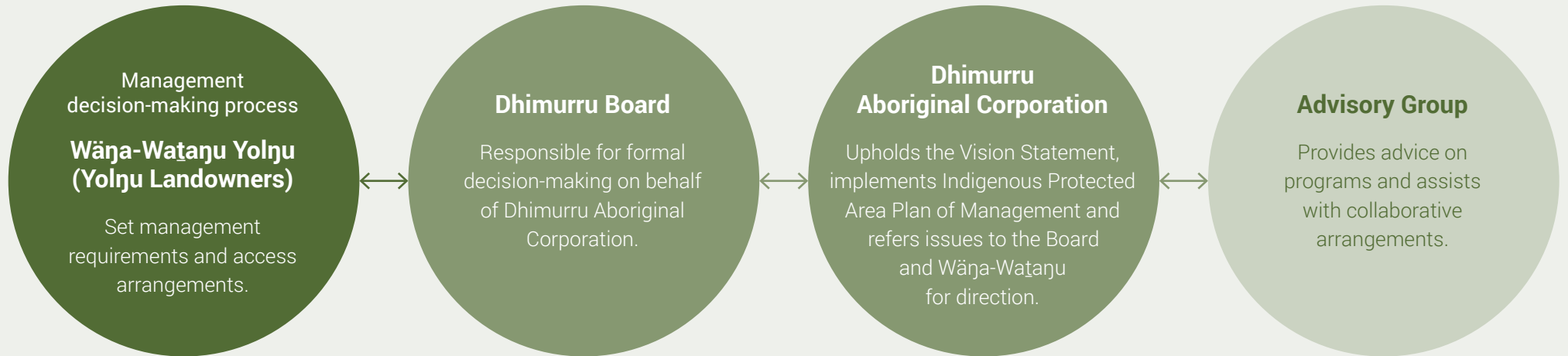
Yolŋu traditional owners declared the first phase of the Dhimurru IPA in 2000, and the second in 2013, bringing the total area of the land and sea to around 550,000 hectares. The area identified for management is shown here. The IPA includes islands but excludes mining and town lease areas and the areas of Yirrkala township and Marngarr Community Council at Gunyajarra.

Yolŋu estates do not conform to Western geographical boundaries. We have responsibility for our estates regardless of where Balanda tenure has been superimposed. Yolŋu understand, however, the need for conventional Balanda boundaries for the processes of the National Reserve System and the way this affects our management programs. It is for that purpose and on this basis that we have identified the IPA boundaries. Our IPA also aligns with the categories identified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as identified in Appendix 1.





# Governance structure



Seventeen clans from northeast Arnhem Land are represented in the membership of Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation. Dhimurru is governed by an elected Board of up to 12 Directors who are Wäṅa Waṭaṅu Yolṅu (Traditional Owners) from these clans. The Board meets bi-monthly to make operational and administrative decisions on behalf of

the members. They set the priorities for management for the region and in accordance with Dhimurru's vision statement and approved plans of management. Dhimurru refers directly to the Wäṅa Waṭaṅu regarding all decisions which may have a direct or lasting effect on their estates.

Supporting the operations of the organisation, Dhimurru has developed effective collaborative governance of the IPA. The Dhimurru IPA Advisory Committee supports Dhimurru's operations by providing advice and technical support in a range of areas. Membership may change depending on emerging issues and priorities. This meeting

is held jointly with Yirralka Rangers to ensure that there is consistency in approach and outcomes. This collaborative approach is consistent with Traditional Owners' commitment to 'both ways management.'



Dhimurru Plan of Management



## Background to the Yolŋu Knowledge Framework

Our Elders from all our clans came together more than 30 years ago to discuss how they would deal with and manage the impacts of Balanda, particularly illegal entry, desecrating sacred sites and the introduction of weeds and feral animals on Yolŋu Country. They established Dhimurru to manage the region in the north-east of Yolŋu Country and Yirralka to manage our homelands.

The Yolŋu Knowledge Framework brings Yirralka and Dhimurru together. The senior staff from our organisations have interviewed more than 40 of our most senior Yolŋu knowledge holders, from all our

different clan groups, to learn from them and their vision for how Dhimurru and Yirralka can work together from a foundation of Yolŋu Law.

Our Elders have guided our thinking to develop some new directions for managing our Country, guiding us to look after Country in a Yolŋu way that prioritises Yolŋu Law, philosophies and processes. We live in a modern world and we need the Balanda tools to manage the issues the Balanda world has brought to us. But our vision and our work will always be based in our own Law and responsibilities to Country.

## Dhimurru Plan of Management



Dhimurru and Yirralka have been working together to learn from our Elders, to think carefully about how to reshape our work to honour our ancestors, our Law, our responsibilities and our ways forward. The Yolŋu Knowledge Framework is based on the vision of our Elders in a video that highlights their aspirations and concerns for caring for Country. From their guidance we have developed new guiding principles for managing our IPAs. This includes recognising that Yolŋu are not rangers, but Djäkami Wänjawu – carers of Country. To best care for Country, Djäkami Wänjawu need to know and learn about ceremonies, songcycles, seasons and hunting

as a part of their work. We have also established nine management directions that give us specific management actions and strategies for managing our IPA.

We are excited to be implementing our YKF throughout the next ten years. We will focus on ensuring that Yolŋu Law, knowledge and kinship is front and centre in our organisations, first and foremost. We will be working with our elders and engaging our communities and young people to progress our new directions.



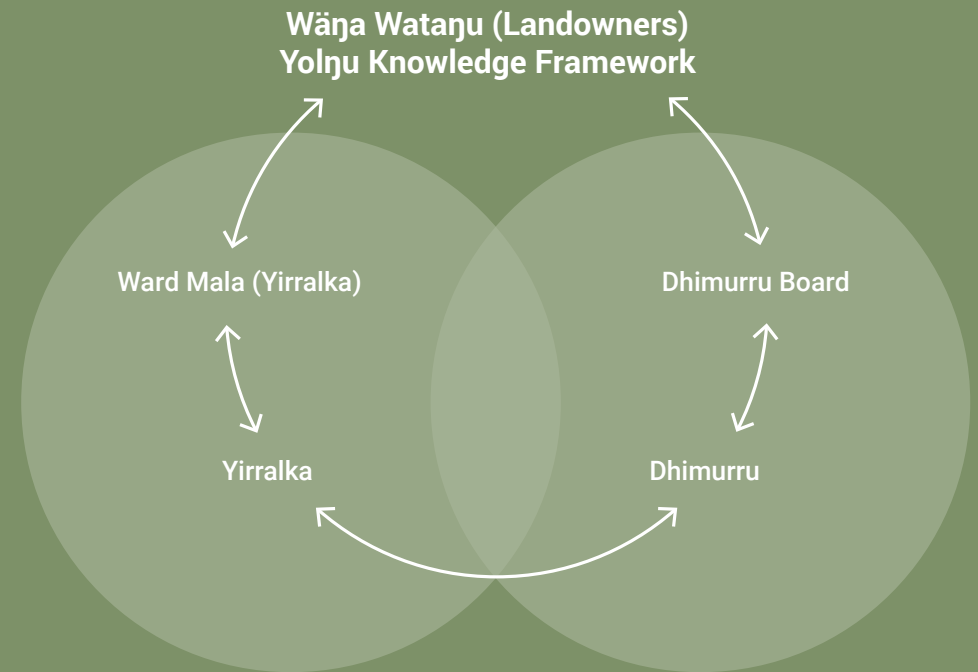


# Our Yolŋu Knowledge Framework as a Regional Action Plan

Although Dhimurru and Yirralka as organisations are different, the kinship links between our staff and landowners has always been strong. Together we have been listening to our Elders to bring their wisdom and our Law as the foundation for our work through the Yolŋu Knowledge Framework. Working together strengthens our work on Country in the entire region that we manage, across nearly 1,940,000ha of NE Arnhem Land. Our Indigenous Protected Areas have a shared zone in which we both work and have responsibilities for. We also have ways of working together across our IPAs according to our kinship rights and responsibilities. By working together on the Yolŋu Knowledge

Framework we have established a shared approach to management in our region – effectively a Regional Action Plan.

A regional approach between us enhances the management that we do as individual organisations. When we work together under a shared framework, we create more consistent management of the region. A shared approach ensures that our cultural links and connections are maintained and kept strong and ensures that we work with the right people in the right Country. We are able to share research, knowledge and information across these areas to get better opportunities to monitor and manage our Country. When we share research



and information we can develop a picture of the changes, the challenges and successes in our region.

Dhimurru and Yirralka share an IPA Advisory Group that meets annually with a membership made up of our important partners. For the last two years we have had an annual shared staff meeting that has helped us to workshop our actions and

new directions. This governance arrangement is documented in a Memorandum of Understanding between our organisations and also guides how we work together, share resources and plan to collaborate into the future.

We look forward to our collaborative journeys moving forward.



••  
**Foundational  
Guiding Concepts  
from our Elders**



## Voices of our Elders

Yolŋu have cared for our Country since time immemorial. We have handed down our ways of knowing over millennia through sharing from our Elders. We honour and revere the wisdom of our Elders and their knowledges form the foundation of our society. Our Elders have always been the ones to navigate and direct how to care for our Country and are just as important today in overseeing and directing our work. This will guide our renewed plans of management. It has been an honour to interview and learn from the Elders from all of the clan groups in our region by interviewing them. They have shared their insights about how to manage Country from a Yolŋu perspective, how things have been done in the

past and how we need to navigate into our future. They have shared their worries and aspirations for how things should be done. They have spoken to our metaphors and teachings about how to live healthy and nourishing lives. Our Elders are our libraries. We thank them for sharing their insights and invite you to listen and learn from their stories too.

“The land is like a Yolŋu leader. The spirit of the land is speaking so that when young people visit Country they must learn that the land is speaking to their minds, heart and souls.”

**WAKURATJPI MUNUNGURR**





Dhimurru Plan of Management

# •• Dhimurru Djäkami Wäṅawu

## We are Yolṅu Rangers

Our Elders established ranger groups for us over the last 30 years, called Dhimurru and Yirralka, to manage the impacts of others and to keep our Country healthy. We have always referred to ourselves as ‘djäkami wäṅawu’ - carers for Country. It is now time to make that our official name because the word ‘ranger’ does not recognize our Law. Changing our name from ‘ranger’ back to ‘djäkami’ redefines what it means to look after Country and prioritises what matters to Yolṅu. Djäkami need to be strong in Yolṅu Law, strong in our culture and undertake our kinship rights and responsibilities to Country and to each other. This is the foundation of our lives and it defines our identity.

We welcome you to learn what it means to be a Djäkami for Country and what that means for Dhimurru and Yirralka in their future directions.

“The land also has Law and songcycles. It’s our old people’s Law. It is a firm foundation, the basis of caring for and living from the land.”

**DJÄWA BURARRWAṅA**



# Manikay ga bunḡul

## Ceremony as part of ranger work

Our Law and our kinship connect us to our Country and everything in it. This knowledge is passed to us down the generations by our old people. Our Laws are held in the songcycles, and we dance them and sing them with our families. Each Yolḷu person has a unique role and responsibility that is held in the songcycles and is deeply connected to Country and all that exists in the cosmos. The songcycles teach us about the world and everything in it and how we connect and relate to all those elements. Upholding the Law by knowing, understanding and fulfilling our kinship rights and responsibilities is most important to us. Our Law is in our Country, and when we hear our

songs we learn about how to care for our Country. It is the foundation of our lives and defines our identity. It is these Laws and roles that are the basis for Djäkami Wäḡawu who have a special and important role to look after Country. We stand strong in the Law. Strong culture means we are caring for our Country and in control.

“Everything in the Yolḷu world operates with due process according to the Law, nothing else.”

**BIRITJALAWUY GONDARRA**





Dhimurru Plan of Management



## Wakir'yun wänjawu djäma

Hunting and monitoring Country is part of ranger work

Caring for and looking after our Country is caring for us. To care for and manage our Country we must know it. We know it through our ceremonies but we must also be there to see and listen to the signs our Country gives us. The knowledge and skills that have been passed to us from our ancestors tell us what, where, when and how to hunt and gather. We are taught how to respect and honour the plants and animals we live with and use and how to share our harvest with our family. It is essential our young people receive this wisdom from us. As rangers we must know this so we can see and feel if everything is alright. As we hunt and gather we can record and report on the health of our Country, inform

our Elders and teach our young people. We will identify changes and concerns and make plans to fix problems and see where we need mainstream strategies and tools to help.

“Hunting is good for rangers. We rangers hunt, it is part of our learning. We learn the places and we know where to go and hunt. At the same time we learn about the land, and who owns the land. We also look after the Country.”

**WANGAWUY MUNUNGURRITJ**

An aerial photograph of a riverbank. The river is dark blue and occupies the upper right portion of the frame. The bank is covered in sparse, dry-looking vegetation, including many thin, light-colored trees and shrubs. A single bird is captured in flight over the river, its wings spread. The overall scene is a natural, somewhat arid landscape.

••  
**Managing  
the Dhimurru  
Indigenous  
Protected Area**



# Marngi'thi wirrki wänawu

## Deep dive program

We have always managed our Country by hunting, knowing the seasonal indicators and their connections, checking up on Country and making sure that we keep Country healthy. We know if things are flowering at the right time, when the right time to harvest is and what the stories in the land and sea tell us. The land has many, many names, some of them are for big areas, some for smaller areas within those and others are sacred. Mapping and sharing the names of Country is important for our culture.

We need to work with our Elders to learn from them about Country, how it used to be and to share how it is now. There are also many new threats to Country like weeds, feral animals and unauthorized visitors. We want to manage those threats to our home. We are establishing a program called marngi'thi wirrki wänawu that will bring rangers together with Elders to be on Country and deep dive to learn about Country and to have Country speak to us.

VIDEO  
COMING  
SOON

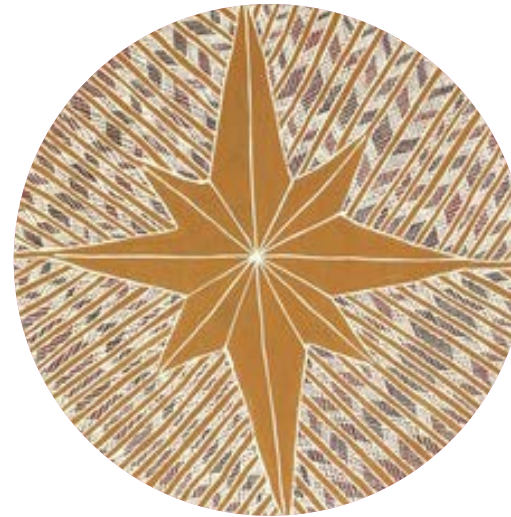




### ●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Host the marngi'thi wirrki wāṅawu in different seasons according to the right place for the right time and for the right species
- Ensuring planning approaches operate from our seasonal calendar, integrating key sustainability and resource indicators and their management
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation program that recognizes hunting and other cultural practices as a part of documenting, recording, mapping, monitoring and assessing health of Country
- Develop Yolŋu style maps for all areas of Country in the Dhimurru IPA as a tool to capture key harvesting, ceremony and other areas important to us
- Identify and record place names in the Dhimurru IPA through the place names project and the cultural mapping program

- Identify and manage threats as they arise
- Continue consultations with IPA landowners regarding more immediate expectations, aspirations and concerns around land and sea cultural heritage to guide work priorities and programs
- Secure resources to employ Elders to be engaged regularly in setting and undertaking work programs



“The rangers should have a Yolŋu program, it should have all the Yolŋu activities in it. They should know Yolŋu weather, seasons and everything. So Yolŋu rangers become real and be recognised. We want to see it all happening as old people before we go.”

**DJAMBAWA MARAWILI, OAM**



# ●● Burning Country the right way

Fire and its Law was handed to us by our creation ancestors and passed to us from our old people. Our Elders continue to hold and pass on this knowledge and Yolŋu fire protocols. Fire has deep meaning to us, it renews life, it brings us together, it feeds us and nourishes us and our Country physically and spiritually. Our ancestors the Djulpan sisters are the first to burn the Country, sometimes we see the smoke rising from the fire they started in other Country – and then we know it's the right time for us to burn. We follow the indicators in our Country, like they taught to us, and the directions provided from our Elders about when, where and why to burn. This is Yolŋu

work – this is more than just fire management – this is the Yolŋu way of burning.

Yolŋu djäkami are embracing new technologies and adding new approaches to complement our way of burning, to place fire in our lonely Country again, protect our homelands and support Yolŋu fire practices in a changing climate. We are supporting our Elders to pass down their knowledge of work to us and younger generations. We retain control of when we burn and why and are carefully balancing these new ways so we never lose sight of our way of burning our Country.

VIDEO  
COMING  
SOON





“The fire belongs to the seven Djulpan sisters, it is their story.”

BALUPALU YUNUPIŃU



●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Engage with and support landowners to undertake burning the right way through our knowledges and traditions

- Arrange the participation of Elders on their Country as part of broader cultural-social-ecological care that includes burning, harvesting, monitoring and surveillance that is consistent with landowner wishes

- Maintain controlled burns to protect people and Dhimurru infrastructure
- Review Dhimurru’s Fire Management Strategy



# Managing Sea Country

Warramiri and Golumala clan leaders describe our special connection to sea Country in this way:

“Manbuyŋa and Rulyapa are two currents that come together to form the seas off our homelands. In the course of their journey through and under the water they separate and then come together again. Within these waters are our sacred totems, songcycles, ceremonies and the pathways of creation beings. Responsibility for them is apportioned throughout our community.”

“More of our totems come from the sea than from the land; sacred sites, although they have been underwater for thousands of years now, are still sung about; our ceremonial dances are about the sea and many of our creation spirits began in the sea. And as most of our food traditionally comes from the sea, both spiritually and physically the wellbeing of the sea has always been and remains crucial to our wellbeing.”

VIDEO  
COMING  
SOON





“Rangers need to look after our sea Country because we belong to the sea.”

GARRUTJU GANDANJU

Our sea Country includes the open sea, bays, estuaries, islands, rocky outcrops, reefs, the intertidal zone and beaches.

We care for our sea Country with as much passion and commitment as we do for our land. We need a stronger voice in policies related to sea Country and to have a stronger presence on our waters so that we can ensure that we have the power and control to uphold our ancestral and ongoing responsibilities to sea Country to keep it healthy, and keep ourselves healthy.

●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Investigate, negotiate and capitalise on management and legislative opportunities arising from the Blue Mud Bay developments, NLC and government sea Country planning agendas, University research programs and sacred site legislation to increase Djäkami Wänjauw compliance and control over sea Country in the IPA
- Increase sea Country patrols and establish partnerships to develop monitoring programs for our significant species and habitats in the IPA, to help us understand the impacts of climate changes and other threats, such as overfishing and undersea developments



VIDEO  
COMING  
SOON

“Us women  
need to learn about  
the songlines  
through crying.”

WAKARR DHAMARRANDJI

Dhimurru Plan of Management

## •• Women and caring as Country

Women have always been respected and valued in our society. Women speak with authority and have their own knowledges, places and laws. Women Djäkami Wäjawu have an important role to maintain, protect and continue our cultural practices. Women are the gatherers and the healers and are the experts on plants for foods and medicines. Women help our children to grow like young bitpit (seedlings) that we nurture and teach our laws to.

Women have practices of milkarri (crying/singing) that make sure that Country is kept healthy. Women know the names of places and direct how burning should happen.

Women need to be more included in decision-making processes in our Indigenous Protected Areas.

## Dhimurru Plan of Management



### ●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Address gender balance in leadership roles, decision-making structures and ranger workforce including by increasing the dedicated female ranger positions and identifying roles for senior women
- Ensure that the workplace is aware of and manages mirirri and rumaru avoidance relationships
- Develop specific learning and management programs for women, such as learning milkarri (singing/ crying the songcycles)

# Education and intergenerational knowledge transfer

To safeguard our future, like all the world's people we must educate our young people. Passed from our ancestors to our Elders and expert knowledge holders (our scientists and professors), our languages, stories, songs, rituals and art hold and give meaning to our lives and the world we live in. Our land and sea Country is alive with this knowledge. It holds layers of meaning and power. Our mälk (skin names) and gurrutu (kinships) systems shows us our place in relation to each other and the known world. Throughout our lives, to learn - we listen, we watch, and we follow. To teach - we show, talk, sing, dance, paint and carve. Our bilingual and learning on Country programs are the way we connect this knowledge with our schools. Our Djäkami Wäjawu, our new name for rangers,

are most important as they safeguard and protect our Country, making sure they have the traditional knowledge and authority to share and teach.

When our Country suffers from introduced threats like weeds, feral animals, marine debris, illegal access and climate change our Djäkami Wäjawu also need mainstream skills. Mainstream skills help when we consider mining, tourism and other enterprise in our IPA's. They are also valuable when we want to work in partnership with western scientists and researchers to add to our knowledge and understanding of our IPA's.

We are proud to be learning organisations, where, based firmly on our cultural knowledge foundation we respect and use both intellectual traditions.

VIDEO  
COMING  
SOON





“We take the children out through Learning on Country and teach them about their land and later they will come back to that place when they have grown up. They and their children will be able to care for that place when the old people have all passed away.”

**DJANĠAL MUNUNĠURRITJ**

●● **STRATEGIES/ACTIONS**

**Workforce Development**

- Develop a Workforce Development strategy for all our staff to promote career succession and provide opportunities for two-way learning
- Review, map, and record the training needs of all staff, especially their path to knowledge of Yolŋu places, kinship and language at induction and ongoing processes to ensure they engage in a culturally appropriate way and refocus the workload to facilitate the time to undertake this in the work program
- Continue to collaborate with key organisations to provide support and mentoring to build a strong workforce and career develop career pathways
- Explore partnerships with universities operating in the region, to develop new accredited units based on Yolŋu skills, knowledge and understandings

- Continue vocational education programs and on the job training including CEM. Marine and compliance training pathways based on agreed commitment to both-ways and on-the-job training modes
- Develop and expand professional development Galtha Rom workshops (outside the school-based program) to facilitate a high level of cultural learning and understanding by our staff to enable them to actively and with confidence participate in and lead cultural actions on Country
- Develop a comprehensive framework for staff engagement in ceremonial practices

**Learning on Country**

- Continue the integration of the LoC Galtha Rom workshops with core operational activities
- Use ranger/senior student Galtha workshops to progress the consultation and planning of Dhimurru’s work program
- Continue and expand collaborative Galtha workshops with Yirralka Rangers



VIDEO  
COMING  
SOON

Dhimurru Plan of Management

## ●● Threats to our Country and culture

We have to confront and deal with many of the same environmental problems that threaten the ecological well-being of all Australians. These threats like the buffalo damage to our wetlands have flow on damage to our culture and practices. As the 2021 State of the Environment Report warns us, we are concerned about biodiversity loss, the spread of invasive species, plant and animal extinction, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. We are worrying about the changes in the seasonal patterns we are witnessing.

The illegal access of non-Indigenous people on our Country is a continuing concern of ours. This trespass disrespects our ownership and culture. We seek to increase our

presence on Country, our compliance capabilities and better communicate our ownership and the terms of entry.

We are certain our management plans, centred on our deep cultural knowledge and practice, employing, where needed the best of mainstream knowledge and practice, will benefit all Australians. For us the key threats are:

- Illegal access
- The spread of weeds
- Feral animals, particularly buffalo, pigs, cats, exotic ants and cane toads
- Salt-water intrusion
- Biosecurity risks
- Marine debris
- Climate change

## Dhimurru Plan of Management



All these threats are increasing. This is where we continue to draw on mainstream knowledge and strategies as well as research partnerships to inform our work as Yolŋu Djäkami Wänjawu.

### ●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

#### Access management

- Continue collaborations with the NLC, NT Police, Fisheries and NTPWS to enhance and build on ranger powers and capabilities to prioritise formal and informal compliance and enforcement training with appropriate support to implement
- Investigate the use of by-laws and other legal mechanisms to deliver compliance outcomes on the IPA
- Actively improve community awareness regarding access permit requirements and routinely report all serious breaches to the NLC

- Increase joint patrols with key partners such as Yirralka Rangers, NLC, Police, NT Parks and Fisheries, where possible accompanied by landowners beyond recreation destinations (including sea Country)

#### Managing weeds and feral animals

- Prioritise weed and feral animal management within the IPA where they have the greatest impact on our Country and important places
- Visit sites with pig and buffalo damage in the IPA with key landowners to identify and assess the extent of the issue to prioritise and implement mitigation strategies
- Investigate and raise awareness about the impact of feral cats, cane toads and introduced ant species in the IPA

- Seek collaborations and/or fee for service agreements (at cost recovery) from key stakeholders such as NTG for weed management and feral animal control where it enhances conservation of our IPA

#### Ghost nets and marine debris in our IPA

- Focus ranger effort on key cultural areas and icons that are most impacted by ghost nets and marine debris
- Support the regional management

#### Climate change

- Document concerns from Yolŋu landowners about the impacts of climate change
- Develop research collaborations to identify mitigation strategies and develop alliances for advocacy for climate action

“I can see the changes these days, all sorts of changes. The sea is eroding the sand away and the salt water is getting closer. Like at my home it is so close now. I am really worried.”

RÄRRIWUY MARIKA



## ●● Collaboration with our partners and stakeholders

Our creation ancestors bestowed the Country and the Law to us. This is Yolŋu Country. We have always welcomed visitors from other cultures who respect our ownership, our culture and reciprocate with us. We value these relationships, some of them stretching back far in time, and hold them close to our hearts. This sharing and trade in ideas, materials and cultures nourishes us and our Country.

Dhimurru have many partners and we welcome new partnerships that support and inform our ways of djäkami wänjau. Like the meeting of the salt and freshwaters, the relationships can create new understandings with both Yolŋu and Balanda knowledges standing eye to eye.

We hope to extend our current relationships with our partners, encouraging those with statutory and legislative responsibilities to fulfil their obligations in full. This will be a great help to us as we are confronted with greater expectations and limited resources.

VIDEO  
COMING  
SOON



## Dhimurru Plan of Management



We look to co-design new partnerships that promote Yolŋu rights and interests, ensuring benefits flow both ways – bala ga lili. We seek partners willing to increase their awareness of our culture and understanding of their own cultural assumptions so together we can leach any poison from our collaborations. Through applying our Djäkami Work Protocols we will ensure the right people and processes are followed, that all participants are kept culturally safe and that we are leading with our partners by our sides.

### ●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

#### Collaborating for advocacy and support

- Build stronger networks with IPA managers and funders to support knowledge sharing and technical expertise
- Collaborate with other organisations to develop peer and mentoring networks
- Utilise our IPA Advisory Committee to work with agencies who have legislative responsibilities to keep our IPA healthy support our management directions and are fulfilling their obligations
- Work with Yirralka to develop a Regional Stakeholder Engagement Plan

“Yolŋu should lead, and Balanda should help Yolŋu with the resources that they can provide to support.”

DJALINDA YUNUPIŊU



# ●● Strong futures and economic development

We have long standing practices of welcoming people to our Country. We enjoy the opportunity to showcase our unique culture and Country with other people. On behalf of landowners, Dhimurru have recreational areas for our visitors to purchase permits to enjoy our beloved Country.

Dhimurru have been managing recreation areas for 32 years. Managing these areas is an act of generosity, providing access and amenities to some of the most beautiful locations in our IPA. We have aspirations to extend and expand on our tourism programs in our Indigenous Protected Areas but as visitor numbers increase and

the expectations of others grow, we will make sure our involvement with tourism benefits landowners and their families and is achievable with the resources available.

We want to develop sustainable livelihoods for our families and future generations. Our IPA offers an opportunity to develop Yolŋu owned and managed businesses and provide our young people with skills for the future. We look forward to working in partnership with landowners and their partners to make sure all future developments in our IPA are sustainable and keep our Country healthy.

VIDEO COMING SOON

“We have a vision for a long term sustainable economic development in our IPA to keep our families strong by supporting Yolŋu businesses on their Country based on their own stories and knowledges for that Country.”

DJÄWA BURARRWAŃA





We want to develop sustainable livelihoods for our families and future generations. Tourism can be a great source of income for landowners and their families and it offers an opportunity to develop Yolŋu owned and managed businesses. We can educate visitors and at the same time help our young people develop skills for their futures. We have aspirations to extend and expand on our Tourism programs in our Indigenous Protected Areas.

●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Ensure Dhimurru is consulted with at an early stage in discussions with respect to any development planned in the IPA as the region diversifies economically to minimise destruction of our Country and to maximize opportunities for Dhimurru to contribute
- Promote sustainable economic development in the IPA by supporting fledgling Yolŋu businesses and organisations with their plans by providing NCRM advice and exploring opportunities for partnerships
- Identify and implement fee-for-service and income generating opportunities that can enhance the organization's long-term sustainability, including through government, Rio Tinto Gove Operations closure and long-term monitoring operations, crocodile management, partnerships with other Yolŋu corporations and tourism expansion opportunities
- Identify and document new strategic directions for managing the Dhimurru Recreation Areas including consideration new economic development opportunities for Dhimurru and our partners



Dhimurru Plan of Management

## Reporting back

One of the most important parts of our work is to always be engaging and talking with our Elders, our boards, our families and our community about the work we are doing on Country. Djäkami Wänjauw are the eyes and ears of Country and when we care for our Country we are learning about our Country and from our Country. We need to let the landowners and the caretakers know about our work and what we are doing so we can look after the Country together.

We have a new App program that can help us develop maps of where we are doing our work. It can record what we find, how healthy our Country is and what work needs to be done. We are also developing a monitoring and evaluation framework based on Yolŋu knowledges, priorities and approaches to managing Country. This will help us to maintain Country in a healthy way for our future generations, which has always been the vision of our Elders.



●● STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

- Develop innovative and empowering ways to collect, analyse and utilise information that we gather as part of our work on Country
- Continue to develop a comprehensive data set to track information and provide management tools to mitigate threats and risks to high priority areas within the IPA:
  - Use the Environmental Systems Solutions (ESS) database to ensure information, maps and GIS tools are produced and designed in a way that empowers our leaders and rangers
  - Train all staff on the use of the database including generic IT skills
- Advocate for the Commonwealth to develop standardized data collection and management across top end rangers in Australia to ensure that data can inform regional management strategies and track success
- Develop Yolju indicators for success of our ranger program and managing Country
- Utilise innovative data collection methods to collect, analyse and report on progress of implementation
- Develop and implement a robust Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) to assess this Plan and how we can adapt and improve our work

“We are always engaging and talking with the community and letting the landowners and caretakers know about our work and what we are doing so that we can look after the Country together.”

**MAKUNGUN MARIKA**



An aerial photograph of a coastal landscape. In the foreground, there are dark, jagged rock formations meeting the turquoise ocean. To the left, a sandy beach curves along the shore. The background shows rolling hills with sparse green vegetation and patches of sand. The sky is clear and blue.

••  
**MERI**  
Monitoring,  
Evaluation, Reporting  
and Improvement



# Maḷḷ'kunmaram Framework

Our monitoring and evaluation framework will be used to make sure that we are being accountable to our Law and communities as we implement our Yolḷu Knowledge Framework. We will evaluate our work through our own worldviews to understand the health of our Country and culture over time and to track the impact and effectiveness of management actions to inform our decision-making. Sharing what we are doing and learning with the right people is an important part of this work. Our approach is based on the principles of Yolḷu leadership, ownership, governance and Law.

The following table outlines the key outcomes we aspire to achieve for each of the chapters of our Plan, which will form the foundation of a more robust MERI in the future. We can use this table each year at our all of ranger meetings, at board meetings and staff meetings to monitor the progress of our Plan. At these forums key Yolḷu will consider our progress towards our desired outcomes. These can be ranked to be Leytju (good), Ganga Manymak (fair) or Yatj (poor) and also if we think that things are getting better or worse.



## Dhimurru Plan of Management



Chapter/Theme	What do we want to achieve over 10 years	Ranking	Trend
Vision of the Yolŋu Knowledge Framework	Only Yolŋu make decisions for Country		
	Kinship is recognised as the foundation of our work		
	Rom dhukarr (due process according to Yolŋu Law) is being followed		
Ceremony as part of Djäkami Wäŋawu work	Support Djäkami Wäŋawu to participate in the right bäpurru/ŋarra/dhapi (ceremonies)		
	Manikay is strong and is being learnt by Dirramu Djäkami Wäŋawu		
	Milkarri practices are being learnt by Miyalk Djäkami Wäŋawu		
	Djäkami Wäŋawu are supporting preparation of bäpurru/ŋarra/dhapi		
Hunting and Monitoring Country as part of Djäkami Wäŋawu work	Keeping knowledge of hunting areas and skills strong		
	Changes to Country are noticed and documented		
Marrgi'thi wirrki wäŋawu	Wäŋa wininy – the right places are visited and checked up on in the right seasons by Djäkami Wäŋawu		
	Dhuyu wininy – sacred areas are being cared for		
	Learning from the right Elders about the health of Country and what they want to happen on Country		
	Djäkami Wäŋawu are learning the deep stories and knowledge of place and demonstrating their knowledges to the right people		
	Making plans for protecting Country that identify the work that Djäkami Wäŋawu need to do		
Burning Country the right way	The right people are burning Country at the right time to keep Country healthy		
	Special Laws for Worrk (floodplain burning) are followed and that knowledge is beng passed on to Djäkami Wäŋuwu		
	Infrastructure burns are protecting assets in the IPA		

## Dhimurru Plan of Management



Chapter/Theme	What do we want to achieve over 10 years	Ranking	Trend
Managing Sea Country	<p>Djäkami Wäñawu have authority to manage access on sea Country</p> <p>Names and boundaries on sea Country are mapped</p> <p>Sea Country and island habitats and animals are healthy and/or healing</p> <p>Yolju protocols for sustainable and seasonal harvest are being followed</p>		
Women and Caring as Country	<p>Miyalk have a strong and equal role in decision-making</p> <p>Women's harvesting species and areas are healthy</p> <p>Milkarri and other Miyalk practices are taught to Djäkami Wäñawu</p>		
Education and intergenerational knowledge transfer	<p>Young people are knowledgeable and standing strong in Yolju Law</p> <p>Formal and informal training about Yolju Law and systems are available for Djäkami Wäñawu alongside mainstream training</p> <p>Yolju knowledges, Law and practices as recognised as the foundation of Djäkami Wäñawu work, including for certification and rates of pay</p> <p>Yolju clan languages are strong</p>		
Threats to Country and culture	<p>Djäkami Wäñawu have powers to control who comes to our IPA</p> <p>Animals with manikay and their habitats are healthy and strong and/or healing</p> <p>Beaches and oceans are clean</p> <p>We understand the impacts of climate change and how to mitigate them on our Country</p>		
Collaboration with our partners and stakeholders	<p>Develop research collaborations about our culturally significant species and habitats</p> <p>Djäkami Wäñawu Protocols are followed in all our collaborations</p>		

## Dhimurru Plan of Management



Chapter/Theme	What do we want to achieve over 10 years	Ranking	Trend
	There is strong tourism by Yolŋu organisations in the IPA		
	There are sustainable incomes from caring for Country for landowners		
Strong futures and economic development	Our organisation is involved in decisions about new developments in our IPA		
Reporting back	The right people know what is happening on Country and what the Djäkami Wäŋawu are doing		
	Wäŋa-Waŋaŋu and Djungaya are involved in our work programs		

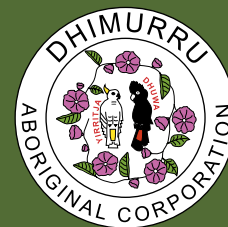
A close-up photograph of a mimosa plant in bloom. The image shows several bright yellow, cylindrical flower heads (cymes) on thin, dark brown stems. The leaves are green, elongated, and have a serrated edge. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a natural outdoor setting. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the flowers and leaves.

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Appendix



## Appendix Allocation of the Dhimurru IPA to IUCN Protected Area Category V (Protected Landscape/Seascape)

	IUCN Category 5	Dhimurru IPA
<b>Description</b>	Areas where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant ecological, biological, cultural and scenic value; and where safeguarding the integrity of this interaction is vital to protecting and sustaining the area and its associated nature conservation and other values.	Dhimurru IPA is a geographical space of land, sea and sky created by the Ancestral Spirit Beings of the Dhuwa and Yirritja moieties. The journeys of these ancestral creators crisscrossed the land and seascape breathing life into the animals and plants inhabiting these environments and creating sacred currents. From these ancestral journeys, and the network of important sites created across the land and sea, we gain our names, our identity and our way of life.
<b>Primary objective</b>	To protect and sustain important landscapes/seascapes and the associated nature conservation and other values created by interactions with humans through traditional management practices.	To protect and sustain our landscapes/seascapes, including biodiversity, ecosystems and our associated ceremonies, cultural sites, and other cultural values and practices that we have nurtured for thousands of years.
<b>Other objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maintain a balanced interaction of nature and culture through the protection of landscape and/or seascape and associated traditional management approaches, societies, cultures and spiritual values;</li> <li>• To contribute to broad-scale conservation by maintaining species associated with cultural landscapes and/or by providing conservation opportunities in heavily used landscapes;</li> <li>• To provide opportunities for enjoyment, well-being and socioeconomic activity through recreation and tourism;</li> <li>• To provide natural products and environmental services;</li> <li>• To provide a framework to underpin active involvement by the community in the management of valued landscapes or seascapes and the natural and cultural heritage that they contain;</li> <li>• To encourage the conservation of aquatic biodiversity;</li> <li>• To act as models of sustainability so that lessons can be learnt for wider application.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maintain a balance between the cultural, economic, and recreational values and the cultural, social and spiritual values associated with Dhimurru IPA;</li> <li>• To ensure ecological sustainability of cultural, economic and recreational use of land and sea resources within the IPA;</li> <li>• To provide opportunities for enjoyment, well-being, and socioeconomic activity through recreation and tourism;</li> <li>• To maintain environmental services provided by land and sea country within the IPA;</li> <li>• To provide a collaborative framework for the governance and management of the IPA that respects the rights and obligations of Traditional Owners and Custodians, government management agencies, commercial fishers, recreational fishers, tourism operators, and local residents;</li> <li>• To act as a model for Traditional Owner led collaborative management of an integrated land/sea Indigenous Protected Area.</li> </ul>



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